

Meredith Sprunger, 1915-2012

Urantian

We will never see his like again.

Dr. Meredith Justin Sprunger was devoted Urantian, serving in numerous capacities including President of the original Urantia Brotherhood. Meredith authored many Urantia Book derivative works, including his book, *Spiritual Psychology* (Jemenon, 1988). Few would dispute that Dr. Sprunger was probably the most reliable source of first-hand information about the intriguing origin and history of the Urantia Papers. He personally knew and worked with all the members of the original contact commission with the exception of Dr. Lena Sadler. Moreover, Meredith became an intimate colleague of Dr. William Sadler (1875-1969), the prominent Chicago psychiatrist who led the Forum, safeguarded the Urantia Papers, and oversaw the publication of *The Urantia Book* in 1955.

Like Dr. Sadler, Meredith had a distinguished career aside from his interest in the Urantia Papers. He was a college president, a professor, and an executive administrator. He taught at Elmherst College and the Indiana Institute of Technology where he functioned as the head of the Department of Psychology, Chairman of the Division of Liberal Arts, and as President. Dr. Sprunger was a licensed and practicing psychologist and therapist, and an ordained minister. He served congregations in the Midwest. These two extraordinary men first met at Dr. Sadler's home in Chicago shortly after *The Urantia Book* was published, on May 7, 1958. Meredith led a group of eleven ministers who had read *The Urantia Book* and who wanted to learn more about how it came to be. From that date until his mid-nineties Dr. Sprunger served both Urantia Foundation and the Urantia Book Fellowship as a loyal and dedicated Urantian. Throughout the years of turmoil in the movement, Meredith held steady as a reliable and wise leader and emitted a light that all of us could rely upon.

I first met Meredith in the mid-seventies at a Urantia conference. In those days, the older Urantians were rather secretive and closed, especially about matters concerning the materialization of the Urantia Papers. However, I found Meredith quite open and gracious. Over

the years I developed a warm relationship with him and his wife, Irene. He assisted me in many projects, and when my wife, Joan, suggested that I attempt to write a reliable history of the Urantia Papers, I turned to Meredith. Without his help, I knew it would not be possible to shift through the misinformation and bizarre theories about the materialization of the Urantia Papers. His only stipulation was that we would follow and document the truth wherever it led, and so we did. Dr. Sprunger provided a sworn affidavit for the Appendixes of our History. I can only offer a portion of it here, but it is important for every Urantian to read:

“I have studied The Urantia Book in depth for over forty years, and I am likewise convinced that the authorship of the text was superhuman, and that it was materialized by unprecedented means that are not fully understood. In my best professional and personal opinion, I am absolutely convinced there was no human authorship or creative input, and there were no human editorial decisions involved with the materialization of the Urantia Papers. I believe the truth of what Dr. Sadler wrote—and personally disclosed to me numerous times: the Urantia Papers were published just as received, and the contact commission had no editorial authority whatever, and its role was confined solely to the clerical tasks of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Neither did the forum members contribute to the creative contents of the Urantia Papers. The forum was similar to a modern focus group in that they were used by the celestial authors solely as a gauge to measure human understanding.”

LARRY MULLINS