

## Bill Sadler Comments on Dissemination and Separate Readings of Part IV

Partial transcript of tape OKCK-T3S2P2-L by David Kantor

Note: Having participated over the past two years in a project to digitize and archive some 92 hours of talks by Bill Sadler recorded in Oklahoma City, I am struck by both the extent and the content of his commentary. In the course of these 92 hours, Bill Sadler covers the entire spectrum of topics which are of interest to readers -- from dissemination of the revelation, to organizational problems, to specifics about very detailed aspects of Urantian cosmology. What is striking is that nowhere in these 92 hours of commentary is there any mention of the Declaration of Trust. Nowhere is there any mention of "instructions" or "mandates." I did not hear a single reference to trademarks or copyrights. There was no mention of any particular mission being mandated to Urantia Foundation. There is no attempt to fabricate an institutionally supportive history.

One would expect that a former Contact Commissioner, giving a talk to the largest reader group outside of Chicago, knowing that his words were being recorded for future generations, would be sure to cover all the important points. What comes through is a human being, struggling with these issues and trying to do his best with his limited human resources, and doing so with a great sense of humility. "He who hath an ear to hear, let him hear."

In the transcript below, Bill is talking with a group of readers who have expressed discouragement about how difficult it seems to be to interest people in reading The Urantia Book.

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**Bill Sadler:** What I'm saying tonight, is not by way of criticism, I'm just sharing some thinking with you; because, please, I never came this way before; I don't know how to do this.

**Audience Member [wryly]:** How many revelations have you launched?

**Bill Sadler [amused]:** This is my first one; I haven't had this book but about a year longer than you folks have had it. I've read it longer, but in terms of propagandizing it, I'm just about as green as you folks are. I've got just about twelve months on you, that's all.

**Audience Member:** Well, Bill, some of us are terribly concerned because we have put forth so much effort . . . and seen so much disinterest . . . and by hook or crook we're unable to get new readers . . . [various audience members express their frustration about the lack of new readers]

**Bill Sadler:** I have listened to much counsel, to many ideas, about the propagation of this book within the Brotherhood. And I don't feel too happy with those who seem to do very little except enjoy the book -- and there *are* those. I have not seen a frenzied approach be too fruitful. There's a laddy out in California -- he's a fine man; he's a salesman; he's been selling all his life -- he set off to do some advertising out of his own pocket. And, well, he ran these ads and he didn't sell any Urantia Books. And I guess maybe that's not the way to do it.

I have a personal feeling simply to be alert to do all that I can do consistent with taking care of two prior obligations: staying efficient and getting my material job done. . . . [Misc audience discussion] . . . I tell you, I keep holding to that parable of the sower. That's why Jesus told it, I think, to comfort folks like us who go forth hopefully sowing seed, only to discover that the results vary because of circumstances largely beyond our control. And if you don't think I haven't been parent to many disappointments, you're just flat crazy. I've tried real hard. And I've learned to try in different ways. This whole story I've tried to write ("A Study of the Master Universe") represents another approach. The previous ones didn't work so let's try this one. I've proved that some of them don't work because I've tried them.

**Audience Member:** Well, we laughed when we first got the book and were studying it, it was amusing to us that the Chicago organizations, as long as they had had these papers, only had three hundred members -- why we were going to do better than that the first year! We didn't understand why they didn't have over three hundred members. [pause] But now I understand.

[laughter]

**Bill Sadler:** Well, I'll say this; if you had talked to me at the time I would have listened silently and said, "Go to it," because I wouldn't know what would happen until we tried it. Just like when Domestic Extension wanted to send out fifty books; I didn't think it would work but I urged everybody on the Executive Committee to vote for it because I said, "This is how we're going to find out how to do it -- we have the money, it's been given for this purpose -- let's spend it and try. We don't know that this won't work." It didn't. All right, now that was an inexpensive way of checking that one out.

I would venture the guess, and since this is my first revelation I'll have to guess -- I wish it was the second one, wouldn't that be handy? -- I will venture the guess that you will go through an expansion phase. Don't ask me when; I think it will happen.

**Audience Member:** I don't think that being an intellectual student of this book helps you to sell it -- I can't buy that.

**Bill Sadler:** I think you need to be a salesman.

**Audience Member:** The idea is not to say too much.

**Bill Sadler:** I think J.P. has a very good point; I think I could run Tom Mercher off right now by talking too much. I won't discuss this book very much with him. I just answer his questions. He's been slogging through part four. "Oh," he says, "My God, Bill, it's a gold mine!" And he uses it when he's putting his Sunday School lessons together -- he just plagiarizes the book.

**Audience Member:** I know a woman up here who teaches Sunday School; she says she just couldn't teach Sunday School unless she had that fourth section of The Urantia Book. She's a dyed-in-the-wool Methodist but she's going to be there with that book. But she's got the book and she reads it; that last section -- she rests on that, because it helps her in her teaching and she teaches youngsters.

**Other Audience Member:** She's not honest with herself then; she can't read that and not accept the first part of the book...

**Audience Member:** Now I don't have the patience to talk to her much. I've never had occasion to really sit down, after she had gained some knowledge of the book, and talk to her; I'd like to do that, but, it isn't my contact and I didn't ever feel it was my business to do it.

**Bill Sadler:** Let it ferment; let it ferment.

**Audience Member:** You couldn't take that book away from her no way in the world.

**Bill Sadler:** I'm all for that. If she never reads anything but part four, she's got a finer concept of God, and I'll settle for that.

I'd like to put this book in a larger perspective, if I may. When I finished my term as President of Urantia Brotherhood, a little over three years ago, I wrote a report to the Executive Committee -- Berk, you've got a copy of it somewhere -- and I tried to sum up what we'd done in three years; how well we'd done and how poorly we'd done, and we did a bit of both. I don't think we did too badly for a bunch of green amateurs. But compared to the way a bunch of professionals would have operated, it was pretty lame and halt.

But I think that at the very end, I tried to analyze -- what are we? And I took the position that we were neither a church nor a sect. I said, how can we be sure that we are not a church? Because, I said frankly, I don't think the modern society needs another church -- I think we have a great plenty -- we might need fewer, certainly we don't need more. Well, I said, I don't think we're a church because we claim no ecclesiastical authority. Our officials have administrative authority. We have a constitution and, as President, I've tried to enforce this constitution -- to see to it that it worked. If somebody was being unconstitutional, I called them on it pretty straight and pretty fast. So I said, I don't believe we're a church.

But now let us consider, are we a sect? Well, I said, We might become a sect; I think it could be unfortunate if we do. Because, if we're sectarian then, I said, I believe we're confusing means with ends. I think our prime purpose in life should be the service of God -- this is the true end; and everything leading to that is a means to that end. The Urantia Book is not an end. It is a means to the end, and the end is God.

We should be interested in doing anything we can do to make God more real to men and to introduce men to God, if we can. This, to me, is our prime objective in life. The Urantia Book I consider to be a most valuable tool in the achieving of this objective. But if I find a wayward Roman Catholic who really needs to be reintroduced to God, and if I believe that sending him back to his church is going to be the most effective way of reintroducing him to God, then I am not going to bring either The Urantia Book or Protestantism into our discussion -- and I have sent Catholics back to the Catholic church. And one of them paid me a high compliment. He said, when we got through, "You're Jesuit trained, aren't you?" He thought I was a Catholic.

If I find one of my brothers looking for God, and he's unhappy with what has been offered him, if he's disillusioned about the conventional approach, then I certainly will introduce him to this blue book -- by all means.

I think the Brotherhood is also a means to an end. Now I think this -- if we put our whole lives in the larger perspective, and if we say we are primarily engaged in the attempted service of God to our fellow men, and this is our supreme goal, this is the true end; and this blue book, and the Urantia Brotherhood, and all the Urantia Societies are helpful means, helpful tools to that end, then I don't think we'll ever become a sect; we will be a true brotherhood.

And I think it's important that we sometimes stop and think of the difference between primary and secondary objectives. Our primary objective is the service of God. Our secondary objective is the propagation of The Urantia Book. Does that make sense?

And if we do not become confused in this issue, then I don't think we will ever be a sect. We will be a group of brothers, if you please, with a brotherhood, trying to work for the boss, and to serve him in whatever way seems practical. So if your Methodist gal wants to read part four and gets good out of it, I say more power to her. I don't think we should feel obliged to go out and recruit her. We should be happy that she's getting some help.

I would count our progress, not only in terms of membership rolls, but of exposure to books, and of how we serve the boss. I gave a series of lectures in San Antonio once, all cribbed from The Urantia Book, on the psychology of religion. They were good lectures, because they came out of The Urantia Book -- this was ten years before it was published. And I was invited to attend a group meeting of ministers. And I went with a rather scholarly prepared speech, and I listened to this meeting, and I would have sworn I was meeting with a group of sales managers -- except that they sang better than most salesmen -- but their entire talk was about secular things. They were talking about quotas, territories, mortgages, memberships. And I threw my prepared talk away and I took as my text one of Paul's letters, "Be ye resolved to know nothing but Christ and him crucified." And I talked rather straight to this group. I said, "You know, we don't need any advice from you about the affairs of this world -- our temporal bread." I said, "I would resent you as competitors; I make my living counseling businessmen." I said, "I don't think you know as much about this temporal life as I do, but if you've got a little bread that's not of this world, there's a great market for that -- if you have that kind of bread."

I don't think we should become too absorbed in numbers, quotas, memberships and whatnot to the point that we lose sight of the largest purpose we have in life, which is the service of God. This is a great purpose.

You see, this attempt at service makes an adventure out of any life, because it adds to life the condiments -- the salt and pepper and spice of spirituality, or attempted spirituality. And when you look at anybody as a potential brother, life is a perpetual adventure then -- you never know what's going to happen five minutes from now, or what you may be involved in. You're alert. It produces an attitude which changes your conduct.

I think the attitude of the attempted service of God is important to our function in life. We're planning to serve God and the mere presence of that plan in our minds is apt to make it more possible to serve God.

**Audience Member:** Bill, when we first got this book and had had it long enough to know a little about it, we thought it was a problem of pedagogy. But later on I found out that it wasn't. You've got to find people with a soul ripe to absorb it.

**Bill Sadler:** This is so.

**Audience Member:** And how are you going to find those scattered few here and there -- see, that's the problem; it isn't a problem of pedagogy because you're just talking to a bunch of people who are impervious to it.

**Bill Sadler:** The difference between a suspect and a prospect is the feeling of need. Jesus didn't confuse the two. Coming down from the Swiss lakes he wasted no sales talk on a suspect, and Ganid got after him, as you'll recall.

In case of doubt, I'd sow seeds. I *always* sow seeds if I doubt and if I feel there's a chance. But since I'm going to gamble and take long chances, I must be prepared to be disappointed a fairly heavy percentage of the time. But I'd rather be disappointed many times than miss one seed sowing. How can you escape that paradox? If you're going to take long chances, you must expect frequent losses. That's just simple horse-racing -- you bet the long shots and you're not going to win very often.

**Audience Member:** I think of that fellow in Southern California who just started giving out books and advertising it -- if he only got one good student, one person for whom that book revolutionized their life, it would have been worth any amount of money which he might have been out.

**Bill Sadler:** I agree with you; but if you only have that philosophy -- he feels disillusioned. He was not just enthusiastic and diligent -- he was *naive* in his enthusiasm.

**Audience Member:** Well I think we've all been naive, Bill.

**Bill Sadler [somewhat exasperated]:** Who hasn't? Who hasn't, Wilma? Who hasn't? -- We all have. We're all -- none of us -- this is again, this is our first revelation; we'll do much better on the next one, I'm sure.

Now let me give you a larger picture. I don't think we're alone and I don't think this book is dependent -- and I know this is being recorded so I'm being careful what I'm saying; but I'm being honest though -- I don't think this book is dependent merely on human resources. However, I don't believe that superhuman agencies have any basis to work on if human beings are not first diligent. There's no use telling the twins "northward" until they have entertained the concept of fleeing -- otherwise the word "northward" has no meaning, does it?

I have undoubted faith that the associates of the authors of these papers, who are charged with the superhuman supervision of planetary affairs are well aware of this book, of our problems, of our efforts, of our frustrations, of our bad judgments and of our good judgments, of our good wisdom and our lack of wisdom; and I'm quite sure that they will, in a most intelligent way, take advantage of all of our human efforts. They are not without their resources. I don't believe they can cause so much as they can coordinate. But if we give them nothing to coordinate, they won't have much to do, will they?

Now I don't think faith is a substitute for good judgment and wisdom in our actions. But if we use the best judgment, the best wisdom, the most common-sense diligence that we're capable of using; if we keep this in perspective, if we remember that this book comes after health and duty -- but before trifles; and if we remember that God is more important than The Urantia Book or the Urantia Brotherhood, then I think we'll be useful servants.

And then I think -- I don't think we're alone in this project. I've got a lot of faith in our friends. But I think the first moves are ours. We've got to give them some grist to work on. We've got to get seeds out that they can perhaps maneuver.

I can easily see a maneuver -- but it's got to be an easy one. It's a Urantia Book sitting on somebody's coffee table, not because he thinks the book is worth a darn -- he has contempt for it -- but it's a nice blue splotch; it fits in with the decor, you know? It's there purely for reasons of color. And this is a cocktail party, and some joker comes along, sits down and wonders, "Well what the heck is this all about?" And there's our prospect. We didn't even know he existed. And somebody was foolish enough, unwisely, to give this Urantia Book to a man who wasn't a prospect but who put it on his coffee table where the prospect found it. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about.

I don't think our friends can send somebody a thousand miles to find a Urantia Book, necessarily. But if he's in the neighborhood and going to a cocktail party, it might be possible to attract his attention to a book on a coffee table. This falls within the range, I think, of the *manipulable*, or the *circumstancible* -- I think they can do *little* things. Especially if that man is looking and is hungry, and doesn't know where to look, or where to seek.

I have this feeling that I've gotten kind of a shift in my feeling about the propagandizing of this book -- you might call it getting your second wind. I'm not running a hundred yard dash; I've just going for a long haul -- this is a five miler. I've tried a few hundred yard dashes. This is a long haul and I'm going to be damn stubborn about this book -- I'm settled down to be stubborn. And I don't think I'm going to get disappointed very much the rest of my life because I think I've had about all I can take in that area; and I've blown all my fuses and I've got in heavy duty circuit breakers now -- I think they'll carry quite a load.

I've done some, [pause] -- I've tried to do some pretty straight reasoning within myself, because if you don't think that I have a feeling of responsibility and obligation -- please, I do. [pause] This has been too much of my life for much too long. And I've looked at it this way: Well, what can you do more than you see to do? The answer is nothing. If you try to do more than that, all you're going to wind up is spinning your wheels, and throwing up a lot of dust or mud, and looking very silly.

Now, what else can you do? Well, you can do some praying -- to be more useful -- if you've got nerve enough to sign those blank drafts which your seraphim, I'm pretty sure, can fill in, and remember -- you have to cash them. And I'm almost afraid to do much praying along those lines because I'm not sure I want more pressure than some that I've experienced. I mean, you know, there's a -- [pause] -- you can get a belly full of that, too. But that's about the only additional thing you could do.

You could take a good look at yourself and say, "Well, Gee, what's wrong here? How could I be a better salesman?" I think technique is important. [pause] Your point is well taken -- it's not enough to know the book -- how are you going to sell it? You could be an engineer who had designed a product, who couldn't go out and sell it, yet you would know more about it than any salesman.

I've just been plain puzzled many times as to what to do. And I just fall back on what seems to me to be common sense, and that is to look at the situation and do what you see to do and if you don't see anything to do, don't do anything right then. But what are you going to do if you don't see what to do? Have you tried advertising free drinks? You might get some Martini Urantians.

**Audience Member:** We haven't found a way of finding contacts.

**Bill Sadler:** That's right.

**Audience Member:** We don't know who's hungry, and I don't know how to find them.

**Bill Sadler:** I don't know what to do either, except to play the long shots. I'll play any odds -- I just want odds, but I don't -- I don't want *nothing!* I'll play 100 to 1 . . .

**Audience Member:** You want a run for your money . . .

**Bill Sadler:** Yeah, I want a horse in the race. I don't care how slow and naggy he is, I just want him there at the starting pole.

**Audience Member:** By the way, who won the Preakness today?

**Bill Sadler:** I don't know. Well, it's nine o'clock. Let's turn the machine off.