

## THE PLAN FOR THE URANTIA BOOK REVELATION

BY CAROLYN B. KENDALL<sup>1</sup> — APRIL 1996

### Introduction

We are told in *The Urantia Book* that revelators came to earth on missions and for specific purposes. There was an ordained plan for how each bestowal son would carry out his program of upstepping evolutionary life and imparting new spiritual truth.

There was a master plan for *The Urantia Book*, and I believe it is still in operation. Its features were specific. They guided the content, the quality, the publishing, and the protection of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. It decreed the establishment and the function of Urantia Foundation and Urantia Brotherhood. The constitution of Urantia Brotherhood was approved by the highest planetary authority. The relationship between the Foundation and the Brotherhood was prescribed. This feature of the plan is where I believe the guidance was not followed, and where subsequent problems arose to bedevil both Foundation and Brotherhood.

The plan was conveyed by the revelatory providers to the contact commissioners, who shared it with the groups known as the Seventy and the Forum. The commissioners had latitude to share elements of the plan with later arriving persons perceived to have leadership potential. The original messages which outlined the plan were not published as part of the revelation and would eventually be destroyed. The former Forum members who became Brotherhood leaders and Foundation trustees carried on knowledge of how the revelation was to progress. However, because of the recent schism, discontinuity occurred in the transmittal of information.

The plan was never presented as a 1-2-3 listing of do's and don'ts. If one is discerning, facets of the plan will emerge, just as they dawned upon each Forum member and Brotherhood leader. As was true in past revelations, in the realm of revelatory planning, timing is everything.

### Development of the Urantia Papers

The revelators began planning the content of the Urantia Papers in the Middle Ages. The purpose of the revelation was to prepare the planet for the next order of sonship. It was instigated and approved by Michael himself - the Word made Book. Though neither a bestowal nor emergency mission, *The Urantia Book* is both a remedial and upstepping enterprise, an array of resident and visiting celestial beings were conscripted for service to the revelatory undertaking. The celestial beings functioned as invisible behind-the-scenes directors to the contact commissioner, the dependable human facilitators who carried the project to completion.

The first Urantia paper was read to the Forum on January 18, 1925. This paper consisted of answers supplied by ABC, the midwayer, to 181 written questions pertaining to Deity and the cosmos. These questions were compiled from hundreds of questions which had been solicited from the Forum in December 1924 by the revelators. The questions were sorted, classified and duplicates discarded. Questions were then presented to the Revelatory Commission. More questions and more papers

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<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Kendall is the daughter of Forum member, Clarence N. Bowman, (1923-1956); joined the Forum in 1951; employed by William S. Sadler, M.D., 1952-1954, and 1957; charter member of First Urantia Society, 1956-1961; founding member of Orvonton Urantia Society, 1961-1977; rejoined First Society, 1977 to present (president, 1989-1993); served on General Council, 1976-1985, chairman, Fraternal Relations Committee, 1977-1982; vice-president, Urantia Brotherhood, 1982-1985; member of Foreign Extension (now IFC), Domestic Extension and Publications Committees, the wife of Thomas A. Kendall, trustee of Urantia Foundation, 1963-1983 (president 1973-1983); currently employed part-time by The Fellowship.

followed. Altogether 57 papers comprised the first series and consisted of at least 1700 typewritten pages. This period lasted until 1929.<sup>2 3</sup>

The first 57 papers were further expanded through the asking of more questions by the Forum. "The first three parts were completed and certified to us in A.D. 1934. The Jesus Papers were not so delivered to us until 1935."<sup>4</sup> This second series, plus the Jesus Papers, totalled about 4,500 typewritten pages.<sup>5</sup> The Forum was then invited to review the 196 papers and ask questions concerning clarification of concepts and the removal of ambiguities. Clarence Bowman adds, "During this period very little new information was imparted. Only minor changes were made in any of the Papers. Some matter was added - some removed - but there was little revision or amplification of the text."<sup>6</sup>

The original papers were received in English in the handwriting of the unidentified contact personality.<sup>7</sup><sup>8</sup> The handwritten papers were never seen by the Forum.<sup>9</sup> Each was typewritten on an Underwood upright typewriter. The papers were typed at least three times.<sup>10</sup>

### The "'Contact Personality"

Regarding the human subject: "His was an exemplary and inspiring life else he would not have been chosen for such an important task by the Revelatory Commission."<sup>12</sup> "We were enjoined to refrain from discussing the identity of the Contact Personality and, after the publication of the Book, to make

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<sup>2</sup>. William S. Sadler, M.D. (Contact Commissioner), History of the Urantia Movement, ca. 1966, unpublished; and, extract from the 1923-35 diary of Clarence N. Bowman, Forum Member, 1923- 1956

<sup>3</sup>. Extract from the 1923-35 diary of Clarence N. Bowman (Forum Member), 1923-1956

<sup>4</sup>. Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>5</sup>. Op Cit (note 3)

<sup>6</sup>. Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>7</sup>. Personal interview with William S. Sadler, M.D.(Contact Commissioner), Forum, 1951; and,

<sup>8</sup>. Presentation by William S. Sadler Jr. (Contact Commissioner; President, Urantia Brotherhood; Vice-President, Urantia Foundation), Oklahoma City, ca. 1962

<sup>9</sup>. Attributed to Clarence N. Bowman (Member of Forum, 1923-1956), 1951-1959

<sup>10</sup>. Attributed to Emma L. ("Christy") Christensen (Contact Commissioner)

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<sup>12</sup>. Emma L. ("Christy") Christensen, Personal Letter, 1970

no statement at any time as to whether the 'subject' was still living or was deceased." <sup>13</sup> "The human subject was necessary for any written communications and for the Urantia Papers." <sup>14</sup>

### Functioning of the Contact Commissioners

"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" Only these Contact Commissioners attended 'contacts' and received written communications through the contact personality." <sup>15</sup> The Commissioners were the custodians of the Urantia Manuscript, keeping the carbon copy of the typewritten transcript in a fireproof vault. They were also charged with full responsibility for supervising all the details connected with the publication of the Book, securing the international copyrights, etc. "The Papers were published just as we received them. The Contact Commissioners had no editorial authority. Our job was limited to 'spelling, capitalization, and punctuation'." <sup>16</sup> During these early years the Contact Commissioners received many communications and directives in writing ... Between 1939 and 1955 eight written communications were given to the Seventy by the Seraphim of Progress attached to the Superhuman Planetary Government of Urantia." <sup>17</sup> The last new written communication was read to the Forum in 1952 (see below). <sup>18</sup> Almost all of these messages had a notation at the bottom of the last page which read: 'To be destroyed by fire not later than the appearance of the Urantia Papers in print.' It was the design of our unseen friends to prevent the appearance of an 'Urantia Apocrypha' subsequent to the publication of *The Urantia Book*. <sup>19</sup> Dr. Sadler and Christy were permitted to retain several of the communications after publication, but she was required to destroy them before her death. <sup>20</sup> In 1982 during her final illness Christy directed their destruction by two trusted associates. <sup>21</sup>

The presence of the contact personality was not required for verbal contacts between the Revelatory Commission or the successor Midwayer Commission and Contact Commissioners. The verbal contacts which had begun twenty years before the papers appeared, continued into the early 1950s. <sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup> "The midwayers were very real to us - we frequently talked with them during our varied 'contacts'. We quite fully understood that the secondary midwayers supervised the contacts." <sup>24</sup> Once when

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<sup>13</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>14</sup> . Op Cit (note 7)

<sup>15</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>16</sup> . Ibid

<sup>17</sup> . Ibid

<sup>18</sup> . Recollection by Carolyn Kendall

<sup>19</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>20</sup> . Op Cit (note 7)

<sup>21</sup> . Attributed to Thomas A. Kendall (President, Urantia Foundation, 1963-1983)

<sup>22</sup> . Op Cit (note 7)

<sup>23</sup> . Attributed to William S. Sadler, M.D. (Contact Commissioner) 1951-68

<sup>24</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

asked why words unique to *The Urantia Book* were pronounced in a certain way, Dr. Sadler answered, "We heard some of them spoken." Verbal contacts have not been re-established since the demise of the last contact commissioner.<sup>25 26</sup>

### The Delay in Publishing the Urantia Book

Had not World War II occurred, the book might have been published in 1940 or 1941. It was assumed that when the war concluded, permission would be granted to publish *The Urantia Book*.<sup>27</sup> The war was barely over in 1945 when a new menace arose that postponed the dream of worldwide peace and spiritual regeneration. In January 1946, the Melchizedeks declared war on communism. They viewed communism as one of the "greatest threats to the religion of Jesus and to the freedom of man: in two thousand years." The seraphim advocates of the past angels of the churches and of the future angels of progress have been mandated to abandon their traditional perspectives while they have been bidden to stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of the present." The Melchizedeks promised: "The Master's teachings at Urmia will sometime prevail. The brotherhood of men will someday begin. Whether it requires a decade or a century, we will prevail against the forces of retrogression and enslavement." They expressed the hope they could "prevent global war. But most of all we crave to foster a spiritual awakening of your fellow mortals."<sup>28</sup> The course of communism was watched as the Melchizedeks worked behind the scenes. Finally, rather than delay until the downfall of the Godless, oppressive system, the go-ahead was given in August 1952 to publish the Papers in 1955.

### Assignments of Responsibilities

The following instructions were read to the Forum in November 1951. They were directed "to the Contact Commissioners (the Custodians of the Urantia revelation) from the personal regent of the acting Planetary Prince of Urantia: "I desire to inform you concerning certain decisions and rulings formulated by the planetary government which pertain to the affairs of *The Urantia Book* and the ensuing Urantia Brotherhood. Today, I am calling into being a supreme planetary conclave to signalize my creation of the Supreme Court of Urantia. I have recently had a meeting with all persons and groups concerned with the Urantia revelation. As a result of this conference, I have made certain decisions and am handing down the following rulings:

1. For five hundred years from February 11, 1935, the overall welfare and direction of *The Urantia Book* is placed in the hands of the Seraphim of Progress."
2. The immediate fostering of the Urantia revelation - from decade to decade - (at least for the next one hundred years) will be entrusted to the Seraphim of the Churches. I have instructed this group to create a special commission to carry on this work."
3. The human aspects of *The Urantia Book* will be placed in the hands of the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation, subject to the advisory suggestions and veto powers of the Revelatory Commission of the United Midwayers of Urantia."
4. For the time being, mediation between the overall and superhuman supervision of this commission and the directly human functioning of the Trustees of Urantia Foundation shall be vested in the Midwayer Commission, the successor of the original Urantia Revelatory Commission. This Commission shall continue to function as advisor to both the Seraphic

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<sup>25</sup> . Op Cit (note 20)

<sup>26</sup> . Attributed to Patricia Mundelius (President, Urantia Foundation, 1993-present)

<sup>27</sup> . Op Cit (note 9)

<sup>28</sup> . Written communication received by Contact Commissioners from Revelators January 14, 1946

Overseers and the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation, but their veto powers shall extend only to the decisions and acts of the human Trustees."

5. In the absence of Midwayer intervention after February 11, 1954, the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation shall proceed in accordance with their own judgment."<sup>29</sup>

"This communication represents my ruling up to this date respecting your Forum, the Seventy, *The Urantia Book*, the Urantia Foundation, and the proposed Urantia Brotherhood:

1. Your Forum shall continue under the supervision of the Contact Commission as directed June 24, 1933.
2. ***The Urantia Brotherhood*** - The plan of organization [constitution] as it exists on this date is hereby provisionally approved for the inauguration of the Brotherhood. The plan provides for its own subsequent amendment.
3. ***The Starting of the Brotherhood*** - The launching of the Brotherhood shall be left to the decisions of the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation. They shall act personally -- unofficially - and no record of such action shall appear in the transactions of the Urantia Foundation. They shall assume all and full responsibility for the organization and inauguration of the Urantia Brotherhood.
4. ***The Urantia Book*** - By mandate of the Supreme court of Urantia ... the full custody of *The Urantia Book* has been placed in my hands. I now made the following rulings:
  - a. I, and I alone, will direct the time of the publication of *The Urantia Book*.
  - b. If I do not provide such instructions on or before January 1, 1955, then the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation should proceed with plans for future publication in accordance with their own judgment.
  - c. I approve of your plan to publish the Index of *The Urantia Book* in a separate volume.
5. ***The Seventy*** - This is a project which will terminate with the launching of the Brotherhood. I would continue the present supervision. If for any reason this supervision should be terminated, I direct the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation, acting unofficially, to appoint a new leader to act pending the inauguration of the Urantia Brotherhood."

"I share in your aspirations, concur in your longings, minister to your shortcomings, and wholeheartedly bless your undertakings."<sup>30</sup>

### The Timing of the Urantia Book

In April 1955 William S. Sadler Jr., prepared a paper, "Timing of The Urantia Book", for the files of the Executive Committee drawn from "certain wise comments and advices". It was known that these "wise sayings" were originally written communications addressed to the contact commissioners. We had heard them read in 1951 in their original form. Bill had adapted the language for "public" consumption, and he also read this paper to the Forum:

"We regard *The Urantia Book* as a feature of the progressive evolution of human society. It is not germane to the spectacular episodes of epochal revolution, even though it may apparently

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<sup>29</sup>. Written communication received by Contact Commissioners from Revelators November 22, 1951

<sup>30</sup>. Written communication received by Contact Commissioners from Revelators August 21, 1952

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 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 led to provide funds for translations into other languages.

"You who dedicate your lives to the service of the Book and the Brotherhood can little realize the import of your doings. You will doubtless live and die without fully realizing that you are participating in the birth of a new age of religion on this world.

"The future is not open to your mortal comprehension, but you will do well to diligently study the order, plan, and methods of progression as they were enacted in the earth life of Michael when the Word was made flesh. You are becoming actors in an ensuing episode when the Word is made Book. Great is the difference in these dispensations of religion, but many are the lessons which can be learned from a study of the former age.

"You must again study the times of Jesus on earth. You must carefully take note of how the kingdom of heaven was inaugurated in the world. Did it evolve slowly and unfold naturally? Or did it come with sudden show of force and with spectacular exhibition of power? Was it evolutionary or revolutionary? "You must learn to possess your souls in patience. You are in association with a revelation of truth which is a part of the natural evolution of religion on this world. Over-rapid growth would be suicidal. The book is being given to those who are ready for it long before the day of its world-wide mission. Thousands of study groups must be brought into existence and the book must be translated into many tongues. Thus will the book be in readiness when the battle for man's liberty is finally won and the world is once more made safe for the religion of Jesus and the freedom of mankind." <sup>31</sup>

### **The Plates of the Urantia Book**

"Before the demise of Dr. Lena K. Sadler in August, 1939 she had collected about twenty thousand dollars for the publication fund, and this was used to set type and prepare plates for the printing of the Book." It was these plates of *The Urantia Book* which constituted the basis for the formation of the Urantia Foundation. This Foundation, set up under the laws of Illinois, was completed on January 11, 1950. The first Board of Trustees were: William M Hales, President; William S. Sadler Jr., Vice President; Emma L. Christensen, Secretary; Wilfred C. Kellogg, Treasurer; and, Edith Cook, Assistant Secretary.

"It was learned that one of the wealthy members of the Forum desired to contribute fifty thousand dollars for the publication of the Book. By instruction, this was circumvented, because, they told us, it was best to give all parties concerned an opportunity to contribute to the publication fund. "Accordingly, an appeal was made for \$50,000.00 to defray the expense of printing ten thousand copies. The response was immediate. The sum contributed was in excess of forty-nine thousand

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<sup>31</sup>. Ibid

dollars." <sup>32</sup> The plates were destroyed between the second and third printings of *The Urantia Book* in 1971. New offset printing technology had made the old letterpress plates obsolete. <sup>33</sup>

### Urantia Foundation — Publication of *The Urantia Book*

When she joined the Forum in 1939, Marian Rowley recalls that she read the papers in their typewritten form. After the book was plated - sometime during World War II, an employee of Donnelly Printing Co., Mary Penn, proofread the papers. When she had questions about certain items, she came to 533 Diversey to consult with the contact commissioners. <sup>34</sup> The final set of galley sheets read by the Forum in the late 1940s and early 1950s were stamped, "Proofed by Oppy." <sup>35</sup>

When the book was published by Urantia Foundation on October 12, 1955, it was not portrayed as being error-free. The multiple processes of transcribing from handwritten manuscript to typewritten pages; the retyping of these pages two to five times; and from the typewritten to typeset form, presented opportunities for errors to creep into the papers which were not caught by even two professional proof readings. <sup>36</sup> By publication day, Christy and Marian had already collected a list of errors noticed by sharp-eyed Forum members. <sup>37</sup> The midwayers did not volunteer the location of errors, just the information that there were errors in the published text. <sup>38</sup>

In the years after publication, errors brought to Christy's or Marian's attention were welcomed. The Foundation wanted the book to be perfect. However, Christy was adamant - no changes could be made arbitrarily. Between 1955 and 1982 proposed corrections and changes were submitted by either of two surviving contact commissioners to the revelators for permission. <sup>39</sup>

The trustees of Urantia Foundation did not participate in the process of correcting the text of *The Urantia Book*. Their job was to publish the book with whatever latest changes were authorized by the midwayers. They were to maintain the text inviolate, backing it up by copyright. <sup>40</sup> It ought to be clarified to the readership by the Foundation that the corrections made after 1982 were apparently made without the authorization of the midwayers. <sup>41</sup> Reportedly, in publishing their latest edition, the Foundation is reversing changes made after 1982. <sup>42</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>33</sup> . Foundation Mailing, 1972

<sup>34</sup> . Attributed to Marian T. Rowley (Secretary-General, Urantia Brotherhood)

<sup>35</sup> . Personal recollection of Phillip Copenhaver (Member of Forum, 1947-1956)

<sup>36</sup> . Op Cit (note 10)

<sup>37</sup> . Op Cit (note 17)

<sup>38</sup> . Op Cit (note 10)

<sup>39</sup> . Ibid

<sup>40</sup> . Op Cit (note 20)

<sup>41</sup> . Opinion expressed by Carolyn Kendall

<sup>42</sup> . Attributed to Richard Keeler (Trustee, Urantia Foundation)

## An "Unencumbered" Urantia Book

The revelators were concerned that the book might become a means for the personal aggrandizement of the humans associated with it. "The main reason for not revealing the identity of the 'Contact Personality' is that the Celestial Revelators do not want any human being - any human name - ever to be associated with *The Urantia Book*. They want this revelation to stand on its own declarations and teachings. They are determined that future generations shall have the book wholly free from all mortal connections - they do not want a Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley. The book does not even bear the imprint of the printer who brought the book into being."<sup>43</sup> They did not want anyone to make either a name or money for himself off *The Urantia Book*.<sup>44</sup>

The revelators had definite opinions regarding anything that might presume to explain or even obscure the book. As the book was being prepared for its initial publication, one of the contact commissioners proposed to the Revelatory commission that he write an introduction to pave the way for the book. They declined his offer, commenting, "How could a candle illuminate the way for a powerful beacon of light?" The commissioner later said, "So, I didn't write my book."<sup>45</sup>

They had firm ideas about what form the papers should take. In January 1954 Bill Sadler wrote a simplified version of the Foreword and first five papers which he titled, "The Alpheus Twins' Version of The Urantia Papers". He read each chapter on successive Sundays to the approval of, and encouragement by, the Forum. The next week he announced he could not continue his project. The midwayers had remonstrated with him, telling him to "knock it off". They did not want a simplified version of the revelation to compete with the original version.<sup>46</sup> Only material of the highest quality could be considered by the trustees and then, if approved, published separately.

## Safeguarding the Name Urantia

A well-known message is the advice about protecting the name Urantia: "You have not done enough to safeguard your name. (Meaning the name Urantia.) Make it very safe for one generation so the name URANTIA cannot be pre-empted. "In a common-law trust you hold the name. You do it also in a corporation. A corporation has status in law. You also do it in the copyright. You must carefully register it with the division of government that I have looked into, that controls trade relations, Trademark, and then you are protected in common law connected with a volunteer association such as you are planning in the Urantia Brotherhood. In all those ways you must safeguard the name. THIS IS ONE OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DUTIES.

"In 50, 75, or 100 years the name will be fairly safe. You safeguard it for a generation and it will largely take care of itself. (They are talking about the name Urantia)."<sup>47</sup>

"There must be one Urantia Brotherhood. Study groups may call themselves groups to study *The Urantia Book*."<sup>48 49</sup> "Other religious groups will spring from the Urantia teachings. *The Urantia Book*,

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<sup>43</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>44</sup> . Attributed to William S. Sadler Jr.

<sup>45</sup> . Op Cit (note 22)

<sup>46</sup> . Op Cit (notes 17, 33, and 43)

<sup>47</sup> . Written communication received by Contact Commissioners from Revelators August 1942

<sup>48</sup> . Written communication received by Contact Commissioners from Revelators, date unknown

<sup>49</sup> . Emma L. ("Christy") Christensen, "Historical Notes", undated

Urantia Brotherhood, Urantia Foundation and Urantia Societies will be the exclusive carriers of the name, Urantia, but they should not claim to be the exclusive carriers of the truth." <sup>50 51</sup>

### The Urantia Brotherhood

"It was inevitable that some sort of fraternal organization would grow out of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. All interested persons could see that the Urantia teachings were opposed to the sectarianism of Christian believers. It was clear that it was not the purpose of the Urantia Revelation to start a new church." <sup>52</sup> It was the trustees' responsibility to plan the Brotherhood. <sup>53</sup> This organization would be delegated the task of disseminating *The Urantia Book* and its teachings. While it was not to be a church, there needed to be an efficient, minimal organization. In consultation with outside authorities on organizations a governing structure similar to the Presbyterian church was adopted for the Brotherhood. <sup>54</sup>

The "Articles for Urantia Brotherhood Constitution" were read to the Seventy in November 1950. The organizational outline was presented to the Seventy a month later. The preamble to the Brotherhood Constitution and more of the Constitution was read to the Seventy in December 1951. <sup>55</sup> It should be recalled that this "plan of organization" was "provisionally approved for the inauguration of the Brotherhood" by the recently installed planetary prince in August 1952. <sup>56</sup>

"On Sunday, January 2, 1955, at 12 o'clock there was a meeting of 36 people in the Forum room for the purpose of organizing the Urantia Brotherhood. First, Doctor read a communication directing how it should be done, then Bill Hales presided and called each one of the 36 up to the front to sign the constitution. (After elections) the meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer, and the deed was done. Believe me, it was the most thrilling thing! We were all very much impressed - some were crying and I was shaking like a leaf. We've waited so long, and it just seemed hardly possible." <sup>57</sup> On March 7, 1955, William S. Sadler Jr. distributed a memo addressed to the Executive Committee of Urantia Brotherhood, with copies placed into each committee secretary's notebook. Again, the paper was adapted from written communications and was read to the Forum. It was entitled "Some Problems Confronting a New Religious Organization," and opened with:

"It seems most appropriate to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee certain wise comments and advices which have been gathered over a period of time, relative to the future problems of the Urantia Brotherhood and its component societies." <sup>58</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> . From a Melchizedek - date unknown undated

<sup>51</sup> . Op Cit (note 48)

<sup>52</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

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<sup>54</sup> . Op Cit (note 43)

<sup>55</sup> . Op Cit (note 3)

<sup>56</sup> . Op Cit (note 29)

<sup>57</sup> . Letter from Marian Rowley to Julia Fenderson, 1955

<sup>58</sup> . Op Cit (note 43)

"Of course, you probably know that the best government in the world is that which governs least, that the true purpose of government is to prevent government, and that the government which prevents the most government is best because it leaves the individual free - permits him his liberties and inalienable rights - but prevents predatory groups from interfering with these liberties. When people are all spirit-led they won't need any more government than they have on Havona ... That organization is best which is so organized as to prevent all other organizations.

"When people come to you about *The Urantia Book* and URANTIA Brotherhood and tell you that since the Thought Adjusters are here and indwell everyone and the Spirit of Truth has been poured out upon all flesh, therefore, it isn't necessary to have an organization but just to trust in God, etc., don't argue with them. They are right...If we undertake this work without an organization, we will have in the English-speaking world alone fifty other organizations spring up who will all claim the right to use the name 'Urantia', each one claiming to be the 'only true and original' Urantia Brotherhood. It would become the most disgraceful thing in the world since the early days of Christianity. Not since the gospel of Jesus has there appeared on earth such a dynamic nucleus about which could be built so many organizations and which would attract so many differently motivated men - good, bad, and indifferent.

"We must create an organization whose major purpose is to prevent other organizations and, therefore, the most benign. Create an organization which will organize the least and thereby prevent all other organizations with their tyranny and disgrace and their disrupting influences ...  
"We have an organization ... (It is organized) to allow as much liberty as possible. When the time comes that we feel it can be improved, we will have the experience to do so.

"We should foster an organization that will give every one a right to his own belief and interpretation but an organization what will prevent confusion, disruption and disgrace. We should have an organization that will have control over the wicked minority who might by organization seek to disgrace the very purpose for which the book was given to the world. If we do not have an organization to safeguard the name, then will such an organization rise to take the name ...

"Some idealists will join us but they will later go off in their own way just like Abner and they will do a good work, and we will bid them Godspeed because we have an organization which prevents any one from being restricted or inhibited.

"We might consider asking an idealist if he thinks *The Urantia Book* should be copyrighted or just trust to the Spirit of Truth to take care of that? Idealists are to an organization what comets are to the solar system. They are spectacular but you can't depend on them. You cannot plan to receive from an idealist a regular income for a social organization, but he can go out and get a million dollars sometimes.

"We have to deal with many things in our jobs that are not ideal. When this book is once published, if the idealists control it, they would provide no organization and soon a lot of selfish people would start to work to make a name out of it. Lucifer, Satan, and Caligastia were idealists, at the start. But they were something else. They were egoists. Marry idealism to egotism and you have a fatal combination.

"Abner was an idealist, a wonderful man ... Paul was an ideaist. He had ideas and it was a great pity they did not work together, then they would have had a religion for the Orient and a better religion for the Occident. If idealists and ideas could work together it would save a lot of time and lives. One refused to have an organization; he was impractical. The other (Paul) built an organization, and he knew he was building in a practical way. We can love Abner but we must respect Paul. You are going to have a lot of (people) come along now. Some ideaists but mostly idealists.

"You must carefully consider the organization Jesus created before he left the planet. It was an organization designed to prevent confusion, to ordain justice, to safeguard majorities against minorities. He did not leave the ecclesiastical hierarchy that subsequently grew up. But he did leave a simple social organization that could carry on and prevent confusion ...

"Failure to organize would witness, I believe, the most terrible failure for *The Urantia Book*. It would allow all manner of designing groups and organizations to spring into existence and to use the name Urantia, to prostitute the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, and to dictate its policies.

"Many things we have debated and discussed over the years. Many things we have thought of and discarded years ago, but we bring in new people and they do not know what has gone before.

"Think for a moment of the large number of warring and disgraceful organizations that would be inexistence if we did not control the name Urantia and provide for some authoritative recognition. Think of it in the future: One million ... people in confusion and there are a dozen different organizations that want to do something for them about *The Urantia Book*. They get literature from several different groups each claiming to be the one and only true one ... That would be true if we did not occupy the field with an organized group.

"That organization is best that coordinates most while it organizes least."

Again, on May 2, 1955, William Sadler Jr., prepared a memorandum for the Executive Committee consisting of material adapted from "certain wise comments and advices." The first part was entitled, "Past and Present Tests." It was also read to the Forum:

"If our first test was the endurance of delay, the second test was that of unity. We are still undergoing this test ... Our particular mission is to function effectively through this transitional period which is witnessing the materialization of the Book and which will lead to those future times when the social activities of Urantia believers will begin to function in the more formal organization of the Brotherhood. To do this effectively we must meet the test of trust and confidence. We must avoid suspicion as we would shun a deadly spiritual poison. We must make a practice of nipping suspicion in the bud. We must make sure that all short circuits of doubt and suspicion are avoided. In this manner may we keep our group influence intact."

The second part was titled, "Our Baptism of Joys and Sorrows." It was also read to the Forum in May 1955:

"We have been called to do a great work and ours is the transcendent privilege of presenting the Papers to the peoples of our strife-torn world.

"Supercilious scientists will ridicule us and some may even charge us with collusion and fraud. Well-meaning religionists will condemn us as enemies of the Christian religion and will accuse us of defaming Christ himself. "Thousands of spiritually hungry souls will bless us for the message of the Book, and thousands of others will condemn us for disturbing their theologic complacency.

"Are we ready for the baptism of joys and sorrows which will certainly attend upon the early distribution of *The Urantia Book*? "Many strange 'isms' and queer groups will seek to attach themselves to *The Urantia Book* and its far-flung influence. Our most trying experiences will be with such groups who will so loudly acclaim their belief in the teachings of the Book and who will so persistently seek to attach themselves to the movement. Great wisdom will be required to guard the Urantia Brotherhood from the distracting and distorting influence of these multifarious groups and from equally distracting and disturbing individuals, some well-intentioned and some sinister, who will strive to become a part of the authentic constituency of the Urantia Movement.

"We can really forecast very little about the reaction of the present generation to the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. But we can greatly lessen our persecution and ridicule by a reasonable

exercise of foresight and wisdom. Our troubles will be greatly lessened if we avoid all discussion of the origin of the book. We should be determined to know but one thing - the soul-surviving message of the Book." <sup>59</sup>

### The Extraordinary Trust

Throughout the early period, emphasis was placed upon serious study of the Papers. "In 1939, some of us thought the time had come when we should form a class to engage in the more serious and systematic study of the Urantia Papers. This project was presented to the Forum and when those who wished to join such a group were counted, it was found that just 70 persons desired to enter upon this study. So for several years this class was referred to as 'The Seventy'. Two or three years preceding the formation of The Seventy an informal group had been meeting on Wednesday evenings.

"The Seventy carried on systematic study of the Urantia Papers from April 5, 1939 until 1956. It was the forerunner of the later 'School of the Urantia Brotherhood.'

"During these years the Seventy enrolled 107 students. The Seventy carried on its work of study, thesis writing, and practice of teaching for 17 years." <sup>60</sup>

"Membership in the Seventy had stringent requirements. One must have read all the papers before being accepted into the Seventy. Attendance was taken, a good excuse being necessary for absence from the Wednesday evening class. <sup>61</sup> The following communication was read to both the Seventy and to the Forum. It was from the regent of the acting planetary prince: "I have great personal interest in your group and deep affection for you as individuals. I commend your loyalty, but I am somewhat amazed at your relative indifference to the importance of the mission which has been entrusted to your hands. Your group of Seventy may seem to show more interest because you are selected and because you are under more or less discipline. But the majority of your Forum shock me by their lack of enthusiasm. ... I admonish you ever to be alert to the importance of the extraordinary trust which has been placed in your hands." <sup>62</sup> I was stunned to hear this "painful paragraph," as Bill Sadler described it. I thought of the Forum as the most dedicated group of human beings I had ever encountered. It was an eye-opening insight into how much was expected of the human recipients of the Urantia revelation. <sup>63</sup>

### Training of Teachers and Leaders

As originally envisioned, the Urantia Brotherhood School was conceived as a summer program taking place at Pine Lodge in Beverly Shores, Indiana. Dr. Sadler purchased the property with the idea that students would live in cottages on the property as they prepared themselves to go out into the world as teacher and leaders of the new revelation. It was eventually realized that only professional school teachers or retirees could devote entire summers to such a program. They were desirous of recruiting the teacher corps from a broad range of believers. <sup>64</sup> "Among the early activities of the Brotherhood was the organization of the School of the Brotherhood which began its first session in September 1956 ... The course of study is planned to cover a three year seminary education. At present [1966], only

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<sup>59</sup> . Written communication received by Contact Commissioners from Revelators in 1945

<sup>60</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>61</sup> . Op Cit (notes 7 and 9)

<sup>62</sup> . Op Cit (note 28)

<sup>63</sup> . Op Cit (note 40)

<sup>64</sup> . Op Cit (note 7)

part time work is provided at [Wednesday] evening sessions ... The number of registered students taking credit courses has averaged about thirty. A like number of 'auditors' attend the classes ... The degree granted after three years of study is that of 'Ordained Teacher'. A shorter course of study leads to the status of 'Certified Leader'." <sup>65</sup> The curriculum was broad: Doctrines of *The Urantia Book*; Science in *The Urantia Book*; Topical Studies; Life and Teaching of Jesus; Analytic Studies of Parts I and II; History of the Bible - Old & New Testaments; Books of the bible; Denominations, Sects & Cults; Ancient & Modern Philosophy; World Religions; Harmony of the Gospels; Urantia Brotherhood - Organization and Constitution; Educational Psychology; and, Speaking and Teaching. <sup>66</sup>

Eventually, the School ran out of students in the Chicago area. The first Summer Study Session was held in Chicago in 1968. It drew students to the three-day sessions from all over the United States. <sup>67</sup> The summer sessions continued for the next few years. In 1975, a special meeting attended by fifty leaders held prior to the first General Conference in Evanston, the focus of the "Brotherhood School" was shifted from an institutional concept to a more diffused idea:

"We regard the Urantia Brotherhood School as a generic term designating educational activities anywhere in the Urantia Brotherhood. We see individuals, study groups, and societies as the basic channels of educational activity. Just as the Urantia Brotherhood does not aspire to become an institutional church; so the Brotherhood School does not plan to become an educational institution ... The Committee on Education plans to research and define standards of excellence for teachers and educational activities which will help teachers in self-evaluation and growth as well as furnish criteria for evaluating educational effectiveness in groups and institutions ... We generally should not get involved in striving for social change, establishing learning centers, or building a structured educational institution." <sup>68</sup> The teacher training program lost momentum after 1975. The seminars and workshops, the Boulder School and Los Angeles' School of Meanings and Values have been worthy achievements, though not as extensive as what was envisioned by the early leaders, nor, I suspect, by the revelators.

The Fellowship must reactivate itself as an educational institution and foster the kind of teacher and leader training that was envisioned by the revelators. Societies could be induced to sponsor educational training programs in their local areas if curriculum were developed. <sup>69</sup>

### **Brotherhood and Foundation Relationship**

There was no mention in the original Brotherhood Constitution of Urantia Foundation. There was no mention of Urantia Brotherhood in the Declaration of Trust. I once asked Christy why. She said only that there wasn't supposed to be any connection between the two organizations. <sup>70</sup>

Recall that, "The launching of the Brotherhood shall be left to the decisions of the Trustees of the Urantia Foundation. They shall act personally - unofficially - and no record of such action shall appear in the transactions of the Urantia Foundation. They shall assume all and full responsibility for the

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<sup>65</sup> . Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>66</sup> . Urantia Brotherhood School Brochure

<sup>67</sup> . Urantia Brotherhood Bulletin

<sup>68</sup> . Meredith J. Sprunger, Chairman, Committee on Education, 1975.

<sup>69</sup> . Op Cit (note 40)

<sup>70</sup> . Op Cit (note 17)

organization and inauguration of the Urantia Brotherhood." <sup>71</sup> The first public linkage of the trustees and Brotherhood was made in a 1970 letter. "The Urantia Brotherhood was organized by the trustees of Urantia Foundation under the direction and guidance of the governing planetary authorities." This was a carefully worded statement that skirted a Brotherhood/Foundation connection. The same letter went on to state: "Though Urantia Foundation and Urantia Brotherhood work closely together, they are two distinct and separate organizations, with different responsibilities, duties, and prerogatives." <sup>72</sup> These different responsibilities were the subject of William S. Sadler Jr's Intra-Office Memorandum of 1958 which described how, in 1937, the Foundation and Brotherhood started out conceptually as one organization. Because there needed to be two dissimilar functions, two separate organizations were then envisioned. Bill's memo emphasized potential danger areas in the relationship between the two organizations: "Unless the Foundation conducts itself with wisdom it may breed dissension between itself and the Brotherhood. There is no place in Urantia Foundation for naiveté or any exhibition of proprietary feeling toward the Urantia Papers:

- a. "The Foundation...is an autocratic group. It is non-elective. It derives its authority from the defunct contact commissioners [which was] an autocratic body, autocratic in the sense that it was accountable to no electors. The old commission was charged with the custodial responsibility of the Urantia Papers. Its secondary body, the Foundation, inherits the continuing responsibility for the integrity and dissemination of *The Urantia Book*.
- b. "While the Brotherhood was originated by the Foundation, it is destined increasingly to become a republican institution. It is designed to reflect the purpose and desires of its members. It has all the strengths and weaknesses of a democratic organization. But the Brotherhood offers its members something more which the Foundation can never offer, to wit: the feeling of participation and the feeling of belonging. It also offers its members a feeling of responsibility, for in time the official decisions of the Brotherhood will reflect the will, purpose, and intent of its members.
- c. "When an autocratic body functionally cooperates with a democratic body, friction can be avoided to all intents and purposes only if wisdom is exhibited by the autocratic body ...[The problem of avoiding friction with the Brotherhood rests nearly completely on the shoulders of the Trustees of URANTIA Foundation.

"Being an elective body, the Brotherhood is vulnerable. A really clever conspiracy could destroy the Brotherhood or otherwise divert or pervert its mission. Such vulnerability is inherent in a self-governing body.

"Ideally, the Foundation should remain in the background ... It should little appear in the eyes of the public. To the public the Brotherhood is the important organization. To the extent that we can cause the Brotherhood to do the work of the Urantia movement, we have succeeded in holding ourselves in reserve and in so doing we minimize potential friction." <sup>73</sup>

### **Blurring the Edges Between Brotherhood and Foundation**

I don't believe for a moment a 'clever conspiracy' perverted the Brotherhood in its mission. However, I do believe it was diverted in 1975 from its primary role of fostering 'serious and systematic study', formal teacher and leader training, and dissemination of *The Urantia Book* and its teachings. Thus was the door set ajar for the Brotherhood to preoccupy itself with three areas of endeavour: (1) the endless

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<sup>71</sup>. Op Cit (note 29)

<sup>72</sup>. Letter to Brotherhood Triennial Delegate Assembly, 1970

<sup>73</sup>. William S. Sadler Jr., Memorandum, Intra-office, 1958

reassessment of its purpose; (2) the fine tuning of its organization; and (3) the material aspects of the book - its distribution, pricing and dust jacket. Emphasis shifted in the mid-1970's from study of the book to the marketing of the book.

This third item invaded the Foundation's territory. The trustees accepted input by the Brotherhood grudgingly. In retrospect, the Foundation might have been better advised to set up separate ad hoc committees, subject to its own parameters, rather than working with Brotherhood ad hoc committees.<sup>74</sup> The Foundation closed off all input from the Brotherhood on these issues in 1987, and used the licensing agreement as leverage.<sup>75</sup>

At first, from 1950 to 1956, the Foundation remained entirely in the background. The Foundation's office was located at 333 N. Michigan Avenue in Chicago, instead of at 533 Diversey, where it moved to later and has remained. Over time the two organizations seemed to merge through shared activities; overlapping personnel (there weren't enough qualified people to fill all positions); joint fund raising, appeals to Brotherhood members for support in infringement lawsuits; appearances by trustees at Brotherhood-sponsored meetings; the confirmatory licensing agreement which impinged upon all aspects of Brotherhood activities - usage and display of marks; and copyright guidelines that spelled out how all quoted material would be used. All of these created the image of two interrelated organizations.

The 1983 joint Brotherhood and Foundation paper, "Statement of Dissemination and Publicity", was an effort by the Brotherhood to enunciate a policy acceptable to the more conservative Foundation. It was fairly successful, but the Brotherhood should have felt free to pursue dissemination according to its own experience and wisdom. Later, the Foundation's demand that the Brotherhood cleanse itself of personnel not acceptable to the Foundation and the involvement of the Foundation in the revision of the Brotherhood's councillor removal amendment, stepped beyond the bounds of their authority, and into the realm of proprietary control. For a period of years, the trustees withdrew into the background and only surfaced to raise the price of the book or to close off avenues of access to the book.

The internal matter of the simultaneous resignations of three trustees, and the Brotherhood's reactions thereto, brought about the disenfranchising of the Brotherhood. With a new administration, the Foundation, in a relatively short period, has moved to redeem itself by publishing translations, a taped version, a computerized version, soft cover editions, and offering even-handed sales and discounts. While they have not satisfied all their critics with respect to coordination of new readers, nevertheless, they are to be commended.<sup>76</sup>

### **Dissemination of *The Urantia Book***

Dr. Sadler wrote about the dissemination of *The Urantia Book*: "At the time of publication of *The Urantia Book* we were given many suggestions respecting the methods we should employ in the work of its distribution. These instructions may be summarized as follows:

1. Study of methods employed by Jesus in introducing his work on earth. Note how quietly he worked at first.
2. We were advised to avoid all efforts to achieve early and spectacular recognition.

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<sup>74</sup>. Op Cit (note 40)

<sup>75</sup>. Letter from Martin Myers (Foundation President) to David Elders (Brotherhood President)

<sup>76</sup>. Op Cit (note 40)

"However, one thing should be made clear. Nothing is to be done to interfere with the energetic and enthusiastic efforts of any individual to introduce *The Urantia Book* to his varied contacts and human associations."<sup>77</sup>

Judging from a close reading of past messages, the time for *The Urantia Book* is approaching. Any effort to artificially slow or suppress the book at this point would cause it to miss its timed entry into the evolutionary mainstream.

It is a fallacy to believe that whoever controls the book controls the movement. Rather, when believers exhibit more enthusiasm for scholarship and more aggressive personal dissemination of the book and its teachings, there will follow an upsurge in sales of books. When more teachers and leaders are trained, or train themselves, study groups will improve. When there are better study groups, they will attract and hold more students; and more students will buy more books. It worked in the old days!<sup>78</sup>

### **Review: Clear and Incontrovertible Facts**

1. The Angels of the Churches, the Angels of Progress, the Midwayer Commission, and the planetary prince have the ultimate authority for the welfare of *The Urantia Book*.
2. The chain of authority for the management of *The Urantia Book* was first placed into the hands of the human contact commissioners by the Revelatory Commission, then delegated to the trustees of Urantia Foundation by the invisible planetary prince. According to their Declaration of Trust, the trustees assumed exclusive responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the text, and the publication of all editions, including translations.
3. There was supposed to be a copyright in and to *The Urantia Book*.
4. The revelators directed the contact commissioners to protect the name, "Urantia." This responsibility was passed on to the Foundation by the contact commissioners.
5. The revelators advised that there should be only one official "Urantia" social outreach organization--democratic, but minimally organized - to occupy the field.
6. Although the trustees planned and launched the Brotherhood, the revelators advised that the two organizations – the publishing and the social – be organically disconnected from each other. Under this plan, each would carry out its mission without interference from, or accountability to, the other.

### **Conclusions**

1. The "successful" legal manoeuvre to invalidate the renewal of copyright was a major blunder. It would appear that all who enabled Maaheera were in defiance of revelator plans. The Fellowship and its leaders should have nothing to do with that case.
2. It appears that there will soon be two too many publishers, including Pathways. The Fellowship is about to launch its publication of *The Urantia Book*. Already, these more-the-merrier versions are engendering contradictory rationale for changes made, or not made, in earlier printings. With the jumble of non-authoritative voices, the consequent confusion will only raise questions in the public mind about the authenticity of the revelation. The Fellowship should immediately abandon the project and revert to its original mission.
3. The revelators warned about confusion inherent in having too many Urantia organizations. The Fellowship succeeded Urantia Brotherhood, organized in 1955, in 1989, and follows the same Constitution. International Urantia Association was organized by Urantia Foundation in 1994 and

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<sup>77</sup>. Op Cit (note 2)

<sup>78</sup>. Op Cit (note 40)

exists at the pleasure of the Foundation. It would appear that there is one too many social outreach organizations. The Fellowship is not an attractive option to members of IUA because of its publishing program. The IUA is perceived as a captive organization of the Foundation, and is, therefore, not a positive option to Fellowship members.

4. An alternative to this confused state would be to create a new coordinative, outreach, educational organization, Urantia Brotherhood, into which both IUA and Fellowship would merge. It would be licensed by the Foundation to use the name, Urantia, but would be independent of the Foundation and never worry its pretty little head about publishing and distributing the book.
5. The complete separation of the two organizations and their respective functions was an elegant plan that went awry. The revelators' plan could be reinstated if all parties had the courage to take the necessary steps. This would necessitate the withdrawal of individuals who are too invested in the status quo, who cannot forgive, or who like to stay mad.

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