

February 29, 1958

Dr. Edward W. Brueseke  
235 South St. Peter St.  
South Bend 17, Indiana

Dear Ed:

Thank you for your kind letter. First, I should like to make clear, as I have many times before, I am not interested in studying the Urantia Book as normative revelation but as a source of wisdom and insight adding to the richness of our Christian philosophy of life.

My central concern is to assure freedom of thought and discussion among our ministers. Any attempt to curtail this freedom, I will oppose regardless of cost to my personal well-being.

The question of my theological orthodoxy is another matter. I am happy to be questioned about it at any time. The doctrinal standards of the Evangelical and Reformed Church express my own personal convictions.

Our Study Group has been quite concerned about the break in fellowship and this is why we decided to invite everyone in our old Study Group to attend and speak freely about the Urantia Book and other books we may find interesting. The reason we have not done this before is because you have been emotionally disturbed about the Urantia Book and we did not wish to disturb you more. Now we feel that fellowship is even more important than your being upset by our freedom of discussion.

Regarding the reference to a minister in my letter to Dr. Wagner, one of our elders told a group of our people discussing the matter: "One of the ministers of our region told me the book was a lot of poppycock." This is all I know about it. Who the minister was I do not know but I'm rather sure he hasn't read much of the Urantia Book.

What of a significant nature could be accomplished by showing ministers or theologians a copy of the Urantia Book, I wouldn't know. Any one browsing through the book would assume it was "poppycock." We would certainly be more than happy to have a number of competent scholars read the book and after they have read it, share with us their evaluations. We would want to meet with one of them in person. It is important that young theologians like Moss or Shinn be consulted.

Thank you again for your letter, Ed. I appreciate your concern but think your anxiety regarding the freedom of objective study is dangerous. Will also share copies of this letter with Dr. Wagner, Henry Kroehler, and Harold Wilke.

Sincerely yours,

Meredith J. Sprunger

# MICHIGAN-INDIANA SYNOD

OF THE

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February 27, 1958

Rev. Meredith J. Sprunger, Ph.D.  
215 North State Street  
Culver, Indiana

Dear Meredith:

Your letter and note of February 25 disturbed me somewhat. It seems to me that you are attempting to fight back at something when there is actually nothing to fight back against. I assume that now inquiries will be directed to me and I shall need to go into lengthy explanations concerning the whole matter. As you well know by this time, I do have a few reservations in regard to the statements in Mr. Hand's letter. They are in a sense minor and yet could possibly have serious implications. I am just a little fearful that your letter to these various pastors will actually cause this to become something of a major issue. I may be wrong in my judgment in this regard and I certainly do not wish it to become that.

In a way I feel that I should now also follow up your letter with a further word of explanation to these pastors. For the time being, however, I shall not do that.

I do not believe that Ed Brueseke was interested in doing anything particular in this regard, with perhaps the exception of inviting several theologians to study the book through the Commission on Church and Ministry. I had a chance to speak with him briefly on the subject at the South Bend meeting the other day. I believe that I am interpreting his intentions correctly.

So what I am really saying in this letter, Meredith, is that I wish you hadn't sent the information to the other pastors.

Sincerely,

*Henry*  
Henry G. Kroehler

HGK:hs



# *Zion Evangelical and Reformed Church*

(UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST)

S. ST. PETER AT E. WAYNE—ONE BLOCK EAST OF HOWARD PARK  
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TELEPHONE: CE 3-5446

February 28, 1958

Rev. Meredith Sprunger  
Grace United Church of Christ  
307 North Plymouth Street  
Culver, Indiana

Dear Meredith:

First of all let me thank you for sending me copies of your letter to Dr. Wagner and the study group, and a copy of Mr. Hand's letter to the Synodical Council. I am glad to know that the channels of communication are again open between us on this matter. For your information I am enclosing a copy of a letter I wrote to Muessling yesterday.

If we are to hope to understand each other, we must first trust each other and for the record let me spell out a few things to clear the air. Since we last wrote to each other about this Urantia Book and at your suggestion dropped any further discussion of it, I have given the matter very little thought, except to discuss it with Harold Wilke after you had introduced the book to him (when he was in Culver, last year). I also showed the book to a few ministers and theologians. Specifically, I remember showing it to Dick Scheef, Brevard Childs, Bela Vassady and Ruben Huenemann when they were guests in our home.

I frankly was too busy to think about it at all, until Don Calvert came to me greatly disturbed, 1) about the zeal with which some members of the Urantia Study group witnessed to the effect of this "new revelation" on their ministry and 2) about the growing rift in our ministerial fellowship because of the obvious cleavage between those who went for Urantia and those who didn't and 3) the almost certain disintegration of our earlier theological study group, because of this new development.

Since Don spoke to me (some time after our last scheduled theological study group, which I missed because of attendance at General Council - February 10), I have talked with Lowell Dittmer, for whom I have a special concern as a new minister - by Synodical assignment. I learned that he had been given or loaned a book but I don't believe he has taken it too seriously.

I next tried to talk to Dave Schlundt since he came early to our meeting last Monday. We certainly didn't have ten minutes together before others started to come and our conversations had to stop and it is good they did, for Dave became very emotionally disturbed at my suggesting at all that you couldn't really believe Urantia and remain a minister of the Evangelical and Reformed Church - that there was a real antithesis between accepting Urantia as in any sense valid and authentic revelation and being in harmony with the mainstream of the Christian Faith.