

CHAPTER NINETEEN The Sherman Rebellion

Harold Morrow Sherman was born in 1898 in Traverse City, Michigan. His parents were mixed religious background, the mother Methodist, the father Catholic. During World War I, when the Battle Creek Sanitarium was at its height of fame, Sherman briefly worked as a bellhop in the same position that Sadler had some twenty-five years earlier. Although the religious dedication and fervor at the Sanitarium molded Sadler, by the time Sherman arrived secular forces and attitudes had overtaken the devout religious environment. He did not have benefit of the religious influences which conditioned the direction of Sadler's life.

Sherman dropped out of the University of Michigan in 1918 to serve in the Armed Forces briefly before the cessation of hostilities in November. In 1920 he obtained employment with the Ford Motor company in Detroit where he met and married Martha Bain, a young woman also from Traverse City. They had attended the same schools through high school but did not associate in the same circles. This familiar coincidence probably brought them together in Detroit.

Sherman went on to become a newspaper reporter in Marion, Indiana where he first met Harry Loose in the summer of 1921. That job started him on a writing career, taking him to New York City, to Hollywood, to Chicago, and eventually to the Ozark regions of Arkansas where he retired. From 1926 to 1948 he wrote more than forty short stories and books, mostly about sports. After 1935 his strong interest in mental phenomena led to nearly thirty books devoted to mental and spiritual happiness, interpersonal relationships, and psychic phenomena and research. His most famous job was writing the script for the movie *The Adventures of Mark Twain*, produced by Warner Brothers in 1942.

He also received considerable attention when he connected with Sir Hubert Wilkins, the famous Arctic explorer. They met in New York City in the late 1930's and became good friends. Because of Wilkins's interest in mental phenomena they devised a scheme for telepathy experiments. In 1937 and 1938, when Sherman was in New York City, and Wilkins was at the North Pole, they attempted to communicate with one another. World wide attention by the news media on Wilkins's adventure brought Sherman's name into the spotlight. Their experiments were widely reported. This was done under the supervision of Gardner Murphy, a parapsychologist doing studies at Columbia University. Wilkins was the sender, Sherman the receiver. They claimed considerable success, which Sherman wrote about in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* in March, 1939, and in a book, *Thoughts Through Space*, in 1942.

Late in life Sherman engaged in other occult experimentations, believing he could make out-of-body trips to the planets. Those attempts could not have been too successful; he did not publish the results.

When Sherman wrote to Loose at his address at 123 North Elizabeth Avenue in Los Angeles on January 31, 1941 he received an immediate reply, dated February 5. Sherman printed this letter in *How to Know What to Believe*.

Following is the text of the letter:

Greetings!

May I thank you for your letter. I was not given to expect it until later in the month.

With a good wife and two beautiful and dutiful daughters, you are very fortunate. Mary and Marcia. Both are Biblical. Marcia is a derivative of Martha. I am pleased with your writing success. I congratulate you. You have been helped — as you helped yourself.

I live on a very modest income, in an old brown house in a small and humble suburb of Los Angeles. I drive downtown in twelve minutes. My lot is large but I am a sad farmer. My time is not occupied physically.

Intelligences with whom I am in contact have accomplished much in service to this atom world. I serve in a very humble capacity. My mission has not been completed. I have progressed but had hoped for release and much greater progress before this. Much has been done in regard to the crisis looming for this nation, but the forces in opposition are of tremendous psychic power. An untaught, untrained mind could not comprehend.

Long distance telepathy — or short distance — is much in use and operates perfectly. It has been in operation for thousands of years amongst certain groupings in all periods. Its method is very simple when once understood. Time and space is (sic) nothing. There is nothing REAL but MIND. It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.

I do not know your present development. I have to be careful. I do not want to talk over your head and be misunderstood.

Remember to watch for a tremendous book which will be published in about two years. It has been now thirty-five years in the building. It is not mine but I had something to do with it. You will recognize it when it appears. It will clarify so very much that is already in our present day Bible. It is a true spiritual revelation to this age written by intelligences who have never been earthbound and who have to do with the governing of this tiny earth in this very limited part of the universe. Please believe every astonishing word. It is the TRUTH . . . I KNOW.

I talked with you on the night of July 21st, 1921, in my room in the old Marion Hotel. I knew so little myself then. Life is all an individual proposition — whether there will be growth or not. No one can grow for you. This applies hereafter just as much as here. You will not be satisfied to sit on a damp cloud and play on a four-string harp forever. You would get very tired of it after the first few hundred years. You will find that you will be kept very busy instead of cloud-sitting.

With every good thought to surround and support you and yours — sincerely,
Harry J. Loose.

This was the first time Sherman became aware of *The Urantia Papers*. Given Loose's psychic enthusiasm, and Sherman's keen pursuit of psychic phenomena, the two men formed a bond that led to Sherman's continued interest in Loose and his subsequent experience in Chicago.

The two men had started on their common psychic adventure when they first met in 1921. Upon Sherman's visit to his hotel room, Loose impressed the young Sherman by stating that he had been expecting him for an hour. He then performed a trick of moving a handkerchief from the top of a bureau to his hand. This forever convinced Sherman that Loose had exceptional psychic powers. Although Sherman attempted sporadically over the next two decades to find Loose, he was not successful until the 1941 contact. After Sherman moved to California the two men were in geographical proximity, and could establish close friendship. The remarks by Loose in this letter further convinced Sherman of his psychic abilities.

The two men picked up where they left off in 1921. Sherman continued to show high respect for Loose's psychic prowess. They visited with one another often. Loose then engaged in a weird episode of astral projection to further convince Sherman of his psychic abilities. This episode was reviewed in detail by Martin Gardner; I shall not repeat it here. One cannot determine if Gardner was somehow using it to demonstrate that Loose had strange psychic powers, thus to establish credentials as a person worthy of portraying Sadler's character, or if he merely amused himself in such psychic side trips. Undoubtedly the behavior of Loose helped condition Sherman to the psychic origin of *The Urantia Papers*.

The statements in the 1941 letter to Sherman show Loose's state of mind, his self-deception, and his attempt to deceive Sherman. For example, *I was not given to expect it until later in the month*, or, *Intelligences with whom I am in contact...*, or, *Long distance telepathy ... operates perfectly*, — all show his effort to convince Sherman of his psychic abilities. That Loose perpetrated this delusion, and that Sherman fell in with it without critical evaluation shows the state of mind of both men.

Divine beings do not make arbitrary contact with human mortals, certainly not at the beck and call of immature human kind. How would an immature human mortal acquire such unreal abilities? If long distance telepathy worked so perfectly why is not everyone now using it?

Loose probably began this path of psychic delusion after he first met Sadler, and most likely because of his limited knowledge of the early revelations. As with many others to the present day, the Papers not only provided us with divine Revelation; they also provoked many strange psychic and occult pursuits for those whose hearts were not centered on God.

Sherman swiftly fell in with the spirit of the Loose letter. He certainly gave it high regard to quote it in full in his book. It now provides considerable insight into those two men, men whom Martin Gardner used as the basis for his denigration of Sadler.

With such mental conditioning and psychic expectations Sherman approached Sadler and the Forum in Chicago. These elements shaped his conduct

in the rebellion he brought at 533.

It should be noted here that Loose spoke high praise for *The Urantia Papers*. *It is a true spiritual revelation...*, or, *Please believe every astonishing word*, or, *It is the TRUTH ...I KNOW*, all show his respect for it. This openly stated high regard for the Revelation gives the lie to Sherman's statements in his 1976 book. He had this letter in his files and could not claim loss of memory.

Sherman's later emotional account, more than thirty years later in 1976, did not accurately reflect the episode that took place in the fall of 1942. By going back to more original documents, and the witness of others who were directly involved, we can obtain a better grasp of the actual events, far different from those which Martin Gardner tried to thrust upon us in his intense desire to deny a divine Revelation. As Gardner stated,

Stung by Sadler's charges that he was trying to take control of the Urantia movement, Sherman wrote the following statement of his motives, signed and notarized on September 10, 1942:

To Whom It May Concern:

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that my sole and only interest with respect to the BOOK OF URANTIA is strictly spiritual.

I have not in the past nor do I now or ever desire, nor will I accept, any moneys which might be forthcoming through any efforts of mine in connection with its publication.

By the same token, I seek no identification and glorification of my name in connection with said publication. The use of my name I will not permit, since I believe that this TRUE REVELATION must stand alone, unembarrassed and unencumbered by any human affiliation.

I do now take this occasion to declare and solemnly promise, under oath, once and for all, that no circumstances which can arise in the future can or will compel me to seek mercenary gain for any services rendered with respect to the publication of the BOOK OF URANTIA.

Whatever I possess that I can give in time and services in this work of the Kingdom is gladly offered to my Creator, to the Angels of Progress and to Sonsovocton for the privilege of this service is beyond price.

Signed by me this tenth day of September, 1942.

(The reference to Sonsovocton raises a momentous question, which I shall discuss later.)

I do not doubt Sherman's honest intent in 1942. Honesty was not his problem. Delusion was his problem. He had great respect for the magnificence of the Revelation, for its religious quality, and for its spiritual potentials. He knew no human name should be placed upon it. He also did not see it as an avenue for self gain. With twenty years of experience as an author and student of psychic phenomena he had a good estimate of the small pecuniary gain one might expect from psychic works. A potential for income might exist from sale of such a tre-

mendous work, but that was not Sherman's motive. He recognized that the Papers were far beyond human invention. He realized that they could not have come out of purely human fabrication; some higher power was at work. He had great respect for higher powers, even if in his deluded psychic beliefs. With the potentials the Papers offered he wanted to ensure they would include discussions of psychic phenomena, the foundation of his beliefs.

After the Forum meeting on September 13, 1942 Sherman wrote a letter to Harry Loose later that evening, providing a somewhat different account of events than in his 1976 book. This letter is under seal by Martha Sherman; therefore I can quote only so much as Gardner did in his book *Urantia*. The ellipses indicate text edited out by Gardner.

Sadler appeared before the Forum body himself and welcomed us as his guests, which was my cue that he was taking no chances . . . the implication being that no one should speak out of turn if he is a guest —

I waited until he got ready to dismiss the Forum members for the first hour intermission when I arose and said, 'Dr. Sadler, at the start of this new epoch . . . may I speak to the members of the Forum?'

He immediately bristled and said, 'No, not at this time.'

I stepped out into the aisle from my chair and proceeded up front to stand beside him, saying 'I'm sorry, doctor, but there are some things I *must* say to the Forum.'

He said, 'Sit down! And I'll tell you when you can talk to the Forum. You are a guest in my home. You have no right to speak.'

I said, 'I am a member of the Forum, doctor, and Mrs. Sherman and I are here as outcasts. We have been accused and we have a right to be heard.'

Dr. Sadler repeated, 'Sit down. You are not going to speak now.'

I said, 'Doctor, are you afraid of the truth?'

He said, 'I repeat, you are my guest. Take your seat. There is going to be no argument here.'

I stood my ground and by this time other Forum members, as anticipated, were jumping up. Clyde Bedell, who had been a hold-out before, but who capitulated along with the rest, grabbed my arm and said, 'Harold, you are harming yourself by this stand. The doctor is right in asking you to take your seat. We are all guests here. You wouldn't come into my home and do this, would you?'

I said, 'Clyde, this is different. This is the only place a man may speak of these things and we stand accused. . . . We have a right to defend ourselves.'

Dr. Sadler said, 'If Sherman wants to speak and will take his seat, I'll tell him when he can.'

I said, 'May I speak later today, doctor? I want to speak today.'

He said, 'You will not speak today.'

I said, 'Will you be there when I speak?'

And he said, 'I refuse to answer that.'

Hales was now at my elbow, grabbing my coat lapels and telling me what a good fellow he had always thought I was, and he'd read lots of 'stuff' I'd written, and how I was hurting my cause taking a stand like this — losing respect of all the Forum members.

He kept on talking in this vein, asking me why I wouldn't listen to Clyde Bedell. Then Dent Karle, another 'friend,' . . . tried to intercede, and still I refused to take my seat. Meanwhile Martha was being high-pressured where she sat by women begging her to ask me to come and sit down . . . but Martha was unmoved.

And now Russell Bucklin joined the group around me, with the Kulieke boys, two strapping young men, excitedly asking the doctor if they should throw me out. The doctor didn't quite go for this suggestion although he would have liked to have given the 'go ahead.' Bill Sadler began to edge down the aisle toward the group surrounding me. . . .

I still stood my ground with questions coming from the floor, 'Doctor, do you want us to adjourn?' Some members, men and women, were crying. Others were defiant. I think many felt sheepish that they had lacked the courage to take a stand and had left us to face things down.

. . . I finally agreed to take my seat and managed to get in this comment to the Forum members that we had respect for them and loved them all . . . which statement the doctor tried to prevent . . . but I got it across. At the intermission, many gathered around to shake our hands and express friendship. . . .

I felt absolutely free in my own conscience and do not see how I could have acted differently under the circumstances, although I know the doctor feels he has won a great victory, and Bill was laughing hysterically at the proceedings, which indicates how unstable he is and would be as a leader. The doctor was visibly shaken when I did not immediately take my seat and held the floor for at least fifteen minutes or more. He poured out the syrup thick after the intermission. . . .

Clyde Bedell got hold of me afterward and said, 'Harold, I had a fine opinion of you until today . . . but if you let your ego run away with you after this and do not make a more humble position . . . and stop being impatient . . . your usefulness to the Forum will be entirely impaired. I think the next two weeks are going to decide your fate. I have had to eat humble pie because I got impatient and wanted to see different things done myself.'

I said, 'Clyde, you are not in the same position as Martha and myself or your viewpoint is different. . . . We have been singled out for special punishment and held with an indictment over our heads because the doctor has not made his peace with us. What about his own ego and stubborn pride? Are we always to bow to it . . . is he always right?'

You should know by the time, Harry, that I am not moved by fear.

. . . I felt your presence today . . . and I felt a Great Presence. . . . I want to be so sure that I am in the right. I hope I have not failed today, I repeat, in the eyes of those who are watching. The doctor puts on such a disarming front, he is such an actor, that he wins ready sympathy . . .

I feel good tonight after the ordeal and thank you for your letter. No court action unless a very last resort. Love to you both.

I shall now show the differences in details between this letter written the evening of the events, and his account published in 1976. Remember, Sherman

had a copy of this letter when he wrote his book. Differences had to be the result of intentional design.

1942 LETTER TO HARRY LOOSE	1976 ACCOUNT IN PIPELINE TO GOD
Sadler welcomes everyone as his guests.	Sherman makes no mention of this opening welcome.
Sherman requests permission to address Forum members.	Accuses Sadler of charges made behind his back.
Proceeds to the front of the room, in order to address Forum.	
Insists on his right to be heard as a member of the Forum.	Insists he is innocent of the charges he claims Sadler brought against him, and claims a right to answer them.
Clyde Bedell comes first near him, trying to reason with him.	Sherman's omission of these details shows his fear of presenting a picture of the general consensus among leading members of the Forum who were anxious about his behavior, and generally against his effrontery.
William Hales comes next near him, trying to calm him down.	
Dent Karle next comes near him, trying to intercede.	
Russell Bucklin then joined the group.	
The two Kulieke brothers also joined the group, asking Sadler if they should throw him out.	
Bill Sadler began to edge down the aisle toward the group. According to Sherman he laughed hysterically.	Bill Sadler entered the scene threatening violence.
He agreed to take his seat and continued with the meeting after the intermission.	He went back to Martha and the two left the auditorium.

In our attempt to understand why Sherman elected on this confrontation we should try to estimate his position in the Forum, and with Sadler. How did others look upon him? His ideas of their views of him flavored his actions. At that point he felt many were dissatisfied with Sadler, and that he was merely serving as a spokesman for them, while accomplishing his goals of psychic contribution. Then, as now, many Forum members probably were attracted to the idea of psychic substance in the Papers, just as Loose was.

He used Clyde Bedell's dissatisfaction with Sadler's administrative policies as a path to Sadler. Although Bedell was opposed to any suggestion of psychic content, he held strong influence within the group, and therefore would serve Sherman's purpose. Sherman persuaded Bedell to write the Petition, based on that other dissatisfaction. Many Forum members were similarly concerned about Sadler's autocratic policies for the future publication and care of the Revelation. Bedell could serve to focus that dissatisfaction. Sherman intentionally used this environment as a foot hold to accomplish interjection of psychic material.

If he had merely written letters they could be ignored. They would offer no significant impact on the general sentiment of the Forum members. It was obvious through the summer experience that private meetings with members, and forming a silent rebel group, were inconsequential in altering Sadler's policies. Sadler had outflanked him. Many of the Forum members had been around for many years; they had developed a heavy faith in Sadler's competence and, through the interplay of questions and answers, had a powerful background on procedures for acceptance of revelation material. Sherman struggled to interpose his interests into that weighty trust.

But Sherman misjudged the group, the circumstances, and the environment. He obviously did not have a good estimate of the relationships among members, or where their allegiances ultimately lay. He probably thought that he carried as much weight as old-timers, perhaps based on his reputation as a writer. Thus he was forced to a public challenge; he had to create a scene which would bring open acknowledgment of his contentions. But in this he failed also; he simply did not recognize the forces arrayed against him.

The bitterness of his failure rankled within him to the end of his life, and led to the distorted account in his 1976 book.

The Loose-Sherman correspondence continued well into 1943 until shortly before the death of Loose. Loose often commiserated with Sherman, and continued to provide strong emotional support for Sherman's feelings about Sadler.

The intensity of feelings which these two men had developed for Sadler from their reciprocal excitation is indicated by a remark Loose made in one of the letters.

The truth is that Sadler is mentally unsound. A paranoid with a religio-power complex — feverishly grasping for greater jurisdiction over the mentalities of the many . . . O, that Dr. Lena had lived. How different developments would have been today! Sadler has the usual evidence of long latent, and of these later years, aroused, *mental* sadism, which is just as definite, and fully recognized as a condition of physical sadism.

The more intelligent and stable personalities of the Forum certainly did not feel that way about Sadler. How Martin Gardner could have arrived at this conclusion from an unstable Loose, as an accurate characterization of Sadler, probably is an indication of Gardner's own declining mental acuteness.

Furthermore, what mysterious court action Sherman thought he might be able to bring against Sadler is strange, indeed. For being a guest in Sadler's home? For defamation of character when he appeared to be threatening Sadler's person?

Clyde Bedell was terribly upset by Sherman's charge against Sadler. Although he tried to pacify the situation he did not express his true feelings, at least not as reported by Sherman. When Sherman published his Chapter on the Rebellion in 1976 Bedell experienced seething indignation. It was a distortion and perversion of reality, of events, and of the character of the people who participated. Bedell thereupon composed a reply to Sherman which was never published but which circulated within the Urantia community. It was a vigorous denunciation of Sherman and his fabrication. I reproduce the text in the next chapter.

Who was Clyde Bedell?

Clyde was born in Des Moines, Iowa, on April 25, 1898. His high school classmates were impressed with his perseverance and leadership abilities. Beneath his picture in the High School Yearbook is the statement, "A boy in whose dictionary the word 'can't' does not appear." He was universally liked. He was also in many school activities including the basketball squad, track team, boy's glee club, debate captain, and editor of the yearbook. Because he came from a poor family, he had to drop out of Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) after one year. He went on to drive truck ten hours a day for six months, dug ditches and laid gas pipe. He was a helper on a moving van. He got up at 4:00 a. m. to fry doughnuts over a huge vat of boiling oil for six hours, only to clean up and sell clothing the rest of the day.

His first real job was with an advertising agency in Dallas, Texas at the age of 24. He quickly seized upon this opportunity to write copy for two accounts then in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Through advertising he raised \$50,000 by mail from osteopaths, certainly a lot of money for the early 1920's. He then moved to Chicago where he joined another advertising firm, and eventually moved on to Butler Brothers, the world's largest wholesalers, selling mostly by mail. As Director of Sales and Advertising he headed a department with over 500 people and a sales staff of 250. He was authorized to spend more than \$2,000,000 on mail order advertising, and hundreds of thousands more on testing of specialty selling. He continued exploration of copy styles and standards. This led to a book, *The Seven Keys To Retail Profits*, published by McGraw-Hill, which became a best seller in the 1930's and 1940's, and went through twenty printings. It was lauded by many business leaders of his day. He then acquired the advertising account of the N. W. Ayer ad agency for the Ford Motor Company, and sold a Ford national training program against a half dozen avid competitors, personally creating every word and detail of the course. That work led Ford to beat Chevrolet in sales that year.

Clyde then took a job with James O. McKinsey who became Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Marshall Field & Co. in Chicago. While there he wrote an institutional column seven days a week, and spent over \$2,000,000 in promotion and advertising during the depths of the 1930's depression. He then moved to lecturing at Northwestern University where he wrote *How To Write Advertising Copy That Sells*, a book that was the best seller for advertising copy for twenty years. He was the first person named to the Advertising Hall of Fame. When 2,000 Advertising and Promotion Executives were polled he received over 65% of the votes although only six individuals were nominated.

Harry Lewis Byrd, in his book *This Fascinating Advertising Business* called Bedell the foremost teacher and writer in creative advertising. George Nichols, longtime editor of *Printer's Ink*, called Clyde one of the top ten copywriters in the United States, and nowhere near the bottom of that list.

He received many other accolades for his important contributions to the advertising trade.

He and his wife had two sons, the oldest, Barrie, took over his independent business when he retired, and Jeffrey, who became a communication specialist for Lockheed Aircraft Company. Clyde died in 1985.

His son Barrie kindly supplied me with a copy of the infamous *Petition* which led to so much turmoil in 1942. You can quickly recognize that it does not carry the dire content implied by Sherman. Following is the text:

NOTE TO THE READER:

Publication of this Petition here is intended for your private information and use. It shall not be copied to other public media sources, reprinted, or republished without the express written consent of Barrie Bedell. You may contact Barrie at PO Box 30571, Santa Barbara, CA 93130.

THE PETITION

Dear Dr. Sadler:

I

We, the undersigned, about to address you formally on a matter of vital importance to us all, cannot refrain from taking this opportunity to pay you the homage and respect which — despite our affection for you — we have expressed all to ineffectually and too infrequently through the years.

We wish to say to you that — with the Forum group approaching its first season as an independent informal group with no specifically designed task to sustain through the year — we are suddenly acutely aware of the preciousness to us of the years we have been associated with you, our friend and mentor.

We wish to appraise you of our sincere appreciation of what you have meant to us personally through the years in which we have enjoyed companionship with you. We have delighted in your humor, your revealing anecdotes and illustrations, your

kindness and your supreme devotion to the great experience which drew us all together.

We wish to register how impressed it is in our hearts that you have been singularly honored in connection with *The Urantia Papers*. Our emotions crowd within us when we face the fact that it was through you as an integrating focal point that the magnificent experience of the Forum touched our lives.

We are proudly aware that in future worlds, our beloved Doctor of these long and fascinating years, will be pointed out for the part he played in the Urantia Revelation.

Dear friend, this tribute to you has been earned to a degree we cannot express in words. Not one of us whose life you have touched but is better for it. We will be forever grateful for everything you have meant to us in the days which have brought us to this vital, moving, momentous fall of 1942.

II

We, the undersigned, facing for the first time a season of independent association with each other, you, and *The Urantia Papers*, have been impelled to newly appraise the situation in which we find ourselves, and in which we may ultimately find ourselves, in relation to the Urantia Revelation.

Owing a responsibility to the Revelatory Corps, we view the future gravely and with yearning for an auspicious introduction of the Urantia Book to the world.

In a very few years, it may be possible to look upon the printed Book we have so long followed in manuscript form with mingled awe, reverence and thanksgiving.

We know *The Urantia Papers* plan has been in the making for many years. We know that it has evolved and changed, sometimes radically, in the past.

We know the opinions held by the Contact Commissioners in the past, have on occasion been altered or modified under new light and in new circumstances.

We know that the papers themselves, at the hand of their high creators, have been changed and amplified and made to evolve as our mortal minds were put to them.

We know that the Angels of Progress are not entirely pleased with what we have thus far done in contemplation of publication, protection and dissemination of the Urantia Revelation.

All of the above emboldens us to suggest that in this vital and pregnant period, the group mind of the Forum should be employed to analyze and appraise the potentials inherent in the coming months.

We believe the Forum people as a group should turn with the most earnest effort toward the consideration and development of as much sound groundwork as is possible in all the practical aspects of this Book's future.

Respectfully, but most earnestly, we request an opportunity to know all the facts in connection with, and all the provisions concerning, the Urantia Book and the proposed associated organization as their plans exist today.

To this date, no group opportunity has been offered to study, to freely discuss or to examine charters, articles of incorporation, by-laws, et cetera, of the several contemplated organizations.

To this date, earnest Forum members, many with sound experience, judgment and ability, have had no opportunity for frank and full expression of opinions based on familiarity with these organization plans which have been brought to elaborated state by the Contact Commissioners and outside aides.

We believe legal talent is justifiably used in formulating certain instruments which implement the Urantia Book plans. But we do not feel that Forum people should be excluded from full and complete understanding of all instruments identified with the Book for which we have a grave and undeniable responsibility as individuals.

Our responsibility incurred through months or years as Forum members does not drop from our shoulders with dissolution of the Forum as a formal body. All of us will be affected vitally by the future of this Book — and in view of the responsibility we feel toward it, and which the Book imposes upon us, we feel we have a right to understand all the terms of contracts or of formal organizations which have grown out of our collective experience.

There have been no restrictions on our examining, handling and reading — individually or in groups — the Papers which must transcend all the man-created documents to which we have not had free access, and about which our fullest judgment has never been brought.

We believe it is relevant that our questions were sought in connection with the Revelation itself. Our judgments, we have reason to believe, were observed and weighed again and again in connection with matters of great importance to untold unborn generations of men. The Forum has been used as a sounding board against which revealing truths were tried.

We believe our group should be trusted with the very natural task of serving as a human jury in connection with some of the proposals about which we are not fully familiar.

We believe there is sufficient intelligence, experience, and good judgment in the Forum group to provide fair analysis and invaluable reaction in the grave matter of the foundation, the brotherhood, the publication plans, et cetera — which are, after all, the proposals of mortal men.

III

Respectfully, we submit our opinion that it should be not only the privilege, but the unmistakable duty of the Forum group, to sincerely and prayerfully ponder what is projected in connection with the Revelation to which our hearts, our minds, our hopes and our aspirations have been dedicated.

We, the undersigned, deem it incumbent upon ourselves — and such others of our group as feel a responsibility toward the Urantia Revelation, but whose wishes we have not ascertained in the matter — to turn our attention now to friendly and sincere consideration, analysis and appraisal of the man-made plans for dissemination and protection of the God-made manuscript which is so dear and important to us all.

We propose, preferably with help from you, to follow our consciences and promptings in this matter. We seek your permission to discuss these organizations

and publishing affairs deliberately, without haste and by arrangements as our group may elect in terms of full meetings, committees, report-backs, et cetera, — but in any event first as follows: (a) Forum Room, 533 Diversey Pkwy, (b) beginning Sunday, September 13th, 1942, (c) under the leadership of a chairman of our own choosing, (d) with the essential papers, charters, articles of incorporation, et cetera to be made available to a committee later.

We point out and commend to your consideration the following:

- There is no need for — and there is great weight of solemn honesty and sincerity against — precipitant action under present circumstances in finally and formally closing up publishing, and, or any organization, affairs which have been forming for at least ten years.
- Forum people cannot have been expected to assimilate from an annual reading the essential forms, many ramifications, connotations and potentialities in a formidable series of documents which legal talent and highly intelligent laymen took months and even years to formulate.
- Morally and ethically, those whose lives may be affected profoundly by these organizations and arrangements are entitled to analyze what their years of interest, good faith and forbearance helped to bring into reality.
- Legally, those who provide financial support for any collective effort, are entitled to a full accounting and understanding of the potentials of the corporate or other bodies their contributions are used to bring into being, or to which their contributions are entrusted.
- Should this specific group be denied the privilege of deliberately considering and fully understanding these subjects because it is feared the group will disagree on details, fail to appreciate the problems involved, or disapprove of some phases of the plans — that fear augurs ill for the Urantia Book if ever it is launched into the world with such plans for its cradle.
- We believe that unity, if not uniformity, should prevail in our small Forum group which has been so signally blest in this association. We believe that such unity should be achieved as a matter of deliberate accord — not through blindness, unawareness, or inadequate consideration. We believe that our unity should come out of frank discussion, magnanimous give and take, and a fair humility toward the views of others.

IV

We do not question the sincerity, honesty or conscientiousness of any associated with this matter.

We do question the infallibility, the inviolability, the long time perspectives, the soundness and the validity of an complex set of legal plans destined to vitally affect the future of men if such plans cannot stand the scrutiny, inquiry, examination and analysis of men.

V

Dear friend, may we have full and adequate enlightenment, your further confidence and your cooperation?

(A hand-written note by C. Barrie Bedell, undated, at the bottom of the copy says Signed by 6, or possibly 7, Forumites.)

From the evidence presented in the preceding chapter and here we see that the policies of William Salder brought focus on two concerns: a) changes made to the Revelation, and b) autocratic control of the Revelation.

The first was Sherman’s concern; the second was Clyde Bedell’s.

These two concerns blended into the Petition written by Bedell.

Clearly Bedell was not concerned about changes. Although he remarks about them, he places them into the context of the total process extending over many years.

Sherman, as an outsider, had forced a more conscious assessment of the relationship between Sadler and the Forum, heretofore taken for granted:

We, the undersigned, facing for the first time a season of independent association with each other, you, and The Urantia Papers, have been impelled to newly appraise the situation in which we find ourselves, and in which we may ultimately find ourselves, in relation to the Urantia Revelation.

Bedell wanted to keep things straight:

Owing a responsibility to the Revelatory Corps, we view the future gravely and with yearning for an auspicious introduction of the Urantia Book to the world.

But Bedell accepted the changes as part of an unfolding process:

We know The Urantia Papers plan has been in the making for many years. We know that it has evolved and changed, sometimes radically, in the past.

Bedell does not describe the details of these “radical” changes. We do not know if he had reference to the reciprocal process of questions and answers, or if he refers to the recent changes taking place under the auspices of a new revelatory regime.

He point out the fact that Sadler was subject to the “whims” of the “revelatory regime” and cannot claim infallibility to decisions.

We know the opinions held by the Contact Commissioners in the past, have on occasion been altered or modified under new light and in new circumstances.

Bedell again makes reference to the changes:

We know that the papers themselves, at the hand of their high creators, have been changed and amplified and made to evolve as our mortal minds were put to them.

He then identifies an obligation to the “new” revelatory regime. He makes a mysterious reference to the Angels of Progress. There is no explanation of the causes of their displeasure.

We know that the Angels of Progress are not entirely pleased with what we have thus far done in contemplation of publication, protection and dissemination of the Urantia Revelation.

Thus it appears that some contention about policies had already been encountered, to create uncertainty in decisions.

Bedell then uses this as a basis to justify his plea to Sadler.

All of the above emboldens us to suggest that in this vital and pregnant period, the group mind of the Forum should be employed to analyze and appraise the potentials inherent in the coming months.

We believe the Forum people as a group should turn with the most earnest effort toward the consideration and development of as much sound groundwork as is possible in all the practical aspects of this Book's future.

In this manner Bedell deflects Sherman's concern into the more practical demands of publication and human responsibility to the Revelation.

Clearly, Bedell did not see the revelatory changes as important. He understood them as part of a divine process.

A number of other important points are revealed by this document.

a. It carries a definite historical quality, not influenced by later fading memories, or individual interpretations derived from emotional, intellectual, or religious desires.

b. It carries the unique hand of Clyde Bedell in its phraseology and styling. The wordy and flowery language, conveying deep-felt concerns and hopes, could only be his.

c. Section I provides a lengthy address to Sadler, expressing great respect, and paving the way for his possible reaction. There was an obvious deep concern about his feelings. He was held in great respect, almost in awe.

d. The document indicates a new state of affairs among the Forumites, Sadler's custody of the Papers, and anticipation of future association in their legal care.

e. It grants concession to those who may have been Forum members for only a short time. *Our responsibility incurred through months or years...* shows inclusion of Harold Sherman who appeared on the scene only four months before.

f. It shows a deep emotional attachment of the Forumites to the Papers. They do not consider future actions as those which should be made independently by Sadler.

g. An open complaint is made that the Forumites have had no opportunity *to study, to freely discuss or to examine charters, articles of incorporation, by-law, et cetera, of the several contemplated organizations.* This was a concern among the Forumites for at least ten years. With Clyde Bedell's business background it

was especially important to him.

h. Bedell, as spokesman for the Forumites, *respectfully but most earnestly* wants an opportunity to know all the facts about the proposed plans.

i. Bedell was fully aware that the incipient plans were in a pregnant state of affairs. Now was the time to formalize the relationships of the Forumites with the proposed (but unexplained) legal structures and their management.

j. Bedell points out that if the Revelators felt so strongly about the reactions and questions of the Forumites in the preparation of the Revelation, why would they not give equal consideration to the publication and management of the Papers after they came to the world? If the Forum was used as a sounding board for the generation of the Papers, why should they not be used as a counseling body for the publication?

k. Bedell carries this thought beyond mere privilege; he insists it is one of duty. He attempts to reinforce the importance of this concern upon Sadler.

l. He repeatedly reasserts the duty of the Forumites to be participants in these future developments in a list of points. Not the least of these concerns was the monetary contributions of the Forumites toward that future publication. He believes there was a legal obligation for Sadler to provide an accounting of the monies.

m. Bedell had an excellent sense of the human and legal repercussions of Sadler's policies.

n. There was an obvious sense of imminent steps toward publication. Dramatic alterations were being made in relationships and in custody of the Papers. Bedell, with his keen business sense, wished to forestall foolish actions.

He was correct, as we shall see.

In this chapter I have tried to show that Harold Sherman was influenced by Harry Loose, that they were both enamored of psychic activity, and that Sherman's criticism of Dr. Sadler had no foundation — as seen through the eyes of Clyde Bedell.

From the evidence we can gather some sense of the forces which faced Sadler, and the dangers to the Revelation.

But the real dangers were not grasped. A visible Harold Sherman with his human manipulations is easy to identify; an invisible spirit being corrupting the Revelation by deep deception is not so easily discerned.