

(This letter is a response to a Urantian ... I deleted his name. Larry M

Hi _____:

Sorry I took so long on this. We are swamped and I wanted to include some interesting information. If you have seen it, forgive me.

You asked: “How do you (a Historian with a keen interest in the origins of the Urantia Book) answer to Matthew Block's assertions that Dr Sadler may have been commissioned, along with other multiple human authors and personalities, to write portions that would either concurrently or later be included in what we now know as The Urantia Book? I ask because the charge always comes up that Dr Sadler's personal views on many subjects, as evidenced in his books and talks, were “suspiciously” parallel to the material found in the UB (before its inception on paper). And skeptics, including Gardner, say that Dr Sadler's literary style is very similar to that of the writing in the UB.”

As you know, I have expressed my opinion on these issues often. I am very familiar with the work of several of those people who claim that Sadler wrote the book or large portions of it. However, to my knowledge, myself and Meredith Sprunger are the only writers who have read the Urantia Papers extensively and also have read several books by Dr. Sadler. (I have about ten.) To me the claim that Sadler's style indicates he authored the Papers is one that could only be made by a novice in writing. His style is not even close. In addition, Sadler was not a philosopher and there are many philosophical concepts in the Papers that suggest answers to questions that most people have no idea exist. In fact, at the urging of a philosopher I read close to twenty philosophical texts before I began to understand the richness and depth of the Papers.

But all of that aside, you have heard all my arguments. Perhaps we should examine what legitimate theological scholars say about these issues. Fortunately, many scholars are now taking the Papers seriously. The most recent (and most important I think) is an anthology by the Cambridge University Press (of England) titled “The Invention of the Sacred Tradition.” It was edited by two esteemed

scholars, James R. Lewis and Olav Hammer, and it includes the work of a few dozen scholars. The paper by Sara Lewis on the Urantia Papers is fascinating. I have attached it, since it addresses the issues from a scholarly, dispassionate point of view. I was honored that she took the History seriously and respected the research I had done. If you read this carefully, I believe you will find a different, unbiased view on authorship refreshing. (I have suggested this book to several Urantians, but none seem very interested.)

In the Introduction to the book, James R. Lewis and Hammer made these comments about the Urantia Papers:

“One way to avoid difficulties with unsympathetic outsiders might conceivably be to deny human authorship altogether and to decline to enter into the details of historical transmission. In her chapter (10) on a modern, purportedly revealed text, *The Urantia Book*, Sarah Lewis shows that even this refusal to discuss how the tradition took shape has invited problems. The text of *The Urantia Book* was vaguely said to consist of a lengthy series of messages transmitted by a "being" to a "sleeping subject" or "contact personality," and recorded under the auspices of six people collectively known as the "Contact Commission." With no authorial attribution, the people who made the book public presumably attempted to avoid the risk of having the message understood by outsiders as a human construction. Unexpectedly, the refusal of the Urantia Foundation to accept any human agency in the transmission of the text led to legal problems. The Foundation was challenged about its rights to the book, on the grounds that a divine author cannot be granted copyright under United States law.”

All this material does not definitively “prove” anything. It only points in the direction of individual faith. When my daughter died and I read the Papers twice through in a few months (it’s been about 35 years ago now,) I closed the Book

with the mental comment: “This may not be the way things are, but it ought to be.” I wanted to believe the Papers so badly that my sanity seemed to depend upon the truth that Vicki is still alive somewhere and I will hold her in my semi-material arms some day. In the same respect, I believe a thousand years from now _____ and I will sit down in some celestial refreshment spot and you will say to me: “Well Larry, what have you learned since we last talked?”

Even so, my conviction was solidified from two extraordinary passages in the Urantia Papers. One was the passage about materialism based upon the famous rant by Bertrand Russell, and the sublime response (strangely situated on the previous page). Here is my commentary from the History and the Russell rant, plus the sublime (in my judgment) response:

“However, I suspect that no logical argument could convince a closed-minded doubter that the synthesis of new information with existing information is precisely one of the goals that the Urantia Papers tell us epochal revelation seeks to achieve. For the new reader, I will give one example of this process and let each individual decide. There is a passage in the Urantia Papers that is said to be a virtual paraphrased version of a message by Bertrand Russell, purportedly delivered to a college graduating class decades before the Urantia Papers were published. It is ponderous, negative, and seems to ring of typical intellectual existential orientation:

“To the unbelieving materialist, man is simply an evolutionary accident. His hopes of survival are strung on a figment of mortal imagination; his fears, loves, longings, and beliefs are but the reaction of the incidental juxtaposition of certain lifeless atoms of matter. No display of energy nor expression of trust can carry him beyond the grave. The devotional labors and inspirational genius of the best of men are doomed to be extinguished by death, the long and lonely night of eternal oblivion and soul extinction. Nameless despair is man’s only reward for living and

toiling under the temporal sun of mortal existence. Each day of life slowly and surely tightens the grasp of a pitiless doom which a hostile and relentless universe of matter has decreed shall be the crowning insult to everything in human desire which is beautiful, noble, lofty, and good.” [1118, par. 1]

“Now consider the positive counter-argument that appears in the Urantia Papers on the page prior to the comments above. This rebuttal may be from some human writing that has been long lost to us, and is being restored to us by the Revelators. Or, as I believe at this point, it may be completely original and wonderfully inspired. In any case, it could hardly be more appropriate:

“[True] Religion assures man that, in following the gleam of righteousness discernible in his soul, he is thereby identifying himself with the plan of the Infinite and the purpose of the Eternal. Such a liberated soul immediately begins to feel at home in this new universe, his universe.

“When you experience such a transformation of faith, you are no longer a slavish part of the mathematical cosmos but rather a liberated volitional son of the Universal Father. No longer is such a liberated son fighting alone against the inexorable doom of the termination of temporal existence; no longer does he combat all nature, with the odds hopelessly against him; no longer is he staggered by the paralyzing fear that, perchance, he has put his trust in a hopeless phantasm or pinned his faith to a fanciful error.

“Now, rather, are the sons of God enlisted together in fighting the battle of reality’s triumph over the partial shadows of existence. At last all creatures become conscious of the fact that God and all the divine hosts of a well-nigh limitless universe are on their side in the supernal struggle to attain eternity of life and divinity of status. Such faith-liberated sons have certainly enlisted

in the struggles of time on the side of the supreme forces and divine personalities of eternity; even the stars in their courses are now doing battle for them; at last they gaze upon the universe from within, from God's viewpoint, and all is transformed from the uncertainties of material isolation to the sureties of eternal spiritual progression. Even time itself becomes but the shadow of eternity cast by Paradise realities upon the moving panoply of space." [1117, par. 1-3]

“This is revelation, and it speaks for itself beyond any rhetoric or argument I could add. One grasps this or one does not. This is but one example among countless others of the power of the Revelation to transcend the common parameters of human creative thought. For myself and other Urantians who have experienced the Urantia Papers for many years, and who have long enjoyed the spiritual richness and challenging insights of the Revelation, there is simply no room to doubt its authenticity.”

That's about it, _____. Sorry to be so long-winded. Was the Book written by Sadler? Who knows, really? Ours is a religion of the spirit, not a religion about a Book. Feynman once said: “Science is not important. Love is.” Likewise, who wrote the Book is not important. Love is.

Peace and Love,

Larry