

Grace United Church of Christ

307 Plymouth Street

Culver, Indiana

MEREDITH J. SPRUNGER, MINISTER

October 16, 1958

Dr. William S. Sadler
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago 14, Illinois

Dear Dr. Sadler:

Enclosed is a letter which I have written to Dr. Robert Moss, president of our seminary at Lancaster, Penn. Dr. Moss is a young man who took his Ph.D. at Chicago University in the field of New Testament. The meeting was more or less arranged by our denominational committee on the Church and Ministry.

Dr. Moss said he had read only part of the life of Jesus and some sections dealing with the prophets. He reported that, with reservations, he was favorably impressed. The treatment of the prophets he said was in line with the best scholarship of our day. He had hoped to catch the book in its "glib" use of dates. The date upon which he was pinning his hope was the date of the crucifixion established by the research of Bultman (?) but he discovered the Urantia date and the Bultman date were the same.

He had numerous misconceptions about the claims of the Urantia Book which we, I believe, were able to correct. Almost everything he said regarding normative evaluation we were able to affirm: "That's exactly what the Urantia Book says."

I believe he was most impressed by our relaxed, non-defensive manner. He finally ended up with a baiting approach: "You've really got something here that ought to be publicized." We gave a negative reply and assumed the Gamaliel attitude. We also pointed out that most ministers were not ready for the Urantia Book and would only be disturbed by it.

At present I think Moss is acting primarily in the service of the officials of the Church to keep an eye on our activities in the interests of the Church but there is an outside possibility that his personal curiosity may be aroused enough for him to go beyond this point. I recall that half of the spies became followers!

I am writing Marion Rowley about several contacts I have made in behalf of the Brotherhood. We plan to be with you on Sunday afternoon Oct. 26th. We will have to leave almost immediately for a dinner and baptism service in Schiller Park. A German refugee couple who came to Culver several years ago have moved to Chicago and now want us to baptize a new baby.

After talking to Moss I am impressed with the emphasis which modern biblical scholars place on historical facts and documents. In this light it might be well to write a historical report of the Urantia movement. I hope we can talk about this sometime. Will look forward to seeing you on Oct. 26th.

Cordially yours,

Meredith

(over)

Central United Church of Christ

207 Plymouth Street

Chicago, Illinois

MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

P. S. I just happened to remember that several weeks ago B. M. Salyer of Oklahoma City called me long distance and talked for some time about their Society in Oklahoma City. He said they want to hire a full time man. I gave him the name of one of the older men of our pastor's study group who is looking for a change but do not know if he was contacted. He appears to be interested in turning this group over to someone and going out and starting another.

Dear Dr. Hoss:

Enclosed is a letter which I have written to Dr. Robert Hoss, president of our society as I understand, from Dr. Hoss is a young man who took his Ph.D. at Chicago University in the field of New Testament. The meeting was held at the home of Dr. Hoss and was held in the Church and Ministry.

Dr. Hoss said he had read only part of the life of Jesus and some sections dealing with the prophecies. He reported that with reservations he was favorably impressed. The treatment of the prophecies he said was in line with the best scholarship of our day. He had hoped to do the book in the "Gift" use of dates. The date upon which he was planning his hope was the date of the crucifixion, established by the research of Balmann (?) but he discovered the Greek date and the Latin date were the same.

He had numerous misconceptions about the claim of the Greek book which we, I believe, were able to correct. Almost everything he said regarding narrative evaluation we were able to correct. That's exactly what the Greek book says.

I believe he was most impressed by our relaxed, non-defensive manner. He finally ended up with a helpful approach: "You've really got something here that ought to be published." We gave a negative reply and assured the Gospels accounts. We also pointed out that most ministers were not ready for the Greek book and would only be disturbed by it.

As present I think Hoss is being primarily in the service of the officials of the Church to keep an eye on our activities in the interests of the Church but there is an outside possibility that his personal curiosity may be aroused enough for him to go beyond this point. I recall that all of the above points followed:

I am writing Hoss Hossley about several comments I have made in behalf of the Brotherhood. He plan to be with you on Sunday afternoon Oct. 20th. We will have to leave almost immediately for a dinner and regular service in Dallas at 10:00. A German religious couple who came to Chicago several years ago have moved to Chicago and now want us to perform a new trip.

After talking to Hoss I am impressed with the emphasis which modern biblical scholars place on historical facts and documents. In this light it might be well to write a historical report of the Greek movement. I hope we can talk about this sometime. Will look forward to seeing you on Oct. 20th.

Cordially yours,

W. H. Hoss

(over)

October 16, 1958

The Rev. Robert V. Moss, Jr., Ph.D.
Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Dear Dr. Moss:

Thank you for your letter. What you say about the importance of the historicity of Christianity is certainly true. It must be pointed out, however, that the fact of Jesus' being a historical figure or the existence of early manuscripts of the gospels proves nothing regarding the qualitative nature of either.

The Urantia Book has all of this kind of historicity but this proves little or nothing about its quality. The historic facts connected with the coming of the Urantia Papers hold up under investigation. The Urantia Book is an important historic fact. Although the history of its coming is interesting and rather remarkable, it actually proves nothing $\frac{1}{2}$ except its historicity.

If you should ever make a study of the historic facts of the coming of the Urantia Book you will discover two seemingly important facts withheld from you by the people who were directly involved in the coming of the Urantia Papers. The one thing you will not find out is who this individual is or was through whom the papers were materialized. They say the reason for this is that those who are in charge of the spiritual supervision of our planet want no St. Peter's or St. Paul's associated with the Urantia Revelation a thousand years hence.

The other thing you will not discover is the method by which the papers came. The Chicago group believe they were forbidden to tell this because the celestial beings wanted no appeal to the so called miraculous in the acceptance of the Urantia Book. This would be like trying to prove the divinity of Christ on the basis of the apparent miracles which he performed. This is a primitive approach which actually proves nothing. They were told that these limitations would be a stumbling block at first but the real acceptance of the Urantia Book would come from the inner validity of its spiritual truth.

Our pastor's study group were quite concerned in knowing how the papers came. In thinking about how he could satisfy this curiosity, Dr. Sadler got the idea one day that although they were forbidden to tell how the papers came, they were not forbidden to say how they did not come. So he prepared a paper outlining just about every kind of psychic phenomena I can think of, saying the papers did not come by any of these methods. I will enclose a copy of this outline.

As I believe you know, Dr. William S. Sadler was the leader of this early group to whom the papers were entrusted. Dr. Sadler is a prominent psychiatrist of the country, now partially retired; and, incidently, he lectured at McCormick Theological Seminary for about

thirty years. His first contact with the individual who was used in some way in the materialization of the papers took place in 1911. The history of the movement is indeed interesting but in the end actually proves nothing to the individual who approaches it with scientific objectivity - as I think one should.

If you should ever be interested in acquainting yourself with the historical background of the Urantia Book I would be glad to arrange an interview with Dr. Sadler. Anyone desiring to investigate the origins of the Urantia Book and movement from first hand sources should do so soon as many of the original group are now elderly.

Regarding your question about the reaction of the pastors to our meeting last week, I have not talked with any of them about it but would guess they were favorably impressed and probably a bit surprised at the objectivity of your attitude and impressed with the quality of your theological observations.

You may rest assured that the lines of communication between us will always remain open. Best wishes to you.

Sincerely yours,

Meredith J. Sprunger

Oct. 20, 1958

Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger
215 N. Slate St.
Culver, Indiana

Dear Dr. Sprunger:

Your recent letters to me and Marian were very interesting. I think you are having real success in your efforts to interest people in the Urantia Book, and your slow but persistent efforts convince me more and more of the proper technique of spreading the message at this time.

I will be looking forward to seeing you next Sunday.

Sincerely,

William S. Sadler

WSS/ar