

INTERVIEW WITH TOM AND CAROLYN KENDALL

by Polly Friedman

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Polly: I am in Wheeling, Illinois, speaking with Carolyn and Tom Kendall. Carolyn is telling us about her father, Clarence Bowman, and his activity with the papers in the early years.

Carolyn: One day in November, 1923, my Father ran into an acquaintance, a man from his hometown of Williamsburg, Kentucky. He was a Methodist minister who had been a patient of Dr. William Sadler. This man, Rev. Groves, invited my father to the Sadler's home that afternoon. Dr. Sadler had a Sunday afternoon salon type of gathering at which he and his wife, Dr. Lena Sadler, presented such subject as: primary emotions and instincts, convictions, genetics, Darwin, Mendelism, eugenics – in a general discussion. My Dad went that afternoon. He continued to attend until December 14, 1924.

Dr. Lena Sadler happened to be out of town that day. Dr. William Sadler “spilled the beans” about something new that had been going on for a long time actually. He announced at that time that there was going to be a wonderful new revelation. He was conveying the information from Machiventa Melchizedek who had announced the revelation the previous February 11th. From then on they would begin the study of this new material. Before the end of the year the Forum, as it was later known, was invited to submit all the questions they could possibly think of; all the things they were interested in knowing, all the mysteries of life and the universe. There were hundreds and hundreds of questions, which the Forum came up with. It is my understanding that the Dr. and his wife submitted these questions to the personalities who were conducting this revelatory enterprise.

This was in February of 1925. The answers to the questions were forthcoming in the form of papers – chapters – on individual topics and subjects. From about 1925 to 1929 it was known as the first Series, and my Dad noted this in his diary. He kept a diary from 1914 until 1959 when he died.

He noted the subject matter under discussion at the meetings he attended. From the titles of the First Series we can compare them to the titles of the Second Series and see how the papers were studied. Readers submitted their follow-up questions; they wrote their questions on the papers themselves. The Second Series was an expansion of all of the first papers, and finally in the mid-1930s, the book was pretty much finished as we have it today. There were small refinements, small changes of editing. The papers were then typeset into galley sheets that many of us read when we got into the Forum.

In about 1932 there was a period of a whole year when there were no meetings. My Dad kept in touch with Albert Dyon and Ernie Pritchard, who were Forum members, to find out what was going on. When he moved back to Chicago he rejoined the Forum and reread all of the papers. When he completed his reading he was permitted to join the Seventy, which was a more intensive study group for the papers. Each Seventy member eventually prepared a thesis on some subject of interest.

Polly: Why did they call it The Seventy?

Carolyn: Because when all the people who were invited came, they counted just seventy people.

Tom: Just like Jesus' Evangelists.

Carolyn: They thought of it as being like the evangelical group in Jesus' time.

Polly: I have a question about when the First Series came. Were the answers, the papers, in chronological order, like they are in the book?

Carolyn: Basically yes. I think we could briefly review some of the titles, which aren't necessarily the titles they became. It was just the subject matter. For example, on March 1, 1925, an account of the Installation of the God Head. Now, there is no paper with that title. The next one, The Son of God, and then the Sons of God. Then you can see they jumped in again with the message of February 11, 1924, Machiventa's message. Next the Third Source and center, Higher Personalities of the Third Source and Center, and then Spiritual Artisans, Humor, and so forth. Ministering Spirits. Further along – this was still the First Series – they get to the Planetary Prince; Evolution of Law, Order and Civilization; Adam and Eve; The Default; the Religion Papers that we're familiar with; the Jewish idea of God, from Melchizedek to Christ; Bestowals of Christ Michael; Thought Adjusters and Seraphic Guardians. Now he gives the page numbers here, which were typewritten page numbers. They weren't the galley sheets yet.

That was the development. At that time they could talk about it freely among their friends. Later on they were asked not to discuss what was transpiring because it was going to be published as a book. It might be several years hence, and they didn't want what was going on to be divulged outside the group. Dad had written all these titles down in his diaries. I think it was in mid-1955 that he mentioned to Mrs. Kellogg that he had a list of the papers. Would she be interested in having them? She talked to Bill Sadler and Bill asked through her, that Dad destroy his diaries. He had about thirty years of diaries, and he didn't want to destroy them, so he went through with ink eradicator. He tried to eradicate everything referring to the Forum. After he died, I looked into the diaries, and could easily read his shorthand. He did a lot of it in Gregg shorthand, because he didn't want friends who might pry into his diaries to read them.

Polly: So you could read his diaries, that's marvelous.

Carolyn: Even through the ink eradicator I was able to get the titles and everything that had happened. Years later I discovered among my Mother's stuff that she had done the same thing; she had the same titles. My Dad did as he was asked. He tried to eradicate everything. It's the "fault" of my Mother and me that we have some of these original titles. Dad faithfully went to the meetings every Sunday that he could, and finally in 1951, I asked if I might join the Forum. I had been raised on the teachings of The URANTIA Book without their being identified as such. I also attended the Presbyterian Church, but I always felt that Dad had the real poop, so to speak. And I knew it probably came from the Forum he went to. My Mother was not at all interested at that time. I went to be interviewed by Dr. Sadler October 12, 1951 when I was almost 19 years old. He told me the story, which is essentially the same as in Sherman's book, of how the papers came. That book went back 35 years before Sherman got involved, which would take it back to 1906. Not 1911, as stated in The Mind at Mischief

Polly: 1911 is the date I always heard.

Carolyn: Supposedly, in The Mind at Mischief, the printer made an error and they decided to leave it. So it was actually 1906 when it started. In 1951 when I joined the Forum the paper happened to be the Bestowals of Christ Michael. I believed it immediately, no doubts whatsoever. I never had any moments of doubt.

Six months later I met the man of my dreams and got him involved. We both had a Presbyterian background.

Tom: Well, I was dubious at first. Carolyn told me this story, and who wouldn't be a little dubious? But I agreed to attend meetings, and I don't know at what point I came in, but I attended three months or so. Bill Sadler was doing all the teaching at that time; virtually all. He would read the paper and there would be discussion. A couple of years later we came to the Rodan paper in the Jesus section, and I guess maybe I am a philosopher at heart. The truths of the ideas he expresses there, the human philosophy impinging on Jesus' philosophy sold me on the book from that time on. That's how it was with me. It just wasn't a sudden thing and

it wasn't overwhelming emotionally. I just believed it. It must have been in the spring of 1952 that we went to a picnic.

Carolyn: The first picnic I took him to in 1952 I asked Bill if he would give Tom a little background because this was Tom's first exposure to the Forum. Bill had a way of mixing emotion with intellectuality and he said: "You have a wonderful experience in store for you when you begin to read." He talked primarily about the life of Jesus. He said: "What was Jesus like as a little boy? How did he grow up? How did he get along with his parents, and what were the Apostles like?" And, so it was a personal approach, I guess, which had quite a nice effect. I admired Bill's way of doing these things. I can't say that it was a spiritual approach. It was either intellectual or emotional. The spiritual thing I felt was strangely missing from the Forum. It wasn't really until Vern Grimsley began emphasizing the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man – and of course I'd read all of the papers – that I realized that was in there; that we each had a personal relationship with the Father.

Polly: Were the Thought Adjuster papers read and discussed?

Carolyn: They were later. When I came in it was right at the beginning of the Jesus papers. Every Sunday we went consecutively through the papers, so eventually we came back around to the First papers. By that time I'd read them all.

Tom: It took years.

Carolyn: Yes, it took five years to go through the whole book in the Forum. It was later on, probably long after publication, that I realized that there was a spiritual message in there. Now maybe I was deficient. I probably was. There were high-powered people in the Forum, but I never heard that the Father loves you and that we are the sons and daughters of the Father. That wasn't emphasized; it was read, but it didn't come out. Dr. Sadler, I think, exuded that feeling of spirituality.

Tom: We were encouraged to understand the pieces.

Carolyn: Yes, intellectually.

Tom: Not so much, as you say, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, but to understand some of the more difficult papers. People prided themselves on understanding papers 105, 106, the Supreme papers, the Foreword and so on.

Polly: In other words factual information was studied. The spiritual message was missed. Before the book was printed there wasn't the advantage of seeing it and reading it as a whole.

Carolyn: That's right. We could go and read the papers before publication. We'd call either Christy or Mr. Kellogg and order the papers we wanted to read. You only had so much time to read so you'd kind of rush through; you couldn't make notes. I was working there for about three years from 1952. I worked for Dr. Sadler before and after Tom and I were married. This was before publication too.

Tom: You couldn't cross-reference.

Carolyn: Yes, that's the main thing, you couldn't cross-reference.

Tom: I think they assumed everybody would get the spiritual nature of the teachings. It wasn't exactly forgotten; it wasn't emphasized maybe as much as it could have been. But they realized that it was there.

Carolyn: Oh yes, yes, they knew it was there. I guess it was our deficiency. We didn't catch on.

Polly: That's interesting. Well then, how did you feel when the actual hardcover book was published?

Carolyn: Oh, we were there the first day and bought a couple of books or as much as we could afford.

Tom: Yes, yes, it was a great day, but I only had been waiting three years, and Carolyn a little more than that. But there were people who had waited decades for this to come out – thirty years – and they were really excited.

Carolyn: Some people had felt that they were never going to live to see it, and some didn't. It was really wonderful.

The Midwayers had been planning for hundreds of years, since the time of the Middle Ages, for a revelation of this type. I think it was Dr. Sadler who told us that they had tried various techniques of getting through and they finally settled on the method ultimately used. They had the individual through whose mind it came somehow. There is no way of knowing how this happened. And then we had another individual who was the promoter, the organizer, and the one who took it in hand and fostered it, which was Dr. Sadler. He had the expertise and background.

Polly: I understand his wife believed it.

Carolyn: Yes, right but he didn't believe it fully until he came across the Twelve Apostle Paper.

Polly: Yes, I've heard that story from different people and it's a wonderful story in a way, because it makes you realize that we are naturally a little skeptical.

Carolyn: He kept thinking, "I'm going to figure this out, I'm going to beat this thing. I just don't know how they do it, but somehow we're going to get to the bottom of this." I guess he took it seriously, but as far as being a total believer, it wasn't until the Twelve Apostle paper came, and that was years after it began.

Polly: So what about the directions and instructions? Did they talk early about disseminating the teachings one to one?

Carolyn: My Dad was convinced that this was going to be the biggest thing to hit in hundreds of years, that it was going to be reviewed in all the major newspapers. He was going to buy all the newspapers. They had waited through the Second World War, and they figured, the revelators were just waiting until it was over. Well it didn't happen when the war was over. The war was over in 1945 and it wasn't until 1955 that the book was published.

Polly: Why were they directed that way?

Carolyn: Communism was a major impediment.

Polly: And then there was the Korean War in there.

Carolyn: Yes, but by the time the Korean War came; the Midwayers thought things were turning around. Every country in the world was not in the thrall of communism. The Melchizedeks had declared war on communism in 1946. They vowed to beat them if it took 100 years to do so. Publication was held up until it was fairly clear which direction communism was going. Would there be another world war? The course of communism was watched for nine years while the Melchizedeks worked behind the scenes. Finally, rather than delay until the downfall of that oppressive godless system, the go ahead was given to publish the papers in 1955, but with several caveats.

'The book belongs to the era immediately to follow the conclusion of the present ideological struggle. That will be the day when men will be willing to seek truth and righteousness. When the chaos of the present confusion has passed it will be more readily possible to formulate the cosmos of a new and improved era of

human relationships. You are in association with a revelation of truth, which is a part of the natural evolution of religion on this world. Over rapid growth would be suicidal.”

They don't say go real slow, they just warn against too rapid growth.

Polly: They don't say stand still?

Carolyn: “The book is being given to those who are ready for it long before the day of its world wide mission.” So if you see it in the context of communism and their desire to see it beaten, there will come a time when people will be willing to seek for righteousness. That's the time for the revelation. And in that same message: “...an early publication of the book has been provided so that it may be in hand for the training of leaders and teachers. Thousands of study groups must be brought into existence and the book must be translated into many tongues. Thus will the book be in readiness when the battle for man's liberty is finally won and the world is once more made safe for the religion of Jesus and the freedom of mankind.”

This is the message, which came in 1955 as an introduction to the publication mandate, and I believe it was by the Melchizedek who at that time was acting for the planetary regent. His advice was not necessarily to go slow, but rather the time for the book was not yet. In the meantime all who were ready could have it, read it, accept it, prepare, train, establish study groups.

Polly: Don't you think that this depends on readiness and it will be gradual? There probably won't be any particular date or, sudden happening.

Carolyn: Sure. Here is something from Dr. Sadler concerning the dissemination of The URANTIA Book: “At the time of publication of The URANTIA Book, we were given many suggestions respecting the methods we should employ in the work of its distribution. These instructions may be summarized as follows:

1. Study the methods employed by Jesus in introducing his work on earth. Note how quietly he worked at first.
2. We were advised to avoid all efforts to achieve early and spectacular recognition. However, one thing should be made clear; nothing is to be done to interfere with the energetic and enthusiastic efforts of any individual to introduce The URANTIA Book to his varied contacts and human associations.”

Polly: Now does this or any other papers mention more messages after this time?

Carolyn: There were several kinds of messages and instructions. There was The URANTIA Book, then there were these long papers, communications, as they were known, that came through the contact personality. There were additional verbal messages that came to Dr. Sadler and Christy. One that came was the message: You have not done enough to protect the name Urantia; you register it in the branch of government that I've looked into just like you do with a copyright for the book. That was in 1942.

Polly: So protecting the name is important; that was an actual suggestion?

Tom/Carolyn: Yes, it was an order.

Polly: And, to be taken very literally?

Carolyn: Here it is, regarding the name Urantia. “You have not done enough to safeguard your name. (Meaning the name Urantia.) Make it very safe for one generation so the name cannot be pre-empted. In a common law trust you hold the name. You do it also in a corporation. A corporation has status in law. You also do it in the copyright. You must carefully register it with the division of government that I have looked into that controls trade relations. Trademark, and then you are protected in common law connected with a volunteer

association such as you are planning in the Urantia Brotherhood. In all those ways you must safeguard the name. THIS IS ONE OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT DUTIES.” And that last sentence is in capitals.

“In 50, 75 or 100 years, the name will be fairly safe. You safeguard it for a generation and it will largely take care of itself.” And, again, they emphasize, they are talking about the name Urantia. You can see that it is dated August 1942 and this is Christy’s writing in the corner.

Polly: Oh, that’s very important. Now it does say a generation, which is about 25 years. A lot of people say maybe the time is almost over and it isn’t that important.

Carolyn: It should be obvious they don’t want the name to fall into general use, so that you could have, Urantia Trading Company, Urantia Massage, etc. They didn’t say anything about the circles, however.

Polly: What were your recollections of Dr. Sadler?

Carolyn: I thought he was cute. He really was something. He was shorter than I was and he was sort of portly. I heard he had been pretty tough when he was a younger man. Bill once said, “Well you know him now that he is a docile old man, I knew him when he was the son of thunder.” I guess he’d been pretty determined and firm. But, he could still lecture and move a crowd, and be exciting.

Tom: I remember when I presented a paper the first time. They’d finally get around to assigning a paper. Dr. Sadler would be in the audience and Christy would be in the audience. Bill wasn’t. When I did mine, I was shaking a little bit, because they were the real veterans and I’d wonder how it would turn out. It went well.

Carolyn: But Dr. would always come up after you’d finished your paper and look up at you, shake your hand and say, “Oh, that was fine, that was fine.” He would always commend someone, even if they had done a horrible job. The idea was to encourage them to train themselves as teachers, even if they were scared to death.

Polly: Did he have a possessive attitude about this, or was he awed by it?

Carolyn: Oh, I don’t think he was possessive. I think he knew we had to train teachers. He urged us to bring in a lot of people; to go out there and introduce the book. He gave people a lot of latitude.

Tom: Oh, I think, from the time of publication, as time went on, he loosened his grip gradually and he never tried to hang on forever. I admired him for that. He said it’s in other hands now. The next generation is coming along and we have fostered this – told them how to operate within reason and now it is for them to do. He was always there to warn when you were getting off the path.

Polly: Getting off the path? Can you think of examples of something that would have been considered too far out?

Tom: Advertising would be one.

Carolyn: Yes. I think when the Domestic Extension Committee wanted to advertise in all the major newspapers, it was Dr. Sadler who decided they weren’t going to do that. Christy was the one who told them. She was pretty firm. She didn’t do a lot on her own in those days. She would seek Dr. Sadler’s advice, and he would suggest to her, and then she was the message carrier.

Tom: She was the bridge from the Dr. to the rest of us grappling with these things and trying to put them into effect. I remember serving on the first Society’s Governing Committee with him. He was active, but in a quiet manner. He didn’t try to force his will on everybody.

Polly: That's neat. He was there to stabilize.

Tom: If you wanted to ask whether we were proceeding in the wrong way, he would give you an answer.

Carolyn: Yes, he had an opinion about everything. When I worked there, he would wander up and down the hall jiggling the coins in his pocket and sometimes he liked the small talk, especially about baseball. I didn't know anything about baseball, but he was a Cub fan. He wouldn't schedule patients during the World Series. He would be upstairs listening to it. He was such a fan. The Cubs used to live at the Rienze Hotel down the street, and he'd go sit in the lobby hoping to catch a glimpse of them.

He smoked a pipe and it always went out. It never stayed lit.

Tom: He was a very versatile man, you know. When he wanted to click off his accomplishments, he really had them.

Carolyn: He knew a lot about everything.

Tom: He was a surgeon; he was a psychiatrist and had studied under Freud.

Carolyn: He was an ordained minister.

Tom: Salesman, he had done sales work.

Carolyn: He was a detective with Pinkerton.

Polly: Well, all the qualifications you'd need for this revelation, he had them, right?

Tom: That's one reason he got involved.

Carolyn: When the FBI was going to be established, he was recommended by Pinkerton to the US Government to go to England to observe Scotland Yard's operation preparatory to setting up a similar investigative unit in this country. He was asked to be the director but he said no, because he had other career goals.

Tom: All these medical things. He was a general surgeon.

Carolyn: Yes, he claimed he performed the first surgery where he pinned one bone to another using a foreign object. It was a bone from an animal. They polished it, sanded it down, and made sure it was exact; sterilized it and inserted the pin.

Polly: Such a pioneer, all the way around.

Carolyn: In psychiatry he predicted that eventually much of the treatment would involve drug therapy. He believed that most mental illness was due to chemical deficiencies – imbalances in the brain – and that's what they're doing now. When I was working there, I'd try to think of some subject to ask him, to give him a lead in, and he'd expatiate for half an hour or so. At a party one could always wander over and engage him in a conversation.

Polly: So, personally, what has the revelation and Urantia teachings meant to each of you in your lives? What influence has it had in a very real way?

Tom: In my case, after college, before I met Carolyn, I was just sort of drifting along spiritually. The book gave me direction that I wouldn't have had any other way, really. I don't think I would have gotten it from

church. Maybe I would, but I doubt it. It has also caused a lot of work. The biggest pile of compressed reality I've ever had was being president of the Foundation, a very difficult job, and a good experience for me.

Carolyn: Well, I guess from the moment I was born I was influenced by the Urantia teachings and I think we probably saw to it that our five kids were similarly influenced. None of them has ever become involved with organized religion. Not that we didn't make the effort to introduce them. But I think they felt that the teachings of The URANTIA Book conveyed through us to them offered more than what they saw at church. The only reason for going to church would have been for social contacts. I guess they may not have realized it, but there could have been some spiritual intermingling they would have benefited from, but they never got that far. I went to church almost until we were married and I always enjoyed it. I met good friends and I learned the Bible stories. That offered fine background for studying The URANTIA Book that I don't think a lot of people have had.

I think it is a gift. I see so many people who are afraid of things, who lack confidence. They feel there is some unseen evil influence trying to interfere with their progress, or punish them for infractions, known and unknown. I'm totally free of superstition. I'm totally free of the idea that something out there is going to get even with me, or going to put an end to the good things in life.

Tom: It gives you new direction from above, which as the book says you can't really function correctly any other way with just your own psyche. I think that you are not afraid of death. You don't look forward to death, because of its pain, miseries and other things. But you are not afraid of death. You've lost your fears about death.

Polly: It's a graduation.

Carolyn: Yes, my mother died last September, and the memorial service was pretty straight forward as to what The URANTIA Book taught about death. I think that our children's spouses are still kind of mystified about all of this stuff; and why our children are so blasé toward death.

Polly: So, is there anything on your mind before we close?

Carolyn: No, except that I do believe in the concept of the Foundation and that the copyright should be maintained. I can't believe that it can't be valid. I believe the name should definitely be protected. I'm not so sure about the circles. I think the circles are a spiritual symbol and perhaps should never have been trademarked. I think the basic idea of the Foundation is good. I think it is important to have Foundation Trustees who are not subject to popular election and reelection so that they can operate independently. But I think there has to be a better selection process for Trustees. They need to be much better at self-policing their organization than they have been.

Tom: I share the belief that the copyright should be protected and the symbol. As a Trustee and President of the Board, from 1963 to 1983, I participated in this.