

## PROBLEMS OF HISTORICITY ASSOCIATED WITH THE URANTIA BOOK

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As the URANTIA movement moves out into the main stream of society it is important that we face some basic questions regarding the historicity of events associated with the origin of The URANTIA Book. Any one doing research in this area will notice that many members of the Forum respond with tacit or pointed secrecy regarding the events of these early days. This is understandable since Forum members were asked during this period not to talk about their activities and took vows of secrecy. Now we find second and third generation people engaging in this same evasive attitude toward the history of the URANTIA movement. Those acquainted with the subversive sects and cults recognize this as a common characteristic of these movements. Covert behavior has all kinds of dangerous potentials.

Knowing that this issue would eventually have to be dealt with, I asked Dr. Sadler (who did not engage in evasive behavior) what they were requested to keep secret. He told me that secrecy applied to only two things: 1. The identity of the individual who was used in some way in the materialization of the papers, and, 2. Details concerning the method by which the papers were materialized. I then carefully went on to ask him how much of the things he had communicated to me which were associated with the origin of the URANTIA papers could be shared with others. His immediate reply, as closely as I can remember his words, was, "Anything which you have personally heard, you may share with others if you think it is wise to do so."

My own opinion is that it is probably wise for "official" Brotherhood publications not to mention the names of early leaders or historical events associated with the origin of the papers while any Forum members are still living.

It is my conviction that all of us who were not a part of the Forum should treat these events with the same objectivity and wisdom we would use in dealing with any other historical information. Cults and sects which establish an attitudinal atmosphere where certain questions are not discussed, evasive answers given, or where objectivity and openness are lacking become suspect. Such an approach is unworthy of students of The URANTIA Book.

Let us openly acknowledge that the identity of the person associated with the origin of the papers and the method of the materialization of the papers is not known because the Contact Commission was asked to keep it secret. But generalizing this attitude toward other events in the history of the URANTIA movement is not necessary or wise. In my work with the Christian Fellowship we are relating with scholars and professional people accustomed to objective research. If we should be evasive or less than honest in our relationships we would not only sacrifice our personal integrity but would instantly lose credibility. This does not imply that one should not use wisdom in sharing or communicating historical information.

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