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Dr. Sadler And The Urantia Book: The Historic Origins Of A Spiritual Revelation In The 20th Century

DR. SADLER AND THE URANTIA BOOK

The Historic Origins of a Spiritual Revelation in the 20th Century



Sioux Oliva

*"A superb researcher fueled by scholarly discipline and spirited passion,
Dr. Sioux Oliva daily uncovers historical nuggets." —Ezra Kennedy*



Synopsis

Dr. William S. Sadler professed that a group of celestial beings began to communicate to him through a sleeping man in Chicago from 1911 until 1923. He and his wife, Lena Sadler, both well-known and highly respected local physicians, claimed there were “probably 250 night sessions, during which these celestials spoke through their patient. The identity of the patient was never revealed. From 1924-1934, the Sadlers held a Forum in their home to study the voluminous notes and to compose questions for the celestial beings about human origins and destiny. The result was The Urantia Book, which claims to be the fifth epochal revelation to humankind. Published in 1955, it has sold over 750,000 copies by word of mouth. Although translated into 17 languages, relatively few people know about it or the amazing story of its creation. The History Of The Urantia Book explores the professional lives and spiritual pursuits of the Sadlers and the extraordinary role that Dr. Sadler played in bringing this 2,097-page tome to the world. It compares the “origin story” with the scholarly discovery of relevant facts and circumstances that led to its publication. It also sheds new light on the fiercely protected identity of the “patient” and likely scribe for these revelations.

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Customer Reviews

Dr Sadler, from the evidence presented in this book, comes across as a central figure in the origin of The Urantia Book, yet there remains a lot of doubt that his writing style matches those in The Urantia Book. The result is an open question of whether Dr Sadler is the author, or his story of a patient who communicated in his sleep with Celestial Beings and verbally passed on their words is truly true. A fascinating story with all available facts presented, ultimately letting the reader weigh the evidence and decide like a good mystery novel "Who wrote it" ! The Urantia Book itself, available from The Urantia Foundation and elsewhere, is extremely well-written with the deepest of thoughts presented and a most detailed account of Jesus' life on "Urantia" and His purpose in coming to Urantia.

Disappointed. I wonder what the motivation was for writing this book? Wild guesses without any proof. Sorry I bought it.

The Urantia Book is both a compendium and a revelation. In its Forward the authors specifically state: "We shall, in all our efforts to reveal truth and co-ordinate essential knowledge, give preference to the highest existing human concepts pertaining to the subjects to be presented. We may resort to pure revelation only when the concept of presentation has had no adequate previous expression by the human mind." Dr. Sioux Oliva, in her well researched Dr. Sadler and the Urantia Book, presents a variety of competing theories about just how this has been achieved in the formulation of the 196 papers which comprise, what is often referred to as, The Fifth Epochal Revelation (5E). She notes that, in addition to numerous bible references, 5E features many statements that were contained in published works that would have been contemporaneous to those individuals who participated in the question and answer Forum that Drs. William and Lena Sadler hosted in their Chicago home between 1923 and 1942. The authors of the papers also had this to say about that: "We have selected as the basis of these papers more than one thousand human concepts representing the highest and most advanced planetary knowledge of spiritual values and universe meanings. Wherein these human concepts, assembled from the God-knowing mortals of the past and the present, are inadequate to portray the truth as we are directed to reveal it, we will unhesitatingly supplement them, . . . It is this approach, one in which higher intelligences are willing to meet us where

we live, that gives The Urantia Book so much of its wide ranging appeal. The inspirational qualities and internal consistency of the Fifth Epochal Revelation, together with The Spirit of Truth, attest to the book's authenticity and its true value in portraying a rising spiritual tide that lifts all boats. It is this particular recognition, and sometimes the lack thereof, that led to a schism splitting the readership, largely along the lines of attraction versus promotion, as they apply to both the distribution of the Urantia Book and the dissemination of truth contained therein. As conventional wisdom often states, a little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous thing. Many, within the various social groupings that constitute the Urantia movement, have run where the angels fear to tread. They have apparently failed to learn the essential curriculum as it's found within the life, the teachings, and the legacy of Jesus. Indeed, while denying they are building a church or other religious institution, some would inaugurate a new type of priesthood without first considering the pitfalls. Churches sometimes have to deal with judgmental councils that are complemented by self-appointed thought police, integrity challenged prosecutors, highly prejudicial judges, and tainted jury pools. Our Sovereign Lord, during his sojourn on Earth (the Fourth Epochal Revelation), did not advocate any kind of fundamentalism. He did not attack the underpinnings of another's faith, he didn't promise additional layers of ecclesiastical authority or even more holy books. What he did promise was a spirit helper, the Spirit of Truth. This "promised helper" is the key to "just a closer walk with Thee" and it is the best evidence that God is still speaking. This too was addressed within the Forward to The Urantia Book. ". . . we know that there dwells within the human mind a fragment of God, and that there sojourns with the human soul the Spirit of Truth; and we further know that these spirit forces conspire to enable material man to grasp the reality of spiritual values and to comprehend the philosophy of universe meanings. But even more certainly we know that these spirits of the Divine Presence are able to assist man in the spiritual appropriation of all truth contributory to the enhancement of the ever-progressing reality of personal religious experience • God-consciousness. The idea that the force and authority of 5E will somehow become diminished, if people begin to question the Urantia Apocrypha is silly. Even if some who would skim The Urantia Book are put off by a challenge to an origins account, one the revelators specifically sought to dissuade or deemphasize, those readers who are truly responsive to Divine leading will continue to enjoy the kind of edification that is uniquely available through The Urantia Book. Dr. Oliva's harshest critics apparently believe that the Spirit of Truth is somehow impotent, incapable of leading us into the truth of each and every matter. They have painted a caricature of her that is based upon the most simplistic analysis of her work; one that is founded

upon selective amplification, filtration, and contextualization. In other words, they have fallen victim to their own sloppy reading. They have done this while advancing the same politics of destruction that are an unpleasant reminder of the earlier schism and clearly out of place among those in an ascension quest. I have met people that exhibit the same kind of spiritual growth fostered by The Urantia Book, even though they had never even heard of the book. The condescending attitudes held by some readers that have posted here is unjustified. Just because we have benefitted, by having the book early, just because we have been spoon-fed refined spiritual truth, doesn't make us superior. Those responsive to Divine leading, without the benefit of advanced teachings, are the ones that I find awe inspiring. There was nothing attractive about the behaviors of certain people within the movement in the aftermath of the 1989 split. Many, including this reader, thought the boisterous ones with their gratuitous nastiness were an embarrassment to the faith. So, rather than introduce our friends to such a crowd, we simply withdrew from the movement and continued our studies in prayerful solitude. Whether Dr. Oliva's detractors will be satisfied with anything short of a retraction, something akin to the Abjuration of Galileo, remains to be seen. I, for one, believe Dr. Oliva is a sincere truth seeker. I don't see where she tried to sell anything close to the "definitive word" in her answer to the Urantia Apocrypha that was already in play. Mullins and Waldrop clearly have a vested interest in their versions. Mullins, in his own book, had already prompted speculation about the "human subject." I would repeat, this is speculation that the Revelatory Commission wisely sought to dissuade or de-emphasize. Waldrop, a Foundation Trustee at the time of the split, hasn't departed from his stand that some, himself included, are more equal than others. The fact is, Dr. Oliva did an excellent balancing act. She gathered the disparate elements of an already complex yarn into a book that is truly captivating. She gives careful consideration to each theory she encounters along the way and weaves them into a pattern that is disturbing to some and delightful to others. She makes appropriate disclosures in the Preface about her personal involvement with the book from an early age. From then on, she scrupulously avoids inserting herself into the historical account until the end where she reveals her own reservations about the way the Urantia Book treats the controversial issue of eugenics. Dr. Oliva characterized William S. Sadler as "the scribe." She also wrote there is "substantial evidence" that Dr. Sadler was "the channel." In the first case, while the initial contact was through a "sleeping subject," later described as a patient of Dr. Sadler's, the assertion that he engaged directly with the authors does not necessarily contradict the stories told by members of the contact commission. In light of the different communications modalities available

to, and employed by, the Revelatory Commission, each of the theories advanced is to some extent plausible. They may even be complementary. While I wish Dr. Oliva had added the word "circumstantial" in the second case, by any modern definition of "channeling," Sadler clearly fulfilled that function. Perhaps not in the same way that the sleeping subject did during the initial contacts, but our celestial associates were clearly engaging Sadler as the point of contact. And, he was clearly the conduit between the revelators and the Forum. He acted as facilitator, investigator, incorporator, and much more. At the outset, he was the main person to whom messages were directed through the sleeping subject. Then, he carried those messages throughout the chautauqua circuit and the 533 living room. Dr. Oliva cites research involving computer analysis of the text as measured against certain writing samples called "controls." Unfortunately those investigators didn't have direct access to the writings of the Apostle Andrew, the Midwayers, or, for that matter, those of Machiventa Melchizadek, other than what appears exclusively in The Urantia Book. When one also considers the difficulty encountered in religious documents that derive from "transcendent sourcing," it is reasonable to conclude that an analysis based upon computational linguistics would single out the main point of contact, the one who had been fully immersed in the project for over a quarter of a century. With respect to the plagiarism issue, the entire domain of intellectual property is in flux, and rightly so. If one of our celestial associates works diligently to inspire you, it's just possible that you could write a book that reflects those insights. If the celestial personality is then tasked with responsibility for selecting "more than one thousand human concepts representing the highest and most advanced planetary knowledge of spiritual values and universe meanings," who then is the so-called plagiarist? In similar cases involving patent law in the United States, "a patent may not be obtained, though the invention is not identically disclosed or described [in the prior art], if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art." In today's contests between developing nations and certain highly developed nations, the question of whether the only thing separating them is the time factor, whether one group was presented with a certain set of challenges decades earlier than another group, will be determinative as to which patents may be invalidated in the future. During the days our Urantia revelation was being formulated by whatever means, comedian Lenny Bruce became famous for saying: "I don't have an original thought. I'm screwed, I speak English." If there is to be evolutionary growth, religious or spiritual, people will

engage in transcendent sourcing as a matter of course. The academic view is understandable in light of vested interests, but it is hardly serviceable. The world desperately needs the knowledge that some would segment or lock up for profit. No one in the open source arena is criticizing Sadler for the blend of science, philosophy, and religion he used on the Chautauqua Circuit. It is only those who are vested in reputations, publications, tenure, royalties, and licensing agreements that are popping blood vessels in this particular case. The Urantia Book is not for timid souls. The expose Dr. Sadler and the Urantia Book is also not for those with a fundamentalist mindset. Dr. Sioux Oliva's book is for those who trust the Spirit of Truth to guide us into all truth. To anyone venturing beyond the hearsay, and giving prayerful consideration to what Dr. Oliva actually wrote, there will be plenty of opportunity to employ the technique of suspended judgement. She has demonstrated a willingness to lovingly engage people that have hard questions. Her research was thorough and her balanced presentation is a credit to her profession. It is refreshing to behold true scholarship. Sincerely, Robert H. Kalk

Gave a good history of the Sadlers.

A fine book. A lot of detail. One of the best researched books I have ever read. Explains everything in an easy to understand format. I really enjoyed the book and his explanations. I think all readers of the Urantia book should read it so they can better understand the history of the Urantia Book.

Valuable for readers of UB. A detailed portrait of the Sadlers and a close look into their careers and the social and medical aspects of their era. Provides valuable context for the generating of the UB.

Informative and well written!

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