

February 27, 1958

Rev. L. A. Houseling
609 Sycamore Street
Miles, Michigan

Dear Herb:

Thanks for inviting me to your meeting on Monday. I must, however, decline your invitation for at least two reasons. 1) I do not at the moment have the energy needed to engage in what is likely to be exhausting argument rather than exhaustive study, if I am present. 2) Whatever I would have to say would most likely carry little weight, since I would appear in the eyes of some as "the devil's advocate", while I myself would be thinking all the time of the book itself, as the devil's tool.

As you may know, I have had a copy of the book almost since the day it was published. I have read enough of it to know that this purports to be a new revelation, which certainly presumes to be more authentic at points than our historically conditioned Holy Scriptures. Indeed the one thing that puzzles me most is how men who will subject the traditional Scriptures to the most merciless criticism, can give this any credence at all, without first running down the historical origin and development of this book.

More than a year ago, Heredith tried to interest me in taking this Urantia Book seriously. I told him then as I started to tell Dave Schlundt Monday that I had a clear conviction that any minister who accepted the claims and teachings of Urantia as authentic would sooner or later have to leave the ministry of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. I still believe this and that is why I hope those of you who are studying this book will really study it, which means subjecting it to the rigorous criticism of honest doubt.

If you will study it critically (and you can't do that without consulting qualified Biblical scholars and theologians, as I suggested to Dave Schlundt) I have no doubt as to where you will come out. Certainly no one is going to censor you for reading a book or even for being tempted to fall for a heresy. But in the long run you will have to choose between the Holy Scriptures and Urantia, between revelation in history vs. revelation via mysteriously delivered papers, between the basically "wordless" person to person communication of God in Christ and the all too wordy, pseudo-scientific pat answers of the "midwayer" "who was there".

My interest in all this is personal rather than official. Naturally, as chairman of the Commission on Church and Ministry, I am bound to wonder what this augurs for the ministry and the church. Until now I have done nothing but hope and pray that this will pass, except for the letter I wrote to Sprunger a long time ago, and the developments of the past week, including my

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conversations with Lowell Dittmer, Dave Schlundt, Don Calvert and now this letter to you. My hope now is that those of you who have put some stock in these "papers" will reject them out of your own study. I am sure that my studying with you would not do much good at the moment, since whatever rapport we once had seems to be gone. If your group is interested in really finding out what a competent scholar thinks of all this, I will use whatever influence I have to see that our Commission on Church and Ministry brings such a person to this area at our commission's expense.

Sincerely,

Edward W. Brueseke

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