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Why Has The URANTIA BOOK Been Copyrighted? An Analysis

By

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In the realm of ordinary planetary affairs, most human decisions are conceived and actualized in an instant, a day, a few weeks, or several years. Decisions to see a movie, go to college, become an electrician, emigrate to Israel, write a book, etc., take but a short time. Very few human decisions require a whole lifetime to enact. And although the spiritual life of humans is directed toward the making of eternal decisions - decisions spanning the infinite future and based on the infinite past - such decisions have more to do with the inner and invisible grasp for eternal values than with the outer reach for temporal and visible goals.

The manner in which these multitudinous human decisions are woven into a coherent planetary life is a problem which can largely be left to angels and like beings. There are so many such decisions, all of relatively equal weight, that their harmonization is perhaps fairly straightforward albeit quite complicated! In particular there need not be any conspicuous limitations on human actions to effect the desired planetary harmony.

The situation is quite different when one considers the idea of an epochal revelation. By definition such a revelation is an attempt by higher order life in the universe to uplift the level of living enjoyed by the human inhabitants of a planet. Such a decision would naturally span a great many years - five thousand years, fifty thousand years, perhaps much longer time periods. This conclusion is demonstrated by the observation that URANTIA is still feeling the effects of its first and second epochal revelations, which began 500,000 and 38,000 years ago respectively. (See pages 741 and 828 of the URANTIA Book.) In both of these revelations it was intended that our spiritual benefactors would remain on the scene for thousands of years in order to actualize their plans. The third epochal revelation was an emergency and temporary bestowal and was therefore exceptional. But it is instructive to note here that Machiventa's 94 year effort was almost completely submerged during the two thousand year period between his bestowal and the birth of Jesus. (See page 1015.) That is, without Machiventa's continued visible presence on URANTIA his gospel of faith and trust in the one God was largely forgotten in just a few generations. How difficult it is for mortal man to grasp and retain revealed truth! It is no wonder that an epochal revelation is such a long drawn out affair. Finally, the life and teachings of Jesus, which together constitute the fourth epochal revelation to our planet, is expected to profoundly alter the whole future course of URANTIAN history. Thus it is seen that an epochal revelation is not an ordinary planetary event. It is planned over a period of many human lifetimes and is intended to affect the planetary life over a period of many, many more lifetimes. It is difficult to gain anything like an adequate idea of the scope of such epochal plans and decisions.

Turning now to what we consider to be the fifth epochal revelation to our planet, we find that it is in the form of a book authored by super-human personalities. Such a book is evidently intended to favorably influence human life on this planet over a long period

of time. The question arises as to how this good end could be insured considering the present state of our planet. Let us engage in a bit of reconstruction regarding how super-humans might prepare for this fifth epochal revelation.

We can imagine that the text of the book would be written with great care and with the hope that the more difficult passages would be fully understood in one or two hundred years if not earlier. (Let's be optimistic.) Then there would be the much more arduous task of putting such enlightened principles and advanced truths into practice. This might require one or two thousand years or longer. Now the careful writing would pose no insurmountable difficulty since until publication of the book the super-humans would retain almost complete control of the project. But after publication they could no longer maintain such complete control. During the human understanding and social implementation phases, they would be constrained to utilize the cooperation of human beings - unpredictable earthlings! How could the fifth epochal revelation be nurtured for such long periods without the presence of someone with authority and power? We are thus led to infer that the super-humans responsible for the URANTIA Book might set up some sort of an organization dedicated to insuring a successful fifth epochal revelation. This organization is the URANTIA Foundation. The URANTIA Foundation would oversee an orderly and balanced presentation of the URANTIA Book to all URANTIANS. It would persist at least through those transition periods when the URANTIA Book was first read, studied and implemented on to the days when it would be universally acclaimed. The URANTIA Foundation would present the fifth epochal revelation slowly and steadily, consistent with the evolutionary growth of the planet.

How then should this organization be defined? Fortunately, at this point we need not guess: In their Declaration of Trust Creating URANTIA Foundation and in behalf of certain unnamed "Contributors" the five original trustees state the principal and concordant objects or purposes of the URANTIA Foundation:

"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.

Concordant Objects: 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."

Thus it is seen that the principal purpose of the URANTIA Foundation is to improve the religious, scientific and philosophic level of human life on our planet; while the concordant purpose is to preserve and disseminate the teaching of the URANTIA Book. And this is in keeping with the idea that the URANTIA Book is after all just a means to a lofty end, the end being that URANTIANS achieve the spiritual and intellectual levels expressed in the principal object of the Declaration of Trust Creating URANTIA Foundation.

Now were URANTIA an ordinary planet with moderate extremes of good and bad, harmony and discord, then this analysis would be essentially complete. Unfortunately as we all know only too well, our world is decidedly on the disordered side. Great intellects are perverted by spiritual blindness and often are employed toward indiscriminate, even violent ends. All manner of abuses abound so much so that one is tempted to wonder what new evil will be perpetrated next. And so it is appropriate at this point to ask, 'what are some predictable dangers inherent in this fifth epochal revelation to this planet in the form of a book and how would our super-human benefactors design the URANTIA Foundation so as to avoid them?'

First of all, unlike previous epochal revelations the fifth epochal revelation would have no visible super-human person invested with authority to periodically update doctrines and interpretations. Thus foremost among the predictable dangers attendant upon the URANTIA Book is the danger of an unbalanced reception with consequent distortion of meaning and intent. Unstable individuals might be thrown completely off balance by the thought of communications from other worlds. Or persons already unbalanced might make a superficial espousal of the URANTIA Book and then go off and do something foolish. (It takes but a little imagination to conceive the possibilities.) Unthinking and unscrupulous people might attempt to exploit the URANTIA Book for selfish gains. Related to these annoying possibilities there would be two major pitfalls: First there would be the human tendency to be impatient; with a revelation stretched across such a large canvas human beings would have difficulty in adding their individual dabs of color to the painting while maintaining balance and proportion. They might be reluctant to touch the painting at all or they might go ape and splash the paint across the canvas with pseudo-artistic zeal. (Clearly, it would be much better were the painting to proceed too slowly than were it to proceed too quickly.) The second major pitfall logically follows the first. It is the danger that a sub-cult would spring up and preempt the presentation and implementation of the URANTIA Book teachings. Without the self-imposed constraint of 'slow and steady progress consistent with evolutionary growth' a dedicated but misguided subgroup of URANTIANS might gain a temporary ascendancy of power and notoriety only to subsequently ruin their own reputations along with the credibility of the URANTIA Book. Such a subcult might preempt the slow and steady progress of the URANTIA Movement with a dazzling and precipitous exposition of the URANTIA Book perhaps together with other "revelations". (In the painting analogy, someone might grab a paint brush and smear paint across the canvas thinking it to be an 'abstract' when in fact it was supposed to be a classic.)

It was to prevent just such eventualities that the URANTIA Book was copyrighted by the URANTIA Foundation. The copyright was a logical necessity to the plan of gradual presentation of the URANTIA Book to URANTIA. Such a copyright is simply necessary in order to control the rate and means of dissemination of the URANTIA Book to URANTIANS and to prevent the preemption of these responsibilities by a sub-cult. According to Title 17 of the United States Code the rights of a copyright holder include "the exclusive right to print, reprint, publish, copy, and vend the copyrighted work, and to translate, dramatize, arrange, or adapt it." (See Circular 20, Copyright Office, The Library of Congress.)

In conclusion it must be mentioned that the trustees of the URANTIA Foundation have the heavy responsibility to see to it that the URANTIA Foundation does not itself fall victim to various dangers which are inherent in the existence of such an organization so closely associated with the URANTIA Book. An examination of these dangers will be dealt with in a subsequent paper. Suffice it to say that it is of the utmost importance that the URANTIA Foundation remain loyal and true to its principal and concordant objects.