

Chapter 11

Creation of Urantia Foundation—1939 to 1955

The Combination Organization

At first only one organization was envisioned to carry out the tasks of publishing and disseminating *The Urantia Book*. As time went on, the contact commissioners realized that these were two distinctly different functions and that there needed to be two independent organizations to fulfill these functions. The original draft of the combined organizations was introduced to the Forum in 1937. By the second draft, in 1939, they were separated according to function. Urantia Foundation was planned for the purpose of publishing, protecting, disseminating and translating *The Urantia Book*. It was organized in 1950 with five non-elected trustees.¹ This event ushered in the **fifth phase** of the Urantia Revelation.

The Foundation trustees, acting as individuals, created Urantia Brotherhood to be a fraternal organization to which was delegated the task of disseminating the book and its teachings. No record of this event was made for the files in order to demonstrate the autonomy of the Brotherhood. The revelators supplied this concept, approved human plans as they developed, and gave specific instructions regarding some features of implementation, just as they did regarding the publication of *The Urantia Book*.² Urantia Brotherhood was not launched until January 1955, ten months prior to publication of *The Urantia Book*.

The Creation of Urantia Foundation

The plates of *The Urantia Book* formed the basis of the Declaration of Trust of Urantia Foundation. It was set up under the laws of Illinois. Wilfred C. Kellogg assigned the rights to the plates to Urantia Foundation on behalf of the contact commissioners on June 28, 1950.³ One of the first duties of the Board was to discover whether contributions could be considered tax-exempt. They drafted a letter asking for publication funds, and Urantia Foundation opened a bank account on October 9, 1950.⁴ The letter of appeal for \$50,000 in funds for printing the book was dated October 25, 1950. This was in addition to the 1939 fund appeal initiated by Lena Sadler, in the amount of \$20,000, which was used for typesetting the text onto nickel plates.

A generous Forum member offered to contribute the entire \$50,000 amount, but the

revelators indicated that: “It is best to give all parties concerned an opportunity to contribute to the publication fund.”⁵

*This Foundation, a tax-exempt, common-law trust was created January 11, 1950, at the direction of the revelatory commission, and was given custody of the plates inscribed with the text of The Urantia Book.”*⁶

*The response was immediate. The sum contributed was in excess of forty-nine thousand dollars. The first money to reach the Foundation office was one thousand dollars from the Arctic explorer, Hubert Wilkins.*⁷

The first Board of Trustees consisted of three men and two women: William M. Hales, President; William S. Sadler, Jr., Vice-president; Emma L. Christensen, Secretary; Wilfred C. Kellogg, Treasurer; and Edith E. Cook, Assistant Secretary.⁸ Board members were not limited by terms; according to their Declaration of Trust, they could serve for the remainder of their lives if they chose.⁹

“The Foundation’s Principal Object—which object is shared by each of the Trustees—is set out in Article II of the Declaration of Trust. The Declaration of Trust was recorded in the Recorder’s Office of Cook County, Illinois on January 26, 1950.”¹⁰

Article II reads: *The object for which this Foundation is created is the promotion, improvement, and expansion among the peoples of the world of the comprehension and understanding of Cosmology and the relation of the planet on which we live to the Universe, of the genesis and destiny of Man and his relation to God, and of the true teachings of Jesus Christ; and for the inculcation and encouragement of the realization and appreciation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man—in order to increase and enhance the comfort, happiness, and well-being of man, as an individual and as a member of society, through the fostering of a religion, a philosophy, and a cosmology which are commensurate with Man’s intellectual and cultural development.*¹¹

Preservation of the Text

The word "copyright" does not appear in the Declaration of Trust; however, the Concordant Objects are stated as follows:

The concordant Objects for which the Foundation is created are to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of The Urantia Book and to disseminate the principles, teaching, and doctrines of The Urantia Book.*

Article III, 3.3 states: *It shall be the duty of the Trustees to retain absolute and unconditional control of all plates and other media for the printing and reproduction of The Urantia Book and any translations thereof.*¹²

Therefore, the duties of the Trustees include:

1. Preservation of the text of *The Urantia Book*;
2. Effecting the Principal Object;
3. Preservation and control of reproduction of *The Urantia Book* and any translation thereof; and
4. Dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* (later delegated)¹³

* "Inviolate" means "free from injury, desecration, infringement; incorruptible." [*Webster's New World Dictionary*]

Copyright of *The Urantia Book*

Wilfred Kellogg began correspondence with the copyright office of the United States in 1932 so that when the book was published, the commissioners would be ready to obtain a copyright. This would protect the book against infringement for an indefinite period.¹⁴ The revelators warned:

There has not in 1900 years been anything about which there could be so much confusion and competition for control. 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. When this book is once published, if the idealists control it, they would provide for no organization and soon a lot of selfish people would start to work to make a name out of it for themselves.*¹⁵

*As custodians of the Urantia Papers, the Contact Commission was responsible for securing the international copyrights of The Urantia Book*¹⁶

One of the reasons for maintaining secrecy throughout the early years and for not permitting copies out of the custody of the contact commissioners was so that a copyright on the text could be obtained.¹⁷

The trustees expressed the view that, without a copyright, the book could be “cut up into separate papers and sold piecemeal; the text reprinted with difficult portions omitted, tasteless artwork inserted, or footnotes appended. Or, the papers would be copyrighted by another individual or group.” None of these was the intent of the revelators, and some of these misuses and insertions were explicitly proscribed.¹⁸

The following is from an informational sheet from the U.S. Copyright Office:

The first term of copyright is 28 years and is computed in the case of a published work from the date of publication. In the twenty-eighth year an application may be filed to renew the claim to copyright for a second term of 28 years.

Bill Sadler was asked by a member of the Forum in 1955 how a divine revelation could be copyrighted. He answered that he didn't know until they tried, but they had no choice other than to try. The revelators had insisted that there be a copyright on *The Urantia Book*.¹⁹

Canadian and U.S. Registrations

On October 12, 1955, Bill Sadler took a train to Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and met Urantia Foundation's legal representative, Solicitor James G. Fogo, in order to effect the legal publication of *The Urantia Book*. Canada was the Berne Convention member country in closest proximity to the United States. Mr. Fogo delivered three copies of the book to Burton's Book Shop in Ottawa to be displayed and offered for sale. They delivered three more copies of the

book to another book shop nearby. Next, Bill and Mr. Fogo delivered one copy of the book to the Deputy Chief Librarian, Ottawa Public Library. Last, they deposited two copies with the Librarian of Parliament in Ottawa under the terms of “The Copyright Amendment Act, 1931. Thus were the necessary steps taken to obtain registration in one of the two international copyright unions, the Berne Convention.²⁰

Simultaneously, another member of the legal team was carrying out a similar procedure in Washington, D.C. to satisfy the requirements of the Universal Copyright Convention (UCC) at the Library of Congress in Washington. Coincidentally, the United States had become a member of the UCC on September 16, 1955, less than one month prior to *The Urantia Book's* publication.²¹

The Application for Registration of a Claim to Copyright in the UCC was dated December 29, 1955, and the Certificate of Registration of a Claim to Copyright was received in Washington, D.C., January 3, 1956. The Registration number was A 216 389. The Library of Congress assigned the classification number BF1999 – “General Works – Miscellaneous Occult and Esoteric Sciences.” The Dewey Decimal System number originally given to *The Urantia Book* was 133 and meant “Parapsychology and the Occult.” The trustees and Forum members were distressed by this misperception of the book’s content and meanings.²² (Urantia Brotherhood was in operation, but First Urantia Society had not yet organized)

Over a period of years, through much effort and many contacts with the Library of Congress, the classification numbers were eventually changed in 1975, to BP 605, meaning “Other Beliefs and Movements.” The Dewey Decimal System number was changed to 299, meaning “Other Religions,” a more appropriate description.²³

In subsequent years there would be many legal challenges to the copyright. *The Urantia Foundation v King, et al, case*, March 21 1977, Federal Court, Central District, California, was one. A case in Michigan was decided in favor of the Foundation. A number of other infringements of the copyright were settled out of court. The conclusions regarding authorship in the California case were that:

There is no statutory requirement that an author be named in the Certificate of Registration of a claim to copyright, and failure to name an author, or naming a wrong author, or naming fewer than all authors does not affect the validity of a copyright.

This case developed a line of reasoning that established the Foundation's right to copyright of the work:

Dr. William S. Sadler, Sr., had possession of the original unpublished handwritten manuscript;

Dr. Sadler had the manuscript typed and plated...the plates were paid for by monies contributed for that purpose;

Urantia Foundation was formed in 1950 by Trustees;

Dr. Sadler (through his agent Wilfred C. Kellogg) gave the plates to the Foundation;

Urantia Foundation published The Urantia Book on October 12, 1955;

Copyright notices appeared in the first printing and all subsequent printings; Urantia Foundation registered a claim to copyright January 3, 1956, certificate No. A216,389.²⁴

Destruction of the Plates

In a newsletter sent to both Urantia Brotherhood and Urantia Foundation mailing lists in June 1972, the trustees of Urantia Foundation wrote that they had been advised in 1969 by Donnelley Press that they could no longer use the letterpress plates for printing *The Urantia Book*. Donnelly said the plates took up valuable storage space and would be sold for their intrinsic value.²⁵

Thus it was necessary before the third printing to convert the plates to acetate proofs. The third printing was made by the offset method in 1971.²⁶

Article V, 5.2.of the Declaration of Trust gives the trustees:

. . . the power to destroy all or any part of the Substantive Estate [the plates] . . . when they unanimously agree that the continued preservation . . . of the Substantive Estate is no longer required.²⁷

“You Must Safeguard the Name Urantia”

In addition to the copyright, the contact commissioners were also advised by the revelators as early as August 1942 to protect the name Urantia. In 1950, when the commissioners inquired about legal protection of the name, counsel assured them that this would be possible after the name had acquired sufficient public usage over time.²⁸ This is one more reason the contact commissioners were so secretive during the pre-publication years. The process of protecting the name did not begin until 1966. The 1942 revelator message follows:

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 one generation and it will largely take care of itself.²⁹

The Concentric Circles Symbol

The revelators did not require the azure blue concentric circles symbol to be legally protected.³⁰ Nonetheless, the trustees decided to protect it, since it was legally easy to protect a symbol. The circles were registered in 1950 because they were imbued with symbolic significance in the text of *The Urantia Book*:³¹

Since Michael elected to remain aloof from the actual warfare of the Lucifer rebellion, Gabriel called his personal staff together on Edentia³² and, in counsel with the Most Highs, elected to assume command of the loyal hosts of Satania.³³ Michael remained on Salvington³⁴ while Gabriel proceeded to Jerusem,³⁵ and establishing himself on the sphere dedicated to the Father—the same Universal Father whose personality Lucifer and Satan had questioned—in the presence of the forgathered hosts of loyal personalities, he displayed the banner of Michael, the material emblem of the Trinity government of all creation, the three azure blue concentric circles on a white background.³⁶

The third presentation of the Trinity was made by Machiventa Melchizedek, and this doctrine was symbolized by the three concentric circles which the sage of Salem wore on his breastplate.³⁷

Since the circles could be easily duplicated, the trustees thought it wise to preempt legal ownership by outside commercial or religious interests in order to preserve them for the eventual worldwide readership of *The Urantia Book*. The circles would become the material symbol of the Urantia Revelation and associated official organizations. Some expressed concern that the circles could be cheapened by careless or commercial usage unless they took steps in the beginning to register them in the United States and worldwide.³⁸

Urantia Foundation Headquarters

At its founding on January 11, 1950, Urantia Foundation shared office space in Bill Sadler's management consulting firm, Sadler and Associates, at 333 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

After thirteen years, in 1963, the Foundation headquarters moved from Michigan Avenue to the first floor office at 533 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois. This occurred when Bill Sadler resigned his trusteeship June 18, 1963, due to failing health. The building at the Foundation's new location had been the home and office of Dr. William S. Sadler since October 1921.³⁹ After the doctor's death in 1969, on January 6, 1971, the title of the building at 533 Diversey Parkway passed to Urantia Foundation.⁴⁰

Designed and built in 1908 by architects Frommann and Jepsen, the Diversey building was described in a 2004 American Institute of Architects guidebook:

*This grand flat (is) the star of this graceless south-side stretch of Diversey Pkwy. Lavish ornament grows out of the wall organically, recalling Art Nouveau and Jugendstil masters. The integration of the metal railing with the stone balcony is the jewel in the crown of this sculptured façade.*⁴¹

A Urantia Brotherhood *Bulletin* article described the building in 1972:

The building is a three-story stone and brick building, built as a three-flat residence in the early part of the century. It is one of the first all steel (framed) residences built in Chicago, located about four miles north of the Loop. At that time Diversey Parkway was an unpaved street with (wooden) sidewalks. This very substantial building is now situated amidst high rises and a thriving business district. There are eight or nine rooms on each floor. The third floor is still maintained as an apartment.

The plan was for Urantia Foundation and Urantia Brotherhood to share space and personnel. Christy continued to live in the third floor apartment for the remainder of her life.⁴²

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 11, THE CREATION OF URANTIA FOUNDATION

¹ Sadler, William S., Jr., Memorandum, 1958.

² Hales, William M., See notarized statement by first president of Urantia Foundation, Appendix V.

³ Urantia Foundation files.

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- 4 Urantia Foundation memo, 1970.
5 Revelator message, 1950.
6 Urantia Foundation memo, 1970.
7 Contact commissioners' 1960 *History of the Urantia Movement*. See Appendix II.
8 [Ibid].
9 Urantia Foundation Declaration of Trust.
10 Urantia Foundation memo, 1970.
11 Urantia Foundation Declaration of Trust.
12 Declaration of Trust
13 [Idem.]
14 *100 years of Revelation: A Historic Perspective*, (publ. by Urantia Foundation, 2000).
15 Revelator message, Aug. 1942; see Appendix IX..
16 Contact commissioners' 1960 *History of the Urantia Movement*. See Appendix II.
17 Sadler, William S., Jr., oral remark to Forum members.
18 Sadler, William S., Jr. and Thomas A. Kendall, former vice-president and president
of Urantia Foundation, respectively.
19 Contact commission's instructions to Forum. September 1955.
20 Fogo correspondence, Urantia Foundation files, 1955.
21 Thomas A. Kendall files.
22 [Ibid.]
23 Urantian News, 12/1975.
24 Thomas A. Kendall, trustee & president of Urantia Foundation (1963-1983), memo.
25 Urantia Foundation notice, 1972.
26 Urantia Foundation newsletter, 1972.
27 Declaration of Trust
28 Kendall, Thomas A., former Urantia Foundation president; oral comment to Urantia groups.
29 Revelator message, August 1942.
30 Kendall, Thomas A., by authority of E.L. Christensen, at Lake Forest, IL workshop, 1980.
31 The Lucifer Rebellion (p. 606) [53.05.03] and Machiventa Melchizedek's symbol, (p. 1016)
[93.03.03].
32 Edentia is the capitol of the constellation of Norlatiadek.
33 Satania is the name of our system.
34 Salvington is the capitol of our local universe of Nebadon.
35 Jerusem is the capitol of our system of Satania.
36 (p. 605-6) [53.5.4].
37 (p. 1143) [104.3.4].
38 Christensen, E. L., and Thomas Kendall, comments at 1980 Brotherhood meeting.
39 Christensen, E. L., short biography of William S. Sadler, M.D., undated.
40 Urantia Foundation files, 1971.
41 AIA brochure, 2004.
38 Remarks of Thomas A. Kendall.