

Chapter 13

Publication of *The Urantia Book*, 1951 to 1956

Permission to Publish

The arrival on August 21, 1951, of a new Regent of the Acting Planetary Prince set the stage for **phase seven**, the long-awaited publication of *The Urantia Book*.¹ This celestial being is a member of the Melchizedek order among the local universe Sons of Nebadon. His second message in 1952 announced how and when the book would be published:

The Urantia Book. By mandate of the Supreme Court of Urantia, [appointed in 1951] unanimous decision, No. 81, pertaining to mixed planetary mandate, the full custody of The Urantia Book has been placed in my hands. I now make 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 publication in accordance with their own judgment. (I reserve the right to intervene at any time.)²*

When Bill Sadler read this communication to the Forum on Sunday, September 21, 1952, he commented: “Unless we hear from them, I guess we’ll be on our own after January 1, 1955.” Hearing no objections from the revelators, negotiations began in February 1955 with Donnelley and Company to print 10,000 copies at a cost of \$45,700.00. The official publishing date was October 12, 1955.

“The Timing of *The Urantia Book*”

The contact commissioners received the permission to print [date unknown] along with a majestic statement entitled “The Timing of *The Urantia Book*,” also known as “The Publication Mandate,” which explained in general terms why the Urantia revelation was sent to our world during the twentieth century:

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.³

Many in the Forum assumed the celestial being was speaking of communism, but others reasoned that communism was not a threat when the revelation was first envisioned. Others viewed the impending adjudication of the Lucifer Rebellion, the end of isolation, and the termination of the present dispensation as the reasons we were given a new revelation at this time. He presented a plan of action for the period between publication and the wide acceptance of the revelation:

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 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 translations into other languages.⁴

Next came what to many was a shocking assignment:

*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.*⁵

The Forum had been thinking in terms of Urantia societies, not study groups. Study groups were not grandiose, not what they believed the Urantia revelation deserved. “Now they tell us,” one man grumbled. They began to revise their thinking about the organizations. Theretofore, societies had been the goal, rather like churches, but without the hierarchy and ritual. How many people could a home living room hold, they wondered?

*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?*⁶

*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. Over rapid 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.*⁷

This introduction to the Publication Mandate was read in its entirety to the Forum many times from its reception until the publication. The Forum members took the words very seriously, and the words echoed in their minds as they prepared for the launch of Urantia Brotherhood in January 1955, and for the day of publication of *The Urantia Book* in October 1955.

Publication Day: October 12, 1955

On Wednesday, October 12, 1955, the “momentous transaction took place—the publication of the fifth epochal revelation.”⁸ The first 10,000 copies of *The Urantia Book* were published under two international copyrights, the Berne Convention and the Universal Copyright Convention.

Word circulated immediately that the first books had been delivered to 533 Diversey Parkway in Chicago. Members of the Forum rushed to obtain copies of *The Urantia Books* that awaited them at last, eager to share them with their friends and family who, until this moment, did not know about the revelation. They interrupted appointments and made overseas telephone calls. The great day had finally arrived!⁹

Children of Forum members remember this day with great affection. It was the first time their parents brought home *The Urantia Book*. Many of the children received a copy that very day. Some were relieved to know that their relatives had been involved in a project of such noble purpose, having wondered all these years what they were doing on Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. Although Forum family members attended the open social gatherings, only the Forum members read the papers or knew of their existence until this day.¹⁰ One individual said:

Many years of waiting were over for the Forum members. At last they could read The Urantia Book anywhere and anytime they chose. The day made a lasting impression on many people. It has been described by those present as a thrilling and awesome moment.

Another said, “I still remember men excitedly leaving the building with boxes of books carried on their heads.” One woman recalls mixed feelings, including sadness. She said, “I felt that an era was ending and none of us knew what we were facing.”¹¹

To Sum up

Overall, the leadership of Urantia Brotherhood and Urantia Foundation promoted a few simple guidelines as to how *The Urantia Book* would be launched to the world:

- *The Urantia Book* must stand alone, with no connection to any other religious, social, or governmental group.¹²
- You must train leaders and teachers.¹³
- You must establish thousands of study groups.¹⁴
- There must be one Urantia Brotherhood.¹⁵
- Individual membership in any other religious group does not preclude membership in Urantia Brotherhood.¹⁶
- In the early years, person-to-person dissemination is the preferred method.¹⁷
- There are to be no official interpretations of the meanings of *The Urantia Book*.¹⁸
- Individual students are encouraged to offer their own interpretations.¹⁹
- The name Urantia must be legally trademarked. Only stable, official groups (Urantia Foundation, Urantia Brotherhood, Urantia Societies) may use the name.²⁰
- *The Urantia Book* must be copyrighted in all copyright unions.²¹

Entering New Territory

How would these Urantia pioneers navigate their new territory? From their years of preparation, they knew that the indwelling spirit of the Universal Father himself would guide them:

*Mind is your ship, the Adjuster is your pilot, and the human will is captain.*²²

Until the time of its publication, *The Urantia Book* had been under the direct guidance of the superhuman revelatory commission. While the interest of the celestial overseers in the project undoubtedly continued, the special contact maintained during the early years no longer existed. A new day had indeed arrived. The Urantia ship sailed out of its safe harbor to the adventures waiting on unknown shores and seas.²³

ENDNOTES FOR CHAPTER 13, PUBLICATION OF THE URANTIA BOOK, 1955.

¹ "The Publication Mandate" See Appendix XI.

² The New Regent of the Acting Planetary Prince. See Appendix X. Second message.

³ See Appendix XI.

⁴ [Ibid]

⁵ [Ibid.]

⁶ [Ibid.]

⁷ [Ibid.]

⁸ Urantia Brotherhood, Publications Committee, slide tape History of the Urantia Movement, 1980.

⁹ *The Golden Years, A Historic Perspective, 50th Anniversary Book*, by Barbara Kulieke, Carolyn Kendall, and Urantia Foundation Staff, (Publ. by Urantia Foundation, 2000) .

¹⁰ [Ibid.]

¹¹ Urantia Brotherhood, Publications Committee slide tape History of the Urantia Movement, 1980.

¹² See Appendix IX

¹³ See Appendix XI

¹⁴ See Appendix IX

¹⁵ [Ibid.].

¹⁶ Urantia Brotherhood Constitution, Art. IV., Sec.1.

¹⁷ (p. 1460-1462) [132.04]

¹⁸ (p. 1592) [141.05.04]

¹⁹ (p. 1942) [179.05.4-05]

²⁰ See Appendix IX

²¹ [Ibid.]

²² (p.1217) [111.1.9].

²³ *The Golden Years: A Historic Perspective, 50th Anniversary Book*, by Barbara Kulieke, Carolyn Kendall, and Urantia Foundation Staff, (Publ. by Urantia Foundation, 2000) .