

Marian Rowley's
HISTORY OF THE URANTIA MOVEMENT

Draft

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This historical narrative was prepared by a group of Urantia pioneers, assisted by members of the contact commission, and approved for distribution by action of the Executive Committee of the Urantia Brotherhood. June 16th, 1960

HISTORY OF THE URANTIA MOVEMENT

Several members of the pioneer group who participated in the preliminary contacts which led up to the appearance of the Urantia papers had had considerable experience in the investigation of psychic phenomena. This group early arrived at the conclusion that the phenomenon connected with the subject who was later associated with the Urantia papers, was in no way similar to any other well-known type of psychic performance – such as hypnotism, automatic writing, clairvoyance, trances, spirit mediumship, telepathy, or double personality.

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CONTACT ACTIVITIES PRECEDING THE URANTIA PAPERS

As the Urantia Book indicates, the papers were received as follows: Superhuman personalities, the authors of the papers, sometimes called “the revelators,” worked through the mind of a human subject, sometimes called “the contact personality”. Also involved was a small group of human associates, called the “contact commission”, who were charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the papers, putting them in typewritten form, handling all details of publication, securing copyrights, etc.

For a number of years before the presentation of the papers, the contact personality and the contact commissioners went through what seemed to be a period of testing and training in the matter of technique of communication, etc., in a general way setting the stage for the subsequent presentation of the Urantia papers.

Some of the contacts were verbal, some were written. All observations and investigations utterly failed to reveal the technique of reducing messages to writing, but it was established that it was not automatic writing. All the Urantia papers appeared in written form. Usually the verbal contacts were concerned with instructions and with miscellaneous information about the universe affairs of our planet.

After some years of preliminary contacts, during which many new concepts of the universe and of Deity were implanted, it was suggested that questions of a serious nature should be asked in order to elicit answers of supreme value to the human race. The result was that the Urantia papers began to appear.

HOW WE GOT THE URANTIA BOOK

Just about all that is known or can be told about the origin of the Urantia papers is to be found here and there in the Urantia Book. A list of such references is to be found on the back of the dust jacket of the book.

Extract From the Appendices for
Larry Mullins, A History of the Urantia Papers

HOW WE DID NOT GET THE URANTIA BOOK

At one time Dr. Sadler held a discussion with a small group of ministers who were studying the book, on “How We Did Not Get the Urantia Book.” The following is a gist of that presentation: (List page 16 – Psychic Phenomena)

FUNCTIONING OF THE CONTACT COMMISSIONERS

During the early years the contact commissioners received many instructions and directives verbally and in writing. They were instructed to destroy by fire most of the written messages upon the appearance of the Urantia papers in print, apparently to prevent the appearance of an “Apocrypha”, subsequent to the publication of the Urantia Book.

The commissioners were the custodians of the Urantia manuscript, and they were also charged with full responsibility for supervising all the details connected with the publication of the book, securing the international copyrights, etc.

They were enjoined to refrain from discussing the identity of the contact personality and, after the publication of the book, to make no statement at any time as to whether the subject was still living or was deceased.

REASONS FOR SILENCE RESPECTING DETAILS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE URANTIA BOOK

Just about all that is known or can be told about the origin of the Urantia Papers is to be found in various places in the Urantia Book. A list of such references is to be found on the back of the dust jacket of the book.

Among the several reasons given for not discussing details of personal experiences associated with the origin of the Urantia Book, the two major reasons were the following:

1. Unknown Features. There is much connected with the appearance of the Urantia papers which no human being fully understands. No one really knows just how this phenomenon was executed. There are numerous missing links in the story of how this revelation came to appear in written English.
2. If anyone should tell all he really knows about the technique and methods employed throughout the years of getting this revelation, such a narration would satisfy no one – there are too many missing links.
3. The main reason for not revealing the identity of the contact personality is that the 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.
4. They are determined that future generations shall have the book wholly free from all mortal connections – they do not want a St. Peter, St. Paul, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley. The book does not even bear the imprint of the printer who brought the book into being.

Remember – you can appreciate a good poem – even if you do not know the author. Likewise, you can enjoy a symphony even if you are ignorant of the name of the composer.

THE PUBLICATION MANDATE

When permission to publish the Urantia papers was granted, the revelatory commission states that they regard the Urantia Book as a feature of the progressive evolution of human society. It is not germane to the spectacular episode of epochal revolution, even though it may apparently be timed to appear in the wake of one such revolution in human society. The book belongs to the era immediately to follow the conclusion of the present ideological struggle. That will be the day when men will be willing to seek truth and righteousness. When the chaos of the present confusion has passed, it will be more readily possible to formulate the cosmos of a new and improved era of human relationships. And it is for this better order of affairs on earth that the book was being made ready.

They further stated that the publication of the book was not being postponed to that (possibly) somewhat remote date. An early publication of the book was

being provided so that it might be in hand for the training of leaders and teachers. Its presence is also required to engage the attention of persons of means who may be thus led to provide funds for translation into other languages.

Upon the receipt of the publication mandate, the contact commissioners entered upon the task of publishing the Urantia Book and of planning for its distribution.

The papers were published just as they were received. The contact commissioners had no editorial authority. Their job was limited to “spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.”

Before the death of Dr. Lena Sadler in August 1939, she had collected about \$20,000.00 for the publication fund, and this was used to set type and make plates for the printing of the book.

THE FORUM

Many years ago, Dr. William S. Sadler made the suggestion to his son and to his wife that they try to maintain contact with former patients and friends by having an informal gathering Sunday afternoons to discuss matters of health, mental hygiene, and so on, and enjoy a cup of tea together. This group came to consist of professional men and women – doctors, lawyers, dentists, ministers, and teachers – together with individuals from all walks of life – farmers, housewives, secretaries, and common laborers.

During a discussion on psychic phenomena, the doctor said that with one or two exceptions all the psychic phenomena, which he had investigated, had turned out to be either conscious or unconscious frauds. Some were deliberate frauds – others were those peculiar cases in which the performer was a victim of the deception of his own subconscious mind. Someone in the group asked about the one or two exceptions and the result was that some notes were produced which had been made during a recent contact. At that time there was no secrecy connected with the case. This was during the preliminary period before the Urantia papers began to appear.

The group (now called the Forum) started to ask questions in writing concerning Deity, creation, evolution, and so on, and as a result of these questions the Urantia papers started appearing.

At about this time instructions were received from the superhuman personalities to form a closed group. Membership tickets were issued and the charter membership numbered thirty. From time to time new members were received into the Forum, after being interviewed by the officers and after signing the same pledge that was signed by the original charter members. This pledge read: “We acknowledge our pledge of secrecy, renewing our promise not to discuss the Urantia Revelations or their subject matter with anyone save active Forum members, and to take no notes of such matter as is read or discussed at the public sessions, or make copies or notes of what we personally read.”

The last meeting of the Forum as a genetic assembly was held on May 31st, 1942. During its existence the membership figure mounted to a total of 486. From this date in 1942 the Forum continued as a study group to the time of the organization of the First Urantia Society in 1956.

THE SEVENTY

In 1939, it appeared that the time had come to 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 study group had been meeting on Wednesday evenings.

The Seventy carried on systematic study of the Urantia papers from April 3rd, 1939, to the summer of 1956, and was the forerunner of the later "School of the Urantia Brotherhood."

During these years the Seventy enrolled 107 students.

THE URANTIA FOUNDATION

The plates of the Urantia Book, which had been previously made, constituted the basis for the creation of the Urantia Foundation by Declaration of trust under the laws of the State of Illinois, dated January 11th, 1950. This is a non-profit organization.

One of the objects for which the Foundation was created was to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of the Urantia Book and to disseminate the principles, teachings, and doctrines of the Urantia Book.

William M. Hales, President, William S. Sadler, Jr., Vice President; Emma L. Christensen, Secretary; Wilfred G. Kellogg, Treasurer; and Edith Cook, Assistant Secretary.

When an appeal was made for funds to defray the expense of printing the first 10,000 copies, the appeal was made only to the members of the Forum group and the response was immediate. The sum contributed was in excess of \$49,000.00.

With the Urantia Foundation acting as the publisher, the Urantia Book was published under international copyright October 12th, 1955.

THE URANTIA BROTHERHOOD

It was inevitable that some sort of fraternal organization would grow out of the teachings of the Urantia Book. However, it was clear that it was not the purpose of the Urantia revelation to start a new church.

Accordingly, on January 2nd, 1955, a group of persons who believed the teachings of the book and who were interested in their proclamation, assembled in Chicago and completed the organization of the Urantia Brotherhood, a voluntary and fraternal organization of Urantia believers. This group of 36 composed the charter membership of the Urantia Brotherhood.

A constitution and by-laws were adopted, and since that date several local societies have been formed throughout the United States.

When ten or more persons who are familiar with, and believe in, the teachings of The Urantia Book so desire, they may be chartered as a Urantia Society. Membership in any church or fraternal organization does not interfere with becoming a member of a Urantia Society.

The General Council, the original 36 organizers of the Brotherhood and their successors, is the direct the organization for the first nine years. Thereafter, the Brotherhood will be governed by the action of a Triennial Delegate Assembly composed of delegates from the various Urantia Societies.

The Departmental Committees of the Brotherhood are:

- Judicial Committee
- Charter Committee
- Fraternal Relations Committee
- Domestic Extension Committee
- Foreign Extension Committee
- Committee of Education
- Publications Committee
- Finance Committee
- Committee on Miscellaneous Activities

The chairmen of the committees, together with the Brotherhood officers, constitute the Executive Committee of the Brotherhood.

The purpose of the Brotherhood is well expressed in the preamble to the Constitution, as follows:

“Inasmuch as it is our most solemn conviction that the comfort, happiness, and well-being of man will be enhanced by the creation of an organization devoted to the purposes hereinafter expressed, and inasmuch as it is our considered judgment that the purposes hereinafter expressed, may best be accomplished through the mutual assistance and association of a body of people working together for a common cause, we do hereby unite together as a voluntary association and fellowship under the name of Urantia Brotherhood, and we do hereby adopt and establish this constitution of Urantia Brotherhood.”

The original 36 founders became the General Council, which was designed to govern the Brotherhood for its first nine years.

URANTIA BROTHERHOOD CORPORATION, October 21st, 1955

Extract From the Appendices to:
Larry Mullins, A History of the Urantia Papers

Since the Urantia Brotherhood is not a corporation – a legal entity – the Urantia Brotherhood Corporation was formed under the laws of the State of Illinois, designed to provide for corporations not-for-profit, to serve as the legal arm of the fraternal and voluntary association of the Urantia Brotherhood.

This corporation is the fiscal agent of the Brotherhood and in a general way takes care of the varied financial and legal interests of the Brotherhood.

URANTIA BROTHERHOOD SCHOOL

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 highest degree granted is that of “Ordained Teacher”. A shorter course of study leads to the degree of “Certified Leader”.

The school is conducted by the Committee on Education. Many textbooks have been prepared for use in the school and for use by a future correspondence school, which will no doubt materialize as the Urantia Book continues to be distributed throughout the world.

The following textbooks have been prepared on theology, etc., Part I., Part II., Part III, Part IV

- Extract From the Appendices to:
Larry Mullins, A History of the Urantia Papers**
- The Teachings of Jesus.
 - The Short Course in Doctrine.
 - Worship and Wisdom.
 - Science in the Urantia Book, Vol. I., Vol. II.
 - Topical Studies, Vol. I, Vol. II.

In Preparation

- The Urantia Book and the New Testament.
- Analytic Studies in Part I., Part II.
- Diagrams and Maps.

The course of study is planned to cover a three years' seminary education. At this writing, only part-time classes are provided at evening sessions.

The curriculum embraces courses in the following subjects:

- Technique of Public Speaking
- Leadership and Teaching
- Comparative religion
- Educational Psychology
- Christian Sects and Denominations Homiletics
- Old and New Testament History
- Organization of the Urantia Book

- Studies in the Urantia Book:
- Urantia Doctrine
- Synthetic Studies
- Topical Studies
- Life of Christ
- Worship and Wisdom
- Short Course in Doctrine
- Comparison with the Four Gospels
- Science in the Urantia Book
- Critical Analyses

Up to this time no degrees of “Ordained Teacher” have been granted, but diplomas as “Certified Leader” have been given to 14 individuals.

The number of registered students taking credit courses has averaged about 30. A like number of auditors attend the classes.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK

Extract From the Appendices to:
 Larry Mullins, A History of the Urantia Papers

At the time of the publication of the Urantia Book suggestions were given by the revelators respecting the methods to be employed in the work of its distribution. These instructions may be summarized as follows:

1. Study the methods employed by Jesus in introducing His work on earth. Note how quietly he worked at first – so often after even a miracle, he would admonish the recipient of His ministry, saying: “Tell no man what has happened to you.”
2. It was suggested that we avoid all efforts to achieve early and spectacular recognition.

During the first five years these suggestions have been followed and the distribution increases yearly. The vast majority of the Brotherhood has concurred in this sort of quiet and gradual presentation of the book. However, one thing should be made clear: While it is the policy of the Brotherhood to work slowly in the presentation of the book, nothing is done to interfere with the energetic and enthusiastic efforts of any individual to introduce the Urantia Book to his friends and associates.

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