

HISTORY OF THE URANTIA MOVEMENT

This historical narrative was prepared by a group of Urantia pioneers, assisted by members of the contact commission.

1960

Sadler

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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.

It should be made clear that the antecedents of the Urantia papers were in no way associated with so-called spiritualism—with its seances and supposed communication with the spirits of departed human beings.

I. 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, 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 concerning the technique of communication, etc., thus in a general way setting the stage for the subsequent presentation of the Urantia papers.

After some years of these preliminary contacts, during which many questions were asked and new concepts were imparted, the Urantia papers began to appear.

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.

*(The number of contact persons is not stated, but it is probable that the majority of the contact persons were destroyed at the expense of the revelators.)*

NOTES - ENLARGED  
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*[Signature]*

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who were charged with the responsibility of safeguarding the papers,

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*(The members of the contact commission were the only persons who were allowed to see the original papers, all of which have been destroyed at the explicit request of the Urantia Foundation.)*

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II. REASON 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 will 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. 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. 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.

2. 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. 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.

### III. THE FORUM

Many years ago a small group began meeting to discuss matters of health, mental hygiene, religion, psychology, and so on. One of the group opened his home for these meetings. This group came to consist of professional men and women—doctors, lawyers, dentists, ministers, teachers—together with individuals from all walks of life—farmers, housewives, secretaries, and common laborers.

During a discussion of psychic phenomena, mention was made of a contact which did not fit into any of the known categories. As a result of questions, the group began to obtain information not previously known on this planet. Although many new concepts were implanted during these early years, the revelators suggested to the contact commission that questions of a serious nature should be asked in order to elicit answers of supreme value to the human race. This suggestion was passed on to the discussion group—then called the Forum. Questions in writing concerning Deity, creation, evolution, and so on, were formulated, and as a result, the Urantia papers began to appear.

At about this time instructions were received from the revelators to form a closed group. Membership tickets were issued and the charter membership numbered 50. 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 reads: "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 first group of papers numbered 57. The revelators then suggested that since the Forum could now ask more intelligent questions, they would undertake to enlarge the revelation and to expand the papers in accordance with new questions.

The procedure was to read a paper on Sunday afternoon and the following Sunday the new questions would be presented. These would be sorted, classified, and duplicates eliminated. This program covered several years and ultimately resulted in the presentation of the 196 papers as now found in the Urantia Book.

*Throughout the entire Association, only one subject, or contact personality (see p 865-2) was limited.*

The last meeting of the Forum as a genetic assembly was held on May 31, 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.

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IV. 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." For several years preceding the formation of the Seventy an informal study group had been meeting on Wednesday evenings.

*Most of them chose to become members of the 70.*

The Seventy started a systematic study of the Urantia papers on April 3, 1939. The group was reorganized in a more formal way in September, 1943, but it continued to be known as the Seventy and the study of the papers continued to the summer of 1956. This was the forerunner of the later Urantia Brotherhood School.

During these years the Seventy enrolled 107 students.

## V. THE PUBLICATION MANDATE

When permission to publish the Urantia papers was granted, the revelator commission stated that they regarded the Urantia Book as a feature of the progressive evolution of human society; that it was 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. *A revolution does not necessarily mean violence and catastrophe. Remember the industrial revolution.* 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 *cosmology* of a new and improved era of human relationships. And it was 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.

*In accordance with the instructions*  
 Upon the receipt of the publication mandate, the contact commissioners *with their own experience to the Urantia Foundation, which* entered upon the task of publishing the Urantia Book and of planning for its distribution. *7/10/57*

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## VI. 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 a Declaration of Trust under the laws of the State of Illinois, dated January 11, 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.

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

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

*R-R. Donnell and Sons Co.  
Crawfordsville, IN plant*

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## VII. THE URANTIA BROTHERHOOD

It was inevitable that some sort of fraternal organization would be formed to disseminate the teachings of the Urantia Book. However, it was clear that the purpose of the Urantia revelation was to start a new church.

Accordingly, on January 2, 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 fraternal organization of Urantia believers. This group of 36 composed the charter membership of the Urantia 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 General Council, the original 36 organizers of the Brotherhood and their successors, was to 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 on 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.

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. Several local societies have been formed throughout the United States and the Brotherhood is fostering many study groups which will eventually develop into local societies.

Two Field Representatives have been appointed to act as liaisons between the Executive Committee and the local societies and study groups.

In accordance with Section 3 of Article 13 of the constitution, the Van Award has been established. This provision of the constitution reads: "If, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, any member of Urantia Brotherhood shall perform or render some unusual, extraordinary, or distinguished service, the Executive Committee shall present to the General Council the name of such member with the recommendation that a suitable award or citation in recognition thereof be given. Upon the presentation

of such recommendation, the General Council, by unanimous vote of all Councilors present at any duly constituted meeting, may give or confer on such member such award or citation in recognition of the unusual, extraordinary, or distinguished service of such member as the General Council may deem fitting and appropriate."

On January 25, 1959, the first Van Award was made.

#### VIII. URANTIA BROTHERHOOD CORPORATION

Since the Urantia Brotherhood is not a corporation—a legal entity—the Urantia Brotherhood Corporation was formed on October 21, 1955, 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.

In December 1959, the Internal Revenue Bureau of the United States government ruled that the Urantia Foundation, the Urantia Brotherhood, and the Urantia Brotherhood Corporation were exempt from paying income taxes, and that any and all contributions made to these organizations are deductible from the income taxes of such donors.

## II. 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. These textbooks cover, among other subjects, theology of the Urantia Book, the teachings of Jesus, worship and wisdom, science in the Urantia Book, and topical studies. Other texts are in preparation.

At this writing, only part-time evening classes are being provided.

The curriculum embraces courses in the following subjects:

- Technique of Public Speaking
- Leadership and Teaching
- Comparative Religion
- Educational Psychology
- Christian Sects and Denominations
- Old and New Testament History
- Organization of the Urantia Book
- Studies in the Urantia Books
  - Urantia Doctrine
  - Synthetic Studies
  - Topical Studies
  - Life of Jesus
  - 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.

## X. DISTRIBUTION OF THE URANTIA BOOK

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—very often after 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 have 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 distribution 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.