

Early Religious Development, as
Depicted in The Urantia Book

Robert Milton Underwood, Jr.

© 2009

Early Religious Development, as
Depicted in The Urantia Book

Introduction

With its 2097 pages, The Urantia Book has intrigued spiritual seekers since its publication in 1955. The word Urantia refers to our planet Earth, and it is an incredibly detailed book covering innumerable diverse topics of our globe and universe. Authoritative in tone, it reads like a history book, but it also includes detailed information about countless subjects including, but not limited to, philosophy, theology, sociology, religion, geology, spirituality, oceanography, anthropology, physics, astronomy, psychology, and cosmology. At the heart of the book is the role of God in the creation of our universe, and of the roles of numerous other levels of spiritual beings. That the source of its information is indeterminate adds to its intrigue for those who believe in its truths, but adds fodder for criticism for those who are suspicious of its origins. Regardless of issues associated with its origins, it provides much insightful information. What follows is the view from The Urantia Book of the evolutionary and revelatory development of religion.

Evolutionary Religion

Animals are primarily fear-based, due to their natural instincts for self-preservation. Except for humans, animals don't have illusions that they can conceptualize, and thus have no religion. Primitive religions were based on both fears and illusions (944). Early religion was wholly emotional, not spiritual, and objects of worship were essentially things or occurrences with which humans had regular or periodic associations. The first object to be worshipped was a stone (944). Early man was fascinated not only by the stones that turned up in fields after being

uncovered by storms, but were especially intrigued by meteorites that fell out of the sky. Many primitive cultures today still have stone fetishes and sacred stones.

Hill worship followed stone worship, with primitive peoples believing that the spirits of the unknown lived in the grandeur of nearby hills. Higher mountains were also special as they were closer to the mysteriousness “up there.”

Plants were next to be worshipped, especially because of their real or imagined medicinal powers, and also since intoxicating beverages could be made from some of them. They thought that being in an altered state (from those plants that were intoxicating) brought them closer to the mysteries of the unknown (945).

Early humans also came to venerate some animals, especially those with keen senses or strong physical strength. Some mythical animals, like centaurs and dragons, were created to represent great power in animals. Some animals were not actually worshipped, but instead were religious symbols or religious representations of a forgotten god or a vanished cult (946).

Humans have also worshipped the four original elements of the antediluvian world: earth, air, fire, and water. Numerous religious practices still include rituals with water. Harsh weather, storms, and lightning, have also been both feared and worshipped.

Religion naturally evolved to include worship of the visible heavenly bodies (viz., moon, sun, and stars). Moon worship was of value when humans were hunter-gatherers since its illumination extended hunting hours. Sun worship came later as mankind evolved into an agrarian society with the sun's properties being recognized as vital to crop growth (947).

Humans also worshipped other humans, especially when the position in society of the worshipped was one of power. Individuals who were outside of the norm (e.g., epileptics, lunatics) were often revered for their mysteriousness. Tribal chiefs were frequently deified after

their deaths, and some even demanded veneration while still living.

The worship of nature seems to have developed naturally. But also present in the minds of humans at this stage of their development was a spirit that “was constantly stimulating the worship urge of the human species, no matter how primitive its first manifestations might have been” (948). It was an innate spiritual component. When humans developed beyond a certain level, they became more likely to worship not nature and natural phenomenon, but the creator of those things.

The early primitives were guided more by emotional responses than by analytical thinking. Their earliest fears of nature gradually became religious in nature as the thinking brain became more discerning. The notion of chance and luck weighed heavily on early humans. Each day was a struggle for existence, and on any given day, that struggle could result in either good fortune or bad fortune. Existence itself was a game of chance, and eventually chance became personified in the form of spirits, and eventually as gods. Bad luck could certainly be devastating. Not finding material causes to explain bad luck, man instead chose an explanation attributed to invisible spirits. Religion thus was born out of fear of the unknown. The primitive mind was so unsophisticated that it couldn't properly comprehend the concept of cause and effect. If one event followed another, it was likely to be believed that it had been caused by the prior event.

Besides the mysteriousness of nature, early man was profoundly perplexed by death. It was the fear of death, rather than the sanctity of life, that fostered the growth of religion (952). Death could come about both violently and nonviolently, but it was arguably one of the greatest unknowns that spawned a vague concept of ghosts. Man realized his weakness against the life and death struggle, and therefore looked to the supernatural world for answers.

Humans eventually believed that there was something immaterial about the human body for two reasons. First, dreams at night would produce images of lost loved ones, thereby giving the idea (upon awakening) of an invisible world (i.e., that of ghosts and spirits). Secondly, humans knew that the breath only escaped from the bodies of the living, and this was noticeably obvious in the colder months. The thought was that something immaterial was a part of, but also exiting, the body. “The most primitive idea of the human soul, the ghost, was derived from the breath-dream idea-system” (953). This concept of a ghost-soul led to the beliefs that there could be life after death, and explains why ancient cultures like the Egyptians were so fastidious about elaborate tomb and sarcophagus construction.

Ancient peoples thought that the soul could leave the body temporarily through dreaming or fainting, and would leave the body permanently upon death. “Man inherited a natural environment, acquired a social-environment, and imagined a ghost environment” (955). But what was imagined was evolving into more complex concepts of the unknown and unseen world.

Because of worries about bad fortune, and because of their primitive views of cause and effect, early man wanted to do the “right” thing so that the imagined spirits would not be displeased. Numerous superstitious actions were done for the sake of good fortune. They didn’t want the unwelcome consequences they believed would be forthcoming if the spirit-ghosts were displeased. The Urantia Book explained the folly of such superstitious beliefs as follows:

With the emergence of these concepts, there was initiated the long and wasteful struggle to appease the ever-displeased spirits, the slavish bondage to evolutionary religious fear, that long waste of human effort upon tombs, temples, sacrifices, and priesthoods. It was a terrible and frightful price to pay, but it was worth all it cost, for man therein achieved a natural consciousness of relative right and wrong; human ethics was born! (956).

The importance of the development of ethics was that man could not even begin to imagine a fair and dependable God “until he himself became relatively dependable, moral, and

ethical” (983). Later on, as mankind’s ethical standards were raised, people had difficulty imagining a *loving* God unless they too became more loving. The role of Jesus was therefore to show humanity how loving God could be.

Religion was originally a creation for the purposes of self-maintenance. But it was erroneously based on an illusory ghost world. “Religion represents man’s adjustment to his illusions of the mystery of chance. Spirit fear and subsequent worship were adopted as insurance against misfortune, as prosperity policies” (962). Besides worrying about offending any particular ghost-spirit, a sense of good spirits and bad spirits arose. This dualism reflected advancement in philosophic thought in that both good and bad represented distinct paradigms of thought. It was more advanced than the prior concept of temperamental monospiritism. But it was still a false dichotomy of good and bad and it prevented a sense of cosmic unity from developing in human minds.

Eventually, there developed an expanded philosophy that included three qualities (963): (a) duty—things *must* be done to placate the spirits; (b) right—the things that must be done must be the *right* things to do to favorably win over the spirits, including proper conduct, ceremonies, and rituals; and (c) truth—the proper understanding of the spirits, and the attitude toward life and death.

So, religion evolved not just as a way to stave off bad luck, but to foster good luck. Ritual practices, oaths, pledges, actions of austerity—all were done to gain positively from the spirit world. Self-denial was also seen as a way to appease the spirits and its legacy of austerity as an element of piety continues to this day in some religions.

It wasn’t just actions, but words themselves that were important. Words became fetishes, especially if they were said to be from God. Words eventually combined as language and writing

developed to create sacred writings. Sacred writings and sacred books represented an advancement over, and enhancement to, ritualistic practices. There are many unique words in The Urantia Book, and it has, in the truest sense, become a sacred book to its believers.

Magic was eventually valued as a way to appease the spirits. Despite fear of spirits, early man didn't think they were necessarily very astute, and tried to outsmart them. For example, dead bodies in some cultures were removed through a hole in the wall of the dwelling instead of the front door to trick ghosts and to prevent them from lingering about. Magical spells and rituals eventually led to the rigors of modern science, as humans have always been incredibly curious, and have always been trying to expand knowledge of the unknown.

Religion evolved from that of placation to that of supplication. Humans began to *ask* for what they wanted. They wanted para-human help, and they needed assistance beyond what normal humans were ordinarily capable of. Shamans acted like middle men in numerous cultures to "interpret" what the gods wanted. This middle-man position is still in practice today as shamans in some cultures, and also exists in the form of priests and clergy in more modern forms of religious practice. Despite the middle-man position, God and spirits still seemed mysterious and complex. Man wanted to *know* the unknown. Besides evolving religion, and because of the receptiveness of mankind at various stages of psychological development, the second major way that mankind's religion and knowledge developed, according to The Urantia Book, was through the gift of *revelation*.

Revelatory Religion

According to The Urantia Book, there have been numerous small-scale revelations, but each of the five epochal revelations presented in the book had tremendous progressive influence on mankind and greatly expanded the existing boundaries of beliefs (1007). The first epochal

revelation was what was referred to as the Dalamatian teachings, and in them was presented a concept of a central God to those who were here on Earth before Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were presented in The Urantia Book as the first of a pair of modern humans, but reasonably intelligent hominids existed before them. The Great Spirit of the Native Americans was a hint of the legacy of the Dalamatian teachings.

The second epochal revelation, from about 38,000 years ago, was the Edenic teachings. Adam and Eve presented a stronger concept of a Spiritual Father. It was one that strengthened the concept of God as a father figure. A father cares for and protects his progeny, albeit he can sometimes be temperamental, and this view of God is consistent with that of the Old Testament.

Around 1920 B.C.E. Melchizedek of Salem presented the third epochal revelation. His primary message was one of trust and faith. Because the complex Spiritual Father could not be fully understood, it was prudent to have faith and to trust in his mysterious ways. Only through faith and trust could one open the mind to be cognizant of God's omnipotence.

The fourth epochal revelation was the divine personage of Jesus of Nazareth and his teachings. His message was one of love and service. Jesus is presented in The Urantia Book as the Son of God and the Son of Man. There were prophets before him, but he was the supreme prophet, the greatest example of the divine spirit made human.

The Urantia Book presents itself as the fifth epochal revelation for humans. It is distinct from the prior four revelations with the following declaration: "These papers differ from all previous revelations for they are not the work of a single universe personality but a composite presentation by many beings" (1008). Although the book purports to be revelatory, it does not claim finality or infallibility.

Seven Major Religious Epochs

When revelation combines with the evolutionary religious ideas of mankind, the God concept becomes “a blend of the pre-existent ideas of the evolutionary cults, the sublime ideals of revealed religion, and the personal viewpoints of the great religious leaders, the prophets and teachers of mankind” (1008). Religious development is thereby influenced by these combinations of factors, and besides the five epochal revelations, The Urantia Book presented seven major religious periods subsequent to Adam and Eve.

The first major religious epoch was the Sethite period. The Sethite priests taught across the lands of the Andites (i.e., the regions next to Mesopotamia), and they influenced the Greeks and Sumerians, and their teachings have continued to the present day as the Bráhmán concept of Hinduism.

The following period was the era of the Melchizedek missionaries. These were teachers from the Salem area who taught about two millennium B.C.E. Their main message was that it was easiest to find favor with God through faith. Only faith could open up the receptivity of the spiritual heart.

The third major religious epoch was the post-Melchizedek era. The main religious leader of this era, Moses, taught monotheism to his Levantine Bedouin followers. He encouraged his followers to give up their ghost cults and accept that that there was only one God.

The fourth major religious period was during the sixth century B.C.E. According to The Urantia Book, this was “one of the greatest centuries of religious awakening ever witnessed on (Earth)” (1009). Included in this century were Gautama Siddhārtha, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Zoroaster and the teachers of Jainism. Not all of these individuals can be strictly regarded as religious teachers, but their teachings markedly impacted the religious views of the time. For

example, Confucius was sagacious as a moralist, but his teachings had a tremendously positive impact on ethics and existing religious views.

The fifth of seven major religious epochs was the first century after Jesus. He was the divine incarnate individual who had the greatest influence on humanity that anyone else ever had. The legacy that spawned the Christian religion can largely be attributed to the ministries of Paul of Tarsus and Philo of Alexandria, and to a lesser extent to Peter.

The next major religious epoch was in the sixth century after Jesus. It was during this period that Muhammad presented the prophecy of the Koran and founded the new religion of Islam. Muhammad was recognized by Michael Hart as the most influential individual in history in his book, The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History (33). While the legacy of Jesus may have been greater in terms of eventual numbers of followers and also in terms of a wider-ranging spread of believers, Muhammad had more *direct* and personal influence on his followers due to his number of years as a leader. Jesus's influence was more *indirect* due to the brevity of his public ministry.

The last of the seven major religious epochs was the fifteenth century C.E. During this period there were two consequential religious movements. The first was the breaking of the unity of influence of the Roman Catholic Church, which had been stressed by its rigidness. It began to spread into many different denominations and sects. The second movement was the development of Sikhism which combined the preferred elements of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism.

While revelations are *given* to mankind, religious epochs represent the major periods of time that were needed for learning, adjustment and advancement. Through the seven major religious epochs, mankind evolved in many different ways both culturally and religiously so that there are now literally hundreds or thousands of forms of religious expression.

Commentary and Criticisms

One issue that must be addressed is that of the authorship of The Urantia Book. There is no publicly recognized or acknowledged single author, and the book's original publisher, The Urantia Foundation, has for years chosen not to publicly share what is known about how the Foreword and 196 papers (chapters) that make up the book were formed and organized. One reason that the Urantia Foundation has kept silent for decades about the details of the book's receipt is because they wanted the message and meaning of the papers to stand on their own without any focus on the messenger or on the manner in which they were received. Dr. William Sadler (1875-1969) was a psychiatrist who played a major role in the collection and organization of the information that eventually made up The Urantia Book. He explained that the reason why the identity of the contact individual who was directly involved with the acquisition and accumulation of the papers was never revealed was because "we do not want future generations to be concerned with the adoration of a Saint Peter or Saint Paul, a Luther, Calvin, or Wesley. We want no individual to be exalted by the Urantia Papers. The book should stand on its own nature and work" (Gardner 126-127).

The Urantia Foundation has always maintained that the source of the information was not human. Their position that the book had no human author ended up preventing them from having any legal right to the book's copyright renewal; the book is now in the public domain precisely because of the authorship issue.

All that is publicly known is what is revealed in the papers themselves. Each of the 196 chapters acknowledges some celestial author (e.g., a Brilliant Evening Star of Nebadon; a Melchizedek of Nebadon; a Resident Life Carrier; Malavatia Melchizedek; Chief of Seraphim, Chief of Midwayers; Solonia; Archangel; Mighty Messenger). The 36th paper, for example, was

claimed to be “Indited by a Vorondadek Son stationed on Urantia as an observer and acting in this capacity by request of the Melchizedek Chief of the Supervising Revelatory Corps” (405). With all of the intelligences mentioned in the book, it is almost as if a modern-day mythology has been created. What are we to make of such odd claims, and who would value or even explore such a book? Perhaps only liberal believers would value the book or even take the time to explore it. Fundamentalists of most religions would likely reject it since they have their own holy scriptures (e.g., Torah, Bible, Koran, Vedas, Book of Mormon) that are an integral part of what it means to be a believer in that particular religion. Secular humanists would also likely reject it since it professes God and other celestial beings, none of which can obviously be corroborated, and all of which require “faith.”

But while the mysteriousness of the origin of the papers seems suspicious, especially for discretionary individuals in this day and age who are cautious of false claims and charlatans, the content (both depth and breadth) of the book is nonpareil. The book was written with such decided authority that it does indeed appear to have the power to “stand on its own.”

Many readers and followers of The Urantia Book have used its teachings to be better people and more compassionate human beings. Its truths appeal not only to liberal Christians, however, but should be able to appeal to all religious believers on a broader scale, and to all humans (believers and non-believers) on the broadest possible scale. Urantia Book study groups are in existence all over the world, and some people use the book’s teachings as a religion in and of itself. It presents compelling accounts in its four major parts pertaining to the universe, our part of our galaxy, our planet, and Jesus.

It seems that a human hand had to have some role in the transmission, transcription or receipt of the papers. Perhaps they were channeled, or perhaps an individual had an acute

connection with his or her higher self and was able to tap in to what has been called the superconscious. Perhaps it was actually from the unconscious of an individual. Martin Gardner, a critic of The Urantia Book, thought that there were only three likely views of the origin of its material (225): (a) Wilfred Kellogg (the individual believed by Gardner and many others to be the contact person) was a charlatan; (b) Wilfred Kellogg was chosen by supermortals to transmit a new revelation to humanity; or (c) Wilfred Kellogg was a sincere individual who experienced deep trances during which he channeled information that was fabricated by secondary personalities that are a part of his unconscious. Gardner thought that the third option was the most likely explanation of the source of information for The Urantia Book.

Others believe that the book is exactly what it claims to be. Meredith Sprunger, a retired minister and college professor, studied The Urantia Book for decades and believes wholeheartedly in its veracity. An affidavit that he prepared in 1998 (see Appendix) regarding his understanding of the details of the acquisition process indicates how seriously he took the book.

Is it a scholarly tome? It reads like one, but no, it is not. Much of the historical knowledge that is in the book was recognized as common knowledge at the time of the book's publication. Critics say that it seems all too convenient that no new scientific breakthroughs were mentioned if the intelligences that indited them were indeed superhuman. Also, the fourth part on the life of Jesus roughly parallels his life as presented in the New Testament. But what The Urantia Book does do in the fourth section (on Jesus) and in each of the three other major parts is fill in huge missing gaps of history. So it reads like a "reasonable" account of history, with actual known history mixed in with details and accounts that "fill in" the unknown gaps of common scholarly knowledge. As such it seems like a cosmological treatise without equal.

Summary

It would seem that since The Urantia Book devotes its entire fourth section to Jesus that it would favor Christianity as the “best” religion. But such is not necessarily the case. The Urantia Book takes a position *outside of* any given religion. Consider the following from page 1012:

The many religions of (Earth) are all good to the extent that they bring man to God and bring the realization of the Father to man. It is a fallacy for any group of religionists to conceive of their creed as *The Truth*; such attitudes bespeak more of theological arrogance than of certainty of faith. There is not a ... religion (on Earth) that could not profitably study and assimilate the best of the truths contained in every other faith, for all contain truth. Religionists would do better to borrow the best in their neighbors' living spiritual faith rather than to denounce the worst in their lingering superstitions and outworn rituals.

As such, religion is a vehicle or a tool for which humans can better understand themselves through belief in something greater. The single greatest complaint that The Urantia Book has against Christianity is that too much of it has become a religion *about* Jesus rather than *of* Jesus.

Some think that the followers of The Urantia Book are a cult. Perhaps they can be seen that way, but certainly no more so than early Christianity, early Islam, and early Buddhism must have seemed like cults to the masses of people before they became widespread in their respective developmental regions.

Since The Urantia Book is highly religious in nature, it is interesting to see how it presents an account of the way that religion itself began for humans. Religion, in its view, both evolved and was revealed through the five epochal revelations. What mankind was given with those revelations evolved through the seven major religious periods when great strides were made in ideological development.

Meredith Sprunger proclaimed that the true role of religion was to ascribe values for each individual (McLafferty 57). His psychology was similar to the psychology of Abraham Maslow

and other humanistic psychologists, but he believed that those psychologists stopped short of including a spiritual component in their theories. He thought that all experiences of humans mold into a unity, and while it might be convenient and instructive to break down human experiences into academic categories (e.g., psychology, anthropology, sociology), these are all actually unitary things in human experience and in human living (McLafferty 48). Sprunger's views were influenced by The Urantia Book and because of that influence his own conception of humanity (with its spiritual component) was broadened. The Urantia Book does teach that there is unity in all of existence, and it encourages the study of all religions to acquire the best elements of each.

At the very least, The Urantia Book is a brilliantly inspired work. But whether inspired or truly legitimate as a revelation, it certainly has an incredible amount of very detailed information, and thus assumes a position of superhuman authority. As such it might be seen as the quintessential religion, or as an exemplary model of spirituality *without* religion. The importance of The Urantia Book's presentation of the topic of religious development was that mankind imagined a world outside of the world of the material and became more receptive to that world as time progressed. Our brains evolved and developed with increasing capacity for God-belief.

Works Cited

- Gardner, Martin. Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery. Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1995.
- Hart, Michael H. The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History. Secaucus, NJ: Citadel, 1978.
- McLafferty, Jr. Charles L. Spirituality in Three Theories of Psychology: A Qualitative Study. Diss. U Virginia, 1997. Charlottesville, VA: UMI, 1997.
- The Urantia Book. Chicago: Urantia Foundation, 1955.
- Urantia Book Fellowship. "Affidavit of Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger regarding the origin of The Urantia Book." October 24th, 1998. 1 July 2009. <http://www.urantiabook.org/mullinshistory/sprunger_affidavit.htm>.

Appendix

Affidavit of Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger

Affidavit of Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger
regarding the origin of The Urantia Book
October 24th, 1998

(source: http://www.urantiabook.org/mullinshistory/sprunger_affidavit.htm)

MEREDITH J. SPRUNGER
4109 Plaza Dr.
Fort Wayne, IN 46806

October 24th, 1998

AFFIDAVIT

I declare, under penalty of perjury, that the following are my recollections about the authorship, and the issues surrounding the authorship, of The Urantia Book.

Following my discovery of The Urantia Book in December of 1955, and after introducing it to a number of clerical colleagues and friends, I spent years researching with them the historical aspects of the book. We quickly discovered the Urantia Papers were received by a small group of people in Chicago. Their leader was Dr. William S. Sadler. Dr. Sadler was a highly respected psychiatrist and college teacher in the graduate school of medicine at the University of Chicago. For almost thirty years Dr. Sadler was also a lecturer in Pastoral Counseling at McCormick Theological Seminary.

On May 7, 1958, our group of ministers had an appointment with Dr. Sadler to discuss the phenomena associated with the origin of the Urantia Papers. My personal association with Dr. Sadler continued until his death in 1969. In the course of this friendship, we had many candid conversations about the materialization of the Foreword and the 196 Papers that were eventually published as the text of The Urantia Book. It is important to point out that in this regard Dr. Sadler was a professional researcher of unquestioned integrity.

Dr. Sadler categorically declared that there was no known psychic phenomenon attached to the origin of the Urantia Papers. The final text of the Urantia Papers was materialized in written form, but it was not channeled or spoken, nor was it the product of automatic writing. Dr. Sadler stated that although the Thought Adjuster (a fragment of God that indwells all normal human minds) of the "contact personality" was somehow engaged in the materialization process by spiritual beings, the contact person was totally unaware of this activity. Neither this contact person, nor any other human, wrote any of the text nor authored or originated any material used in the revelatory text of the Urantia Papers, which consist of the Foreword and the 196 Papers.

Although Dr. Sadler was emphatic that no known psychic phenomena were associated in any way with the authorship of the Urantia Papers, he admitted that he was baffled as to precisely how the text of the Urantia Papers was materialized into the English language. He was very clear in his conviction that no human being edited, selected, or had any creative input whatever into the authorship of the Urantia Papers, nor in the arrangement of the text of The Urantia Book, which consists of the Foreword and Papers one through 196. Dr. Sadler was crystal clear that the members of the contact commission had no

editorial authority whatever, and their responsibility was confined to spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Members of the forum were not even permitted to see the original materialized documents, and they had no input in their authorship. Dr. Sadler was convinced that the Urantia Papers are exactly what they purport themselves to be, an epochal revelation authored solely by celestial beings.

I have studied The Urantia Book 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.

Dr. Sadler was also absolutely clear about two related things: (1) Absolutely no human name or names would ever be attached to the authorship or materialization of the Urantia Papers and the publication of The Urantia Book. Even the printer, R. R. Donnelly and Sons, was not permitted to place an indicia in the first edition, which stated their identity. (2) No human being knows or ever knew, the exact method by which the Urantia Papers were materialized. We can only be categorically certain that there was no human authorship, no human editorial involvement, nor any human activity in creating, selecting and/or arranging the Urantia Papers, which consist of the Foreword and Papers one through 196 inclusive, and which constitute the text of The Urantia Book.

Dr. Sadler made it plain to me that the revelators held total authority over the process by which the Urantia Papers were materialized. The revelators suggested the submission of questions, and at one point after the contact commission and forum had read some of the papers, requested that more significant questions be developed and asked by the contact commission. Dr. Sadler said that in a particular session a celestial personality who claimed to be a student visitor to our planet stated to the commission: "If you people realized what a high spiritual source you are now associating with you would stop making these puerile investigations to detect fraud and would ask some significant questions about the nature and reality of the universe." It was at this point the forum was engaged by Dr. Sadler to help him formulate all appropriate questions in answer to the challenge of the revelators. The forum had originally been assembled by the Sadler family as an informal discussion and social exchange. The revelators soon answered the questions the forum had asked, and these answers were presented to the forum by the contact commission. Shortly after this the revelators directed Dr. Sadler and the contact commission to make the forum a closed group, and required each member to take a vow of secrecy about their knowledge of what the contact commission was doing and what information the revelators had disclosed to the forum through the contact commission. "The forum, as it were, was taken away from us," wrote Dr. Sadler. He was indicating that the general discussions in the forum ceased, and the revelators henceforth directed the agenda of the group through the contact commission, and used the forum essentially as a focus group for the Urantia Papers.

Dr. Sadler said no forum member, except members of the contact commission, was ever present during any of the contacts with the revelators. He also said that only one "sleeping subject", or person was involved throughout the entire process of materializing the text of the Urantia Papers.

Dr. Sadler told me that at one point he and his son Bill wrote a draft for an introduction to the Urantia Papers, and submitted it to the revelators. At a contact session with the revelators they were told that

although they meant well, such submissions were not acceptable, and the revelators made the comment, referring to the introduction written by Dr. Sadler, Jr.: "A candle cannot light the sun." At the proper time, the humans were assured, an introduction to the book would be materialized. When the revelators produced the Foreword to the Urantia papers, Dr. Sadler stated that he and his son realized the inadequacy of their own attempt to write an introduction. Dr. Sadler and his son were, however, given permission to compose a Table of Contents for The Urantia Book. Bill Sadler compiled the titles as they appeared in the Papers, and the section headings from the Papers, and he briefly outlined some of the material that was originated in the Urantia Papers, and incorporated it into a Table of Contents for The Urantia Book. Dr. Sadler and other members of the contact commission assured me that no human wrote, edited, or arranged any of the text of the Urantia Papers, which consist of the Foreword and all of the Papers from Paper one through Paper 196 inclusive. Dr. Sadler told me that one individual, not a member of the contact commission, but rather a member of the forum, who made suggestions to "improve" the Urantia Papers was vigorously informed by the revelators (through the contact commission) that no human additions to the Urantia Papers would be allowed. Dr. Sadler said that every possible precaution was taken to see that the text of the Urantia Papers was presented just as the revelators had authored and materialized it.

It should be emphasized that there is not now, nor has there ever been, a human authority on the content or the origin of the Urantia Papers. However, Christy often requested that I reply to many of the letters Urantia Foundation received from readers requesting information on the origin of the Urantia Papers. As these requests increased, I produced a paper on the essentials of the origin of the Urantia Papers, which constitute the text of The Urantia Book. This paper was approved by Urantia Foundation, printed, and freely distributed for several years by both Urantia Foundation and Urantia Brotherhood.

In regards to outreach efforts by Urantians, the following statement was written by Dr. Sadler under the heading, Distribution of the Urantia 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 associates. Signed, Meredith Justin Sprunger

ADDENDA TO AFFIDAVIT:

MEREDITH JUSTIN SPRUNGER is a minister in the United Church of Christ and a college professor, now retired from pastoral and teaching responsibilities. For many years Dr. Sprunger was active as a counselor and psychological consultant, holding a Private Practice Certificate in Psychology in the State of Indiana. He has served congregations in the Midwest and taught at Elmherst [sic] College and Indiana Institute of Technology, functioning as the head of the Department of Psychology, chairman of the division of Liberal Arts, and as President. Dr. Sprunger has served as a Field Representative, chairman of the Educational and Fraternal Relations Committees, and President of Urantia Brotherhood. He is founder and Executive Director of The Christian Fellowship for Students of The Urantia Book, a trustee of Jesusonian Foundation, and editor of The Spiritual Fellowship Journal.

Dr. Sprunger is the only living professional educational colleague of Dr. William S. Sadler associated with The Urantia Book.