

Excerpts from: SPECIAL REPORT TO READERS OF *The URANTIA Book*, April 1990.
(Minor editing to facilitate translation)

The Foundation's Establishment of URANTIA Brotherhood

On January 2, 1955, some 10 months before *The URANTIA Book* was published, the Foundation organized URANTIA Brotherhood to assist the Foundation in disseminating the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*. The Brotherhood was established as a social, fraternal organization with a spiritual objective.

The Brotherhood was organized by the Trustees under the direction and guidance of the governing planetary authorities.

The URANTIA Foundation is separate and distinct organization. The URANTIA Foundation is the conservator of *The URANTIA Book*; the Brotherhood is the promoter, acting under the aegis of the Foundation.

Protection of the Text and Marks

In addition (to securing the copyright) in order to preserve the Foundation's unique identity, the Trustees established the trade names URANTIA Foundation and began using trademarks, service marks and the Concentric-Circles symbol. In response to a request made by URANTIA Brotherhood ... the Trustees permitted the Brotherhood as the licensee to use the word URANTIA and the Concentric Circles Symbol in support of Foundation programs. Initially, the Trustees served on the URANTIA Brotherhood Executive Committee and General Council to provide ongoing supervision of the use of the marks. By the 1970s the growth of the two organizations had created the need for a more formal agreement... Written understandings, called Confirmatory Licensing Agreements, were entered into with URANTIA Brotherhood and each URANTIA Society.

The Confirmatory Agreement

1(g) The Brotherhood has conducted and shall conduct, all of its activities in accordance with the highest moral and ethical standards ... and create good will for the benefit of the Foundation ... in connection with its said activities.

1(i)...The Brotherhood shall permit representatives of the Foundation to examine and review, at all reasonable times, the nature and quality of any and all goods distributed, and services and activities being performed by the Brotherhood...

2. The Brotherhood acknowledges, and shall at all times hereafter acknowledge, the Foundation's exclusive ownership of, and sole right, title, and interest in and to the word URANTIA and in and to the said symbol as trademarks, service marks, and collective membership marks....

Guiding Principles

In furthering its goals and purposes of URANTIA Foundation, the Trustees have relied upon certain principles to govern the activities of the Foundation, the Brotherhood and the dissemination of the teachings of *The URANTIA Book*:

1. The Principle of Minimal Organization
2. The Principle of Proper Procedures
3. The Principle of Slow Growth

The Brotherhood was conceived to be a “co-ordinator” rather than an “organizer” in order to minimize the human tendency to use an organization as a means of acquiring bureaucratic power and control.

The Principle of Proper Procedures, when applied to the Brotherhood, required the creation and functioning of a constitution and bylaws to encourage sound decision making and discourage the rise of self-appointed leaders or others with well-meaning or ulterior motives who might use the Brotherhood ... for their own purposes.

The Principle of Slow Growth ... means the slow, deliberate, person-to-person spread of the teachings ... without undue fanfare or public attention to *The URANTIA Book* as a book.

Prelude to Separation

Disregarding the Foundation’s authority, responsibilities, and support, the leaders of the Brotherhood increasingly objected to the Foundation’s review of Brotherhood activities, even though the Foundation was fully within its rights under the Confirmatory Licensing Agreement. ...several individuals who served on the General Council sought to implement their own personal agendas ...Some individuals created separate organizations for the purpose of pursuing these potentially conflicting agendas...

In addition, the Trustees were especially concerned about what (they) saw as a drift toward a cult-like mentality including the increasing dominance of a few individuals within the Brotherhood and their efforts to control and limit the flow of information to the General Council and the Brotherhood’s overall membership.

Over a number of years, the Trustees worked to resolve (their) concerns through both written and oral communications...even after the Brotherhood attacked the Foundation in 1989. ...(Subsequent) attempts (by the Foundation) to resolve the issues ...were disregarded.

The Brotherhood’s Departure from The Guiding Principles

It must be remembered that the Foundation created and licensed the Brotherhood to work in harmony with the Foundation to advance the programs of the Foundation...following are three examples of problem areas where the Trustees found it necessary to intervene:

1. Aggressive Marketing versus Prudent Distribution of The URANTIA Book.
2. The Removal Amendment
3. The Area Co-ordinator Program.

1. ...the General Council’s growing desire to make marketing and pricing decisions ...without consulting the Foundation.
2. ...there was concern that the Chairman of the (Brotherhood) Judicial Commission was trying to amend the Bylaws...by circumventing proper

procedures. (The amendment would have allowed removal of General Council members without following judicial procedures)

3. The Area Co-ordinator program envisioned an approach similar to that of a centrally-directed sales organization. ...the leaders of the Brotherhood wished to direct and control activities of the Societies, study groups and local readers from the Brotherhood's headquarters. One person described his Area Co-ordinator as a "political ward boss".

The "Churchification" of the Brotherhood

The Brotherhood was becoming a more regimented, authoritarian group with limited and specific values, such as "autonomy", "independence", "group wisdom" and "democracy" as its effective creed, despite its assertion that it remained dedicated to the teachings...The Brotherhood took other significant steps away from a minimal and non-authoritarian organization toward creating a church-like organizational structure and acquiring church-like authority and control over its members:

1. Advocating aggressive promotion and marketing of The URANTIA Book, so that physical distribution of the book itself – rather than dissemination of the teachings – became a principal focus...
2. Politicization of the Area Co-ordinator Program, thus institutionalizing intrusions by the central organization down to the local level – including even the personal lives of individual readers.
3. Increased emphasis on fund raising...

Even more disturbing was the inclination of the Executive Committee and General Council to sit in personal judgment on others – especially anyone who might disagree with them.

In sum, the Brotherhood was succumbing to the temptation to feed its desire for organizational power; it was becoming an "organizer" rather than a co-ordinator"; it was using its growing bureaucracy for political purposes.

The Trustees regarded all of these disturbing trends as being deviations from the Principle of Minimal Organization. In the opinion of the Trustees, the direction of the Brotherhood's organizational behavior was toward a centralized, hierarchical structure that would be based on subordination and authority and that would adopt organizational and social practices that was characteristically Western, Christian, and evangelical rather than culturally neutral, Jesusonian, and world wide.

When the Brotherhood leadership found that they could not co-opt the Foundation's decision making by means of an indirect approach, they directly attacked the Foundation in July 1989, declaring an "emergency" and a "crisis" as justification for their actions.

The Brotherhood actions against the Foundation included:

1. They demanded that entire first floor and basement of 533 Diversey Parkway be given to the Brotherhood.
2. They demanded that Foundation President Martin Meyers resign.

3. The relationship between the Brotherhood and Foundation was redefined declaring the Brotherhood to be an independent and autonomous organization.
4. The Brotherhood would pick and choose which organizational commitments to work with the Foundation they would continue to honor.
5. The Brotherhood broke its 35-year tradition of joint fund raising with the Foundation saying it would no longer "raise funds for another organization with which it does not participate in budgetary review and control."
6. The Brotherhood decided to separate the office staffs of the Brotherhood and Foundation thereby ending central office operations.
7. The joint mailing list agreement would no longer be honored stating that the Brotherhood would use the mailing list in any way it deemed appropriate without consulting the Foundation.
8. The Brotherhood would not continue to provide the Foundation with mailing list updates as addresses changed or were added.
9. They launched an intense political campaign against the Foundation using the Area Coordinators and the newly "liberated" mailing list.
10. The Brotherhood leaders made public disclosure of private matters that had been under discussion between the two organizations and in doing so published critical remarks containing many misrepresentations of the facts.
11. They declared they would not submit Brotherhood plans and programs to the Foundation for review as required by the Confirmatory Licensing Agreement.
12. In their attacking literature, they continued to use the Foundation marks so their actions had the appearance of being valid and legitimate.

The effect on the Foundation was:

1. To harm the reputation and credibility of the Foundation,
2. To polarize and politicize the readership,
3. To diminish the Foundation's ability to obtain public support for its efforts, and,
4. To make the Brotherhood a competitor of the Foundation rather than a supporter.

If the attacks on the Foundation had been allowed to continue, the Foundation might have well have lost the resources and ability to perform its essential mission. On 1 November 1989, the Trustees responded to the Brotherhood with a letter that said in part:

"Contrary to the statement in your letter that the Trustees were hardening their position, the Foundation has been willing to have a dialogue with the Brotherhood – but before, not after- the Brotherhood had acted. David (Elders), by the Brotherhood's refusing to have a dialogue with us before it acted, the Brotherhood disregarded our right... to exercise control over use of the marks. In addition, you have chosen to repudiate a thirty-five year tradition of cooperation.

"Given our responsibilities to protect the text of The URANTIA Book and hold it inviolate, the Trustees concluded that the Brotherhood's actions left them no choice but to terminate the licensing agreement which permitted the Brotherhood to use the marks. We sent you the termination notice on October 30, 1989."

Epilogue: After 1990, there have been several meetings between representatives of Urantia Foundation and the Fifth Epochal Fellowship during which substantial agreements were reached. Unfortunately, individuals within the Fellowship have taken actions that negated those agreements before they could be implemented. The situation at the beginning of 2005 is that both organizations profess a desire for some type of unity. However, little of substance has occurred to effect any type of reconciliation.