

CHAPTER TEN
A History

In 1960 Marian Rowley, secretary to William Sadler, prepared a document entitled *A History of the Urantia Movement*. It was a brief paper of eighteen pages. I have a copy of the draft showing editorial changes by Marian, and another draft showing editorial remarks with the initials WSSJ, William Samuel Sadler, Jr. The drafts differ somewhat from one another in the location of Sections and minor editorial content. About the same time Dr. William Sadler created another document with a similar title, clearly an expansion on certain Sections of the draft, apparently as a collaborative effort to produce a more formal account of events leading to *The Urantia Papers*. Marian left notes showing how Dr. Sadler’s account compared with hers. Later these documents were combined into a lengthier version. The documents were never formally published. Marian’s draft and a freshly typed version, along with Sadler’s text, may now be found on the Urantia Fellowship web site at http://urantiabook.org/index_history.htm.

I reproduce both versions here, as they now appear. First I show Marian’s draft, unedited because of its historical significance. I do not attempt to show the editorial differences between the two early drafts, except to include material from one that may not be in the other. I then show Sadler’s version. I show editorial deletions, insertions, and changes with brackets. The written notations are in at least two different hands — not of Dr. William Sadler. Where appropriate I insert notes as explanation of the remarks. XX’s denote undecipherable text.

Page 1¹:

A History of The Urantia Movement²

This historical narrative was prepared by a group of Urantian pioneers, assisted by members of the contact commission, {and approved for distribution by action of the Executive Committee of the Urantia Brotherhood}.

1960

Page 2:

History of The Urantia Movement

Several members of the (this) pioneer group³ who participated in the preliminary contacts⁴ which led to the appearance of the Urantia papers had had considerable experience in the investigations of psychic phenomena⁵. This group early arrived at the conclusion that the phenomena connected with the {person-

ality} “subject” who was later associated with the Urantia papers, was in no way similar to any other well-known type of psychic performances — such as hypnosis, 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 beings⁶.

Page 3:

I.

Contact Activities Preceding The Urantia Papers

As the Urantia Book indicates, the papers were received as follows: Super-human personalities, the authors of the papers, sometimes called “the revelators,” worked through the mind of a human subject⁷, sometimes called “the contact personality.” {XXX} 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. {The members of the contact commission are the only human beings who ever saw its original XXXX, all of which have been destroyed at the request of the revelators.}

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.

{Some of the contacts were verbal, some were written. All observations and investigations utterly failed to reveal the technique of reducing the messages to writing. All the Urantia papers appeared in written form⁸. Usually the verbal contacts were concerned with instructions and with miscellaneous information about the universe and affairs on our planet.}

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 {XXXX XXXX XXXX} supervising all the detail 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.

Page 4⁹:**Functioning of the Contact Commissioners**

{During the early years the contact commissioners received many instructions and directives verbally and in writing. They were instructed to destroy by fire most of the written messages upon the appearance of the Urantia papers in print, apparently to prevent the appearance of an “Apocrypha,” subsequent to the publication of the Urantia Book.}

Page 4¹⁰:**II.****Reasons 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 found in various places in the Urantia Book. A list of such references will be found on the dust jacket of the book.

Among the several reasons given for not discussing {given us at the time we were requested not to discuss} the details of personal experiences associated with the origin of the Urantia Book, the two major reasons were the following¹¹:

1. The main reason for not revealing the identity of the contact personality is that the (Celestial) 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 declaration and teachings. They are determined that future generations shall have the book wholly free from all mortal connections — they do not want a Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Luther, Calvin, or Wesley. The book does not even bear the imprint of the printer who brought the book into being¹².

2. (Unknown Features) 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 links¹³.

(Remember: You could appreciate a good poem — even if you did not know the author. Likewise, you could enjoy a symphony even if you were ignorant of the composer.)

Pages 5 and 6:

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 to these meetings¹⁴. 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 {via the contact commission} 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 appear¹⁵.

At about this time instructions were received from the revelators to form a closed group. Membership tickets were issued and the charter membership numbered 30. 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 read: “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 public sessions, or to make copies of notes of what is personally read¹⁶.”

The first group of papers numbered 57¹⁷. 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 questions¹⁸.

The procedure was to read a paper on Sunday afternoons and the following Sunday the new questions would be presented {XXXX XXX XXXing their questions on the paper read the previous Sunday.} These would be sorted, classified, and duplicates eliminated. This program covered several years and ultimately resulted in the presentation of 196 papers as now found in the Urantia Book. {Throughout the entire operation, only one subject or contact personality (see p865-2) was involved.}

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 1942¹⁹ the Forum continued as a study group to the time of the organization of the First Urantia Society in 1956²⁰.

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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 be new members of the 70.}

The Seventy started a systematic study of *The Urantia Papers* on April 5, 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.

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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 episodes 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 rev.}²¹ 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 {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 ready²².

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.

Upon the receipt of the publication mandate {In accordance with the instructions}²³ the contact commissioners brought into existence the Ur. Foundation which entered upon the task of publishing the Urantia Book and of planning for its distribution.

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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 {denotes theological tradition. The U.B. seems to me to avoid using this word²⁴} of the Urantia Book.

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 the international copyright October 12, 1955.

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VII.

The Urantia Brotherhood

It was inevitable that some sort of fraternal organization would grow out of the teachings of the Urantia Book. However, it was clear that it was not the purpose of the Urantia revelation 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 and 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 the 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
- 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 societies²⁵.

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.

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VIII.

Urantia Brotherhood Corporation

Since the Urantia Brotherhood is not a corporation — a legal entity — the Urantia Brotherhood Corporation was formed on October 21, 1955²⁶, 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 tax of such donors.

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IX.

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 Book
- 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 Analysis

Up to this time no degrees of “Ordained Teacher” have been granted, but diplomas as “Certified Leader” have been given to 14 individuals.

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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 admon-

ish 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 associates²⁷.

SADLER’S DOCUMENT

(Editorial Note: Following are Sections from Sadler’s document. Where the text is the same as in the draft version I do not repeat it here.)

Contact Activities Preceding the Urantia Papers

It would seem that, during these early years, our unseen friends were engaged in a thoroughgoing testing of the contact personality, rehearsing the technique of communication, selecting the Contact Commissioners — in fact, in a general way — setting the stage for the subsequent initiation of the presentation of The Urantia Papers.

During these early years we were introduced to many new and, to us, somewhat strange concepts of the universe of universes and as concerned man and his life on earth.

Among these numerous ideas of cosmology and philosophy, the following may be mentioned:

1. New concept of a far-flung cosmos.
2. Millions of inhabited worlds.
3. Introduction to scores of different and varied echelons of celestial personalities.
4. Confirmation of the evolutionary origin of humankind — even of an evolutionary cosmos.
5. Intimation of multiple Creator Deities.
6. Tentative testing of our theologic concepts. Patient determination of how far we might possibly go in the direction of modifying our theologic beliefs and philosophical opinions.
7. Without realizing it, over a period of twenty years, our fundamental religious views and attitudes had been considerably changed.
8. We had been familiarized with such terms as The First Source and Center, Havona, superuniverses, and the Supreme Being — but we had but meager ideas as to the real meaning of these names.
9. We also heard such words as Master Spirits, outer space, and Power

Directors. But again, we understood little as to their meaning. We also learned about numerous orders of angels.

10. We heard about Thought Adjusters, but our concept of the meaning of the term was vague and indefinite.

11. We had acquired a fuzzy concept of the morontia level of existence — but we never heard the word morontia used until the Papers started²⁸.

12. 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 contacts²⁹.

13. We heard some things about the Lucifer rebellion, but got little information about Adam and Eve.

14. We gained the impression that there were special reasons for Jesus’ bestowal on Urantia, but we had little or no idea as to the nature of these unrevealed reasons.

15. We listened to occasional references to Jesus’ life and teachings — but they were very cautious about the introduction of any new concepts regarding Michael’s Urantia bestowal. Of all the Urantia Revelation the Jesus Papers were the biggest surprise³⁰.

16. While we did not hear the term “Corps of The Finality,” we did pick up a hazy idea that Paradise might be the destination of surviving mortals.

Our superhuman friends thus spent upward of two decades in extending our cosmic horizons, enlarging our theologic concepts, and expanding our over-all philosophy³¹.

We never realized how much our religious thinking had been expanded until the Papers began to arrive. As the Revelation progressed we came more fully to appreciate how we had been prepared for the vast alteration of our religious beliefs by these preliminary contacts extending over a period of twenty years of pre-education³².

Our apprenticeship training for subsequent service in association with the presentation of The Urantia Papers was facilitated by the fact that, except for contacts with the midwayers, no two contacts were alike. Seldom did we meet the visiting personalities more than once. Every contact was entirely different from any and all that had gone before. And all of this experience was an extensive and liberal preparatory educational training in the expansion of our cosmology, theology, and philosophy — not to mention our introduction to new ideas and concepts concerning a vast array of more mundane subjects³³.

The limited discussions of Jesus’ life and teachings during these pre-revelatory contacts might be explained by the fact that the midwayers were a bit dubious as to how much authority they had in such matters — as shown later on when a whole year was consumed in the clarification of their right to retell the story of Michael’s bestowal³⁴.

Those of us who early attended upon these nocturnal vigils never suspected that we were in contact with anything supernatural.

During these early years, all of our observations and investigations utterly failed to reveal the (psychic) technique of reducing messages to writing³⁵.

How The Urantia Papers Started

After about twenty years of contact experience, an alleged student-visitor, speaking through this sleeping subject during one of these nocturnal vigils, in answer to one of our questions, said, "If you only knew what you are in contact with you would not ask such trivial questions. You would rather ask such questions as might elicit answers of supreme value to the human race."

This was something of a shock, as well as a mild rebuke, and caused all of us to look upon this unique experience in a new and different way. Later on that night, one of our number said, "Now they have asked for it — let us give them questions that no human being can answer³⁶."

Now it is best to let matters rest here while we shift this narrative to a new and different settings.

How The Forum Started

Dr. William S. Sadler, a member of this early group of observers and investigators, tells the following story regarding the origin of that group of interested individuals which later became known as the "Forum." He says, "On my way to the University of Kansas to deliver some lectures on Gestalt psychology, I wrote a letter to my son³⁷ saying that I thought doctors should try to maintain some contact with their old patients. I suggested that he talk with his mother about the feasibility of inviting some of our old friends to meet with us on Sunday afternoons for an hour or two of informal discussion and social exchange.

"When I returned to Chicago one Sunday morning I found that my wife had invited a group of our old patients to meet at our house that afternoon at three o'clock. It was the plan to conduct these Sunday afternoon gatherings somewhat as follows: First have a talk on some health topic — such as the treatment of common colds, the cause and cure of worry, and then, after a cup of tea, engage in informal discussions — asking and answering questions.

"As time passed, this group became a cosmopolitan gathering consisting of professional men and women — doctors, lawyers, dentists, ministers, teachers — together with individuals from all walks of life: farmers, housewives, secretaries, office workers, and common laborers."

Introduction Of The Forum To The "Contacts"

"Presently, I was asked to give a series of talks on 'Mental Hygiene' or 'Psychic Phenomena.' At the beginning of my first talk, I said, 'With one or two exceptions, all of the psychic phenomena which I have investigated have turned out to be either conscious or unconscious frauds. Some were deliberate frauds — others were those peculiar cases in which the performer was a victim of the deceptions of his own subconscious mind³⁸.'

"I had no more than said this, when one of the group spoke up, saying, 'Doctor, if you have contacted something which you have been unable to solve — it would be interesting — tell us more about it.'

"I asked Dr. Lena to get some notes she had taken at a recent 'contact' and read them to the group. It should be understood that up to this time there was no secrecy connected with the case. *The Urantia Papers* had not begun to appear³⁹.

"It was at about this time that this group meeting at our house on Sunday afternoons began to be called the 'Forum'⁴⁰."

"The group manifested such an interest in this case that I never did get around to giving any of the health talks such as had been planned.

"It was while these informal discussions were going on from week to week that the challenge came to us suggesting that if we would ask more serious questions we might get information of value to all mankind⁴¹."

The Forum Begins To Ask Questions⁴²

"We told the Forum all about this and invited them to join us in the preparation of questions. We decided to start out with questions pertaining to the origin of the cosmos, Deity, creation, and such other subjects as were far beyond the present-day knowledge of mankind.

"The following Sunday several hundred questions were brought in. We sorted through these questions, discarding duplicates, and in a general way, clarifying them. Shortly thereafter, the first Urantia Paper appeared in answer to these questions. From first to last, when the Papers appeared, the questions disappeared⁴³.

"This was the procedure followed throughout the many years⁴⁴ of the reception of *The Urantia Papers*. No questions — no Papers."

The Forum Becomes A Closed Group

About this time, the Forum, as it were, was taken away from us. We were instructed to form a "closed group" — requiring each member to sign a pledge of secrecy and to discuss the Papers and all matters pertaining thereto with only those persons who were members of the Forum.

Membership tickets were issued and the Charter membership numbered Thirty. The date of this organization was September, 1925. Seventeen of these Charter Members are still living⁴⁵.

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 "Contact Commissioners." From that date forward only these Contact Commissioners attended "contacts" and received written communications through the contact personality⁴⁶.

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 read: "We acknowledge our pledge of secrecy, renewing our promise not to discuss the Urantia Revelations or their subject matter with any one save active Forum members, and to take no notes of such matter as is read or discussed at the public sessions, and to make copies or notes of what we personally read."

The last meeting of the Forum as a genetic assembly was held on May 31st, 1942. During 17 years of official existence the Forum attained a total membership of 486. Since this date in 1942, the Forum continued as a study group to the time of the organization of the First Urantia Society.

During the period of the reception of *The Urantia Papers* upward of 300 different persons participated in asking these genetic questions. With but few exceptions, all of *The Urantia Papers* were given in response to such questions⁴⁷.

The First Urantia Papers

The first group of Papers numbered 57. We then received a communication suggesting that since we could now ask many and much more intelligent questions, the superhuman agencies and personalities responsible for transmitting the 57 Papers would engage to enlarge the revelation and to expand the Papers in accordance with our new questions.

This was the plan: We would read a Paper on Sunday afternoon and the following Sunday the new questions would be presented. Again, these would be sorted, classified, etc. This program covered several years and ultimately resulted in the presentation of the 196 Papers as now found in the *Urantia Book*⁴⁸.

Receiving The Completed Papers

In a way, there was a third presentation. After receiving these 196 Papers, we were told that the “Revelatory Commission” would be pleased to have us go over the Papers once more and ask questions concerning the “Clarification of Concepts” and the “Removal of Ambiguities.” This program again covered several years. 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.

What has just been recorded refers more particularly to Parts I, II, and III of the *Urantia Book*. Part IV — The Jesus Papers — had a little different origin. They were produced by a midwayer commission and were completed one year later than the other Papers. 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.

The Delay In Receiving The Jesus Papers

The delay of one year in the reception of the Jesus Papers — Part IV of the *Urantia Book* — may be explained as follows: The midwayers were a bit apprehensive about becoming involved in the suit pending in the Universe Courts — Gabriel vs. Lucifer — and they hesitated to complete their project until they were assured that they had full authority to retell the story of Jesus’ life on earth.

After some months’ waiting there came the mandate from Uversa directing the United Midwayers of Urantia to proceed with their project of revealing the story of the life and teachings of Michael when incarnated on Urantia, and not

only assuring them that they were not in “contempt” of the Uversa Courts, but instead granting them a mandate to do this service and admonishing any and all persons connected therewith to refrain from interfering with, or in any way hindering, the execution of such an undertaking.

And this is the explanation of why the Jesus Papers appeared one year after the other Papers had been completed⁴⁹.

How We Got The Urantia Papers⁵⁰

Just about all that is known or could be told about the origin of *The Urantia Papers* is to be found, here and there, in the *Urantia Book*. A list of such references is to be found on the back of the dust jacket of the *Book*.

Let us take a brief look at these citations.

1. Page 1, par. 2. This passage refers to the difficulty of presenting expanded spiritual concepts when restricted to circumscribed human language, such as English.

2. Page 1, par. 4. An Orvonton Commission participated in the revelation and prepared this Forward.

3. Page 17, par. 1. In presenting this revelation of augmented spiritual values and universe meanings, more than one thousand human concepts were drawn from the minds of human beings of the present and the past.

4. Page 16, par. 8. P. 1343, par. 1. In all revelation of truth, preference is given to the highest existing human concepts of ideality and reality. Only in the absence of the human concept is superhuman knowledge revealed.

5. Page 1109, par. 4. Revelators are seldom at liberty to anticipate scientific discoveries. Truth is timeless, but the teachings respecting the physical sciences and certain phases of cosmology will become partially obsolescent as the result of the new discoveries of advancing scientific investigations. The cosmology of the *Urantia Revelation* is not inspired. Human wisdom must evolve⁵¹.

6. Page 215, par. 2-9. Human pedagogy proceeds from the simple to the complex. The *Urantia Revelation* begins with the more complex and goes on to the consideration of the more simple. Instead of beginning with man reaching up to God, *The Urantia Papers* begin with God — reaching down and finding man.

7. Page 865, par. 6,7. The narrative of the midwayers function in initiating and carrying forward the completion of the *Urantia Revelation*.

8. Page 865, par. 2, P. 1208, par. 7. Midway creatures are always employed in the phenomena of communication with material beings through the technique of “Contact Personalities.”⁵² The “subject” through whom *The Urantia Papers* were bestowed had a highly experienced Thought Adjuster. The “subject’s” relative indifference and unconcern regarding the work of his indwelling Adjuster was in every way favorable to the execution and completion of this revelatory project⁵³.

9. Page 1258, par. 1. The contact personality was a member of the *Urantia Reserve Corps of Destiny*. This was just one of several conditions favoring the impartation of the *Urantia Revelation*⁵⁴.

10. Page 1008, par. 3. The *Urantia Revelation* is unique in that it is presented by multiple authors. The *Urantia Revelation*, like its predecessors, is not inspired⁵⁵.

11. Page 32, par. 2. A Divine Counselor “portrays the reality and nature of the Father with unchallengeable authority.”

12. Page 17, par. 2. The Revelators depend upon the indwelling Adjusters and the Spirit of Truth to help us in the appropriation of the truth of the Urantia Revelation.

13. Page 1007, par. 1. Revelation keeps in touch with evolution. Revelation is adapted to the age of its bestowal. New revelation maintains contact with preceding revelations.

Functioning of the Contact Commissioners

(Editorial note: This section repeats that shown in the draft versions, except for the following remarks.)

All of this was encouraging to us in that it assured us that the Urantia Papers would some time be published. It sustained our hopes through the long waiting years of delay.

The fact that no provision was ever made for replacing members of the Contact Commission who might be lost through disability or death, led us to entertain the belief that the Book would be published during the life time of some of us.

How We Did Not Get The Urantia Book

Recently, a group of ministers from northern Indiana, who were engaged in studying the Urantia Book, spent the day with us and, during the evening, Dr. Sadler led a discussion on “How We Did Not Get the Urantia Book⁵⁶.”

The following is the gist of that presentation.

(Editorial note: A list was then given which is identical to that found in the following chapter.)

The Seventy

(Editorial note: This Section repeats that found in the draft versions, except for the following remarks.)

The Seventy started systematic study of *The Urantia Papers* from April 3, 1939 to the summer of 1956, and was the forerunner of the later “School of the Urantia Brotherhood.”

The Seventy carried on its work of study, thesis writing, and practice of teaching for 17 years. During this period eight written communications were given to the Seventy by the Seraphim of Progress attached to the Superhuman Planetary Government of Urantia.⁵⁷

The Publication Mandate

(Editorial note: No significant additional material was included here except as follows.)

It was these plates of the Urantia Book which constituted the basis for the formulation 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 K. 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 fund⁵⁸.

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. The first money to reach the Foundation office was one thousand dollars from the late Sir Hubert Wilkins, the Arctic Explorer⁵⁹.

The Book was published under international copyright October, 12, 1955.

(Editorial note: The remaining Sections repeat material that is found in the draft versions.)

End Notes

¹This page is missing from the expanded version.

²Urantia activities never truly developed into a dynamic “movement.” The fracturing of the organizations prevented cohesive direction. Secular definitions of purpose prevented dedication to God.

³The attribution of authorship would limit the text to members of the Contact Commission.

⁴The remark “preliminary contacts” would place the activity before the creation of the Forum. Available evidence suggests that this pioneer group was composed of more than fifteen members at various times, with the Sadler family maintaining membership throughout. These would include Sadler, his wife Lena, Anna and Wilfred Kellogg, and after 1923, Emma Christensen and William Sadler, Jr. Sadler’s consultation with professional experts would place them within this descriptive category, but the statement also suggests repeated association. The identity of those other persons is unknown, although some are hinted in Sadler’s books. Sadler respected their professional positions. We can deduce from his remarks that the consultants included the magicians Howard Thurston and Harry Houdini. Sadler left no stone unturned in his efforts to explain the phenomenon.

⁵This reference would have been to William Sadler.

⁶Note that the statement fails to distinguish communications that may come from malicious spirit personalities not classifiable under “spiritualism.” Sadler never reached the point of distinguishing between “spiritualism” and “spiritism.”

⁷As I discuss elsewhere, this was a false application. The mind of the Sleeping Subject was never used. Furthermore, this remark was edited out of the expanded version. The remark was based on a nebulous theory of the mechanism of transmission. Sadler just did not have a firm grip on the process. The statement which influenced the thinking of Sadler and others is on page 1258:

“On many worlds the better adapted secondary midway creatures are able to attain varying degrees of contact with the Thought Adjusters of certain favorably constituted mortals through the skillful penetration of the minds of the latter’s indwelling. (And it was by just such a fortuitous combination of cosmic adjustments that these revelations were materialized in the English language on Urantia.)”

⁸This remark confirms my conclusions that the Urantia Papers did not come through the speaking of SS. They were always in written form.

⁹From this point on the Sections of the two draft versions differ in sequence. This immediate section was an expansion on an earlier draft.

¹⁰This section is relocated in the expanded version to the section entitled How We Got The Urantia Papers.

¹¹This paragraph is missing from the expanded version. The reason is fairly clear. Sadler and the other Contact Commissioners could have revealed many details of the strange transactions but felt under sacred obligation not to do so.

¹²The two numbered paragraphs have editorial arrows on the shorter version which show an intent to reverse their positions. This relocation is followed in the expanded version.

¹³This remark does not capture the gamut of possible reasons for not revealing the name of the Sleeping Subject. Veneration is one. Perhaps his human associations might have detracted from the authenticity of the divine nature of the Revelation. Perhaps there was concern that members of his personal family might have become involved, contrary to his wishes. Other reasons may exist. Here Sadler and his family are disingenuous. This was their method for avoiding further inquiries. They could have offered many details had they felt it wise.

¹⁴The meetings took place in the home of William and Lena Sadler at 533 Diversey Parkway in Chicago.

¹⁵The chronology described in this document is confusing. In context, the statement about submitting more elevated questions came about 1928, twenty years after first contact, and five years after the first formation of the Forum. However, the first set of serious questions may have come before 1928. The task of formal questions then led to the first appearance of formal Papers, although these were not the final versions. The system of Papers appearing in response to questions brought the Forum members into intimate relationship with the Revelators, and developed emotional and religious bonds to the Revelation. The final drafts of the Papers, which composed the actual Revelation, did not appear until 1934 and 1935. This process of interaction was designed by the Revelators to ensure the safety of the Revelation when it was released to the world. This need was at two levels: a) To motivate the Forum members to

financial contribution for publication; and b) to guard against perversion that might take place among members of the Contact Commission, consciously or inadvertently. As I shall show, the latter danger appeared early in the 1940’s.

¹⁶The chronologies show that the Forum became a closed group about the time of the first question-and-answer arrangement. Probably this was prior to 1928. The event marks a definite demarcation from earlier arrangements.

¹⁷This number would cover the first two parts of *The Urantia Papers*, including The Central and Superuniverses, and The Local Universe.

¹⁸Again, this shows that the first draft of the Papers was not the final version.

¹⁹A marginal notation states “Out” with the initials WSSJ.

²⁰Later claims to membership in the Forum were amiss. Thus Harold Sherman may have been the last person who technically could be called a member. Sherman’s actions may have triggered Sadler’s decision to terminate the Forum as a genetic assembly. One the other hand, Sadler stated that he was instructed to terminate the Forum.

²¹This interpolated comment was an attempt to deflect the more dire implications of “epochal revolutions.”

²²This statement is part of the final instructions Sadler received for publication of the Papers. Thus it can be dated to the early 1950’s. This “instruction” was instrumental in conditioning policies for formation of study groups and related Brotherhood activities, and the future of the entire Urantia community.

²³In the margin next to this editorial change occur the initials WSSJ.

²⁴The authorship of this note is unknown. It probably was William Sadler, Jr., since Sadler uses the word “doctrine” other places. *The Urantia Papers* use the word “doctrine” only when referring to human theories and beliefs, never as description of the teachings within the Papers.

²⁵The transient nature of study groups prevented the building of a solid body of cooperative believers. Differences in personal philosophies prohibited a unified group of believers.

²⁶This phrase is not contained in the expanded version.

²⁷The plans expressed in these latter sections, while detailing early efforts to establish a “Urantia Movement,” eventually failed. The schools, the credentials issued for ‘teachers,’ the theological documents, the awards, and so on, did not mature. All were soon abandoned.

²⁸The word “morontia” is used more than 600 times in the text of The Urantia Papers, from the beginning to the end, including the Jesus Papers. This was an essential concept. Lack of use of the word in the preliminary contacts suggests a severe limit on the depth of information imparted until the precursor Papers began to arrive.

²⁹One of the more mysterious secrets held by the Contact Commission was the form of midway communication. Use of the phrase “they were very real to us” suggests that they never saw visible images of the midwayers. “Frequently talking with them” again does not distinguish between written conversations back and forth through the Sleeping Subject, or actual audible voices, emanating from thin air. There is no reason to assume the latter. Later, when the actual revelation began to appear, messages and instructions also could have been given in written form without audible communication.

³⁰This statement suggests that they did not receive any material resembling the Jesus Papers during the preliminary contacts, or in the communications with the Forum. Anecdotal descriptions from various individuals suggest the Jesus Papers were revealed after the first three parts of the Urantia Papers were complete.

³¹This remark would date the actual revelation later than 1928. The long list of important details lacking in the preliminary contacts shows that the process was one of preparation, not complete revelation.

³²This is an important remark regarding the psychological and religious preparation required to accustom Sadler and the other members of the Contact Commission, as well as the Forum, to these new concepts. Without this preparation the Revelation might have been rejected.

³³This extended preparatory training, covering twenty years, shows a marked difference from the communications offered by Caligastia. He does not take time to prepare his students philosophically and theologically after penetration of their minds. When once he has them captured he jumps quickly to "revelation." It is important to his methods that his students not have the luxury of thought. His purpose is to overpower them with the seeming miraculous, and to keep the conceptual framework confused. He cannot afford analytical evaluation. Were he to do so his students would eventually come to recognize his logical inconsistencies, and thence to suspicions of origins. Only superficial minds, incapable of theological depth, are subject to his machinations. (Note that many of his candidates are highly trained professionals, but only in the mechanics of their trades. They never learned deeper thinking.)

³⁴This paragraph is speculative; it is an attempt to bring understanding to the long delay in transmitting the Jesus' Papers, and the strange maneuvering of the celestial personalities. Two human elements should be considered in this delay: a) how the story of Jesus' life and teachings might (or might not) be received by human mortals with heavy cultural conditioning and, b) how it might have stimulated premature exposure of the revelatory material. The Jesus Papers were and are an attractive place to introduce others to the Revelation. They are the most compatible with Christian ideas. These two elements were opposite horns of acceptance which, as explained in the above text, required time to prepare.

³⁵The last two remarks show the puzzle which Sadler faced in explaining the strange activities of the Sleeping Subject. At that early period he believed the phenomenon was strictly psychological, deriving out of the sub-conscious mind of SS. On the other hand he could find no memory of the events or details of the material within the mind of SS. Hypnosis, intensive comparison, and other techniques failed to discover how the written materials could have materialized, since the mind of SS seemed to be totally divorced from the materials. Little did Sadler appreciate that the written and oral materials were produced directly by the midwayers, through mechanical manipulation of the voice and muscles of SS. Even to the end of his life Sadler had difficulty understanding this process, and conceived a torturous method involving the midwayers making contact with the Thought Adjuster of SS. Refer to earlier remarks.

³⁶Twenty years would place this remark in 1928, five years after the start of the Forum.

³⁷William Sadler, Jr. would have been sixteen years of age at that time.

³⁸Refer to previous discussions on Sadler's attitude about psychic phenomena.

³⁹This confirms the fact that the Revelation, as a formal set of Papers, did not appear until after the Forum began to ask questions.

⁴⁰From this remark it appears that the name "Forum" was an early application, at about the time of the first meetings in 1923 or perhaps 1924.

⁴¹In study of the various records and documents left by Sadler and the Contact Commissioners, contradictions exist in chronology. This particular statement shows that the formal asking of questions did not occur until after the formation of the Forum.

⁴²It should be recognized that the Forum members would quickly have come to recognize Sadler's position on psychic phenomena, spiritualism, and "channeling." Those individuals who wished to espouse "spiritualism" or psychic theories would have quickly found themselves in a hostile environment, as Harold Sherman did later. They would have been unwelcome in the group. Thus Sadler's philosophical position served to screen the members of the Forum to more conservative minds.

⁴³This remark is an all-important clue to the interplay between the Forum and the Revelators. It also is an important comment on the "miracle" of the Revelation. This would date "miraculous" appearance of Papers to this period. It would also date the miraculous "disappearance" of the questions to the same time. The exact chronology of the first "appearance" and "disappearance," or the unfolding sequence of events, was never clearly explained by Sadler or other members of the Contact Commission. From this evidence the miraculous exchange of questions and answers took place before the actual revelation in 1934 and 1935.

⁴⁴The phrase "many years" would have included the time from the first formal questions, perhaps before 1928, to 1934, the time of the actual revelation. Thus "many years" could have been six, but not more than nine.

⁴⁵There appears to be a discrepancy in dates. The formal constitution of the Forum probably began in 1925 while the question and answer routines did not begin until some time later.

⁴⁶We are unsure if all oral communications had ceased at this point. It appears so. However, the events of 1942 may have introduced another "miracle" element. See later discussions.

⁴⁷The exceptions would be the Jesus Papers, certainly more than a few.

⁴⁸Note that a process of one Paper per week might have required more than four years. In our calculations we also must give regard for vacations, and postponements for various causes. If the Jesus Papers were not part of the interchange between the Forum members and the Revelators, if they came as a surprise, then this time frame might be reduced to 120 weeks, perhaps about three years. If the first set of formal Papers did not begin until 1928, no more than two complete cycles of study and questions on the first 119 Papers could have been accomplished by 1934, the year of actual revelation.

⁴⁹Again, this commentary is speculative. The midwayers would have been fully aware of orders from on high. The human reasons for this delay are not mentioned. Rather what we have here is a biting commentary on the shortness of human vision. One year in the process of the Revelation was minor compared to an exercise that ran from 1908 to 1955. This expansion of explanation on the timing of the Jesus Papers confirms the suggestion that they were not involved in the question and answer cycle.

⁵⁰At this point the section entitled REASONS FOR SILENCE RESPECTING DETAILS follows in the expanded version.

⁵¹Refer to discussion in later chapters on the deeper reasons behind this condition of restraint.

⁵²This statement in the Urantia Papers is simply untrue. Many contacts are made with human beings without the use of, or need for, midwayers. This was part of the corruptions later introduced into the Papers. Refer to later chapters.

⁵³Refer to discussion on the confusion between the "Sleeping Subject" who expressed little interest in the material "coming through" him, and the "forward looking" "contact personality," who was not the "Sleeping Subject."

⁵⁴Again, care should be taken to avoid confusion between the "Sleeping Subject" and the "contact personality." Little did Sadler realize, or anyone since, that he was the "contact personality," and thus the mentioned member of the Reserve Corps of Destiny.

⁵⁵The authors of this "History," including Sadler and other members of the "Contact Commission" who may have had a hand in editing, had an obvious confusion between "The cosmology of these revelations is not inspired," a statement by the revelators, and "The Urantia Revelation is not inspired," a statement by the authors of this document. This is a most notable error, and shows the limits of understanding among the human commissioners.

⁵⁶As far as I can determine, Dr. Sadler was the only person from the Contact Commission who attended these discussions. Therefore, "us" must mean him. He was a humble man who did not pretend to great personal honor.

⁵⁷This period began after the Papers were "completed and certified" in 1935. Caligastia entered into 533 in attempt to corrupt the Revelation. These "new" organizational designations were from him. I shall discuss this great default fully in later chapters.

⁵⁸A note in a different hand at the bottom of the page reads: R. R. Donnelley and Sons Co, Crawfordsville, IN plant.

⁵⁹The Hales family, with their wealth, would assuredly have been involved in this offer. The purpose for rejection of their offer should be apparent. *The Urantia Papers* were not to be unduly influenced by any one person, or small group of persons, based on monetary power, or social position.