PLAN FOR *THE URANTIA BOOK* REVELATION

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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't's. 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.

[***About the author***: 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.]

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 midwayers, 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 followed. Altogether 57 papers comprised the first series and consisted of at least 1700 typewritten pages. This period lasted until 1929. (See Backnotes: (1.1)) & (4.1)

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." (1.1) This second series, plus the Jesus Papers, totaled about 4,500 typewritten pages. (4.1) The Forum was then invited to review the 196 papers and "ask questions concerning clarification of concepts and the removal of ambiguities." "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." (1.1)

The original papers were received in English in the handwriting of the unidentified contact personality. (1.2) & (2.1) The handwritten papers were never seen by the Forum. (4.2) Each was typewritten on an Underwood upright typewriter. The papers were typed at least three times. (3.1)

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." (3.2) "We 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." (1.1) "The human subject was necessary for any written communications and for the Urantia Papers." (1.2)

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" [O]nly these Contact Commissioners attended 'contacts' and received written communications through the contact personality." (1.1) 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.'" (1.1) 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." (1.1) The last new written communication was read to the Forum in 1952. (see below) (8.1) "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*. (1.1) Dr. Sadler and Christy were permitted to retain several of the communications after publication, but she was required to destroy them before her death. (3.1) In 1982 during her final illness Christy directed their destruction by two trusted associates. (9.1)

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 1980s. (1.2 & 1.3) [This is an editorial comment — although Carolyn's material is indicating contact until the 1980s it is our opinion that this is inaccurate. To the best of our knowledge all celestial contact ceased prior to the publication of the book in 1955. Any indication of contact beyond that date is highly skeptical. LW] "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." (1.1) Once when 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 reestablished since the demise of the last contact commissioner. (9.1) & (9.2)

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*. (4.2) 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 "great[est] threat[s] to the religion of Jesus and to the freedom of man: in two thousand years." [T]he 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 defense 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." (10.2) 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 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." (10.4)

"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 amendation.

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." (10.5)

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 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. Overrapid 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." (10.5)

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 dollars." (1.1)

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. (9.5)

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. (5.1) The final set of galley sheets read by the Forum in the late 1940s and early 1950s were stamped, "Proofed by Oppy." (7.0)

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 proofreadings. (3.1) By publication day, Christy and Marian had already collected a list of errors noticed by sharp-eyed Forum members. (8.1) The midwayers did not volunteer the location of errors, just the information that there were errors in the published text. (3.1)

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. (3.1)

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. (9.1) 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. (8.2) Reportedly, in publishing their latest edition, the Foundation is reversing changes made after 1982. (9.3)

BACKNOTES:

1. William S. Sadler, M.D., contact commissioner.
1.1 History of the Urantia Movement, ca. 1966, unpublished
1.2 Personal interview, Forum, 1951
1.3 Verbal, various, 1951-1968.

2. William S. Sadler, Jr., contact commissioner, president, Urantia Brotherhood, vice-president, Urantia Foundation.
2.1 Presentation, Oklahoma City, ca. 1962
2.2 Verbal, various 1951-1956
2.3 Memorandum, Intra-office, 1958

3. Emma L. Christensen ("Christy"), contact commissioner, president, Urantia Brotherhood, trustee, Urantia Foundation.
3.1 Verbal, various
3.2 Personal letter, 1970
3.3 Historical notes, undated

4. Clarence N. Bowman, member of Forum, 1923-1956
4.1 Diary, 1923-1935.
4.2 Verbal, various, 1951-1959.

5. Marian T. Rowley, secretary-general, Urantia Brotherhood
5.1 Verbal, various
5.2 Letter from, to Julia Fenderson, 1955.

6. Meredith J. Sprunger, chairman, committee on Education, 1975.

7. Phillip Copenhaver, member of Forum, 1947-1956, personal memory

8. Carolyn B. Kendall, member of Forum, 1951-1956.
8.1 Personal memory.
8.2 Personal opinion.

9. Trustees, Urantia Foundation
9.1 Thomas A. Kendall, president, 1963-1983, verbal
9.2 Patricia Mundelius, president, 1993-present, verbal
9.3 Richard Keeler, trustee
9.4 Letter to Brotherhood triennial delegate assembly, 1970
9.5 Foundation mailing, 1972
9.6 Letter, Martin Myers, president, to David Elders, Brotherhood president

10. Written communication received by contact commissioners from revelators
10.1 August 1942
10.la 1945
10.2 January 14, 1946
10.3 September 10, 1950
10.4 November 22, 1951
10.5 August 21, 1952
10.6 Date unknown
10.7 From a Melchizedek, date unknown

11. Urantia Brotherhood School brochure

12. Urantia Brotherhood Bulletin