

Dear Dr. Sadler:

Vern and I want you to know how very much we appreciate your prompt and thoughtful replies to Vern's letters of last fall. You helped us in our discussions together and stimulated our thoughts. Because of your interest and help I would like to tell you now of what we subsequently decided. It has, I am sorry to admit, been a long time since our last correspondence, but it has taken us a long time to think through our situation and decide what we want to accomplish in this life. I do not mean to imply that we know precisely what we are going to do and how; we don't. But we do know with a much greater degree of certainty what we are going to try to maintain as our guiding principles and goals. The main problem we were facing when Vern wrote to you, you may recall, was the question of our relation to the organized church. Let me sketch briefly the events leading up to that point.

Vern's strongest desire in life has been, since junior high school to be a preacher. At Culver Military Academy Vern was introduced to the Urantia Book by Dr. Sprunger. He returned to Garden City with a copy and soon told me about it. We were at first intrigued--eventually becoming firm believers in the authenticity of the book. By the time we were married several years later, we were agreed in thinking that Vern, within the structure of the institutionalized church, could be effective in spreading the Urantia message of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The strong, dynamic truth in the Urantia Book is such a refreshing breeze among the smog of misconceptions, misunderstandings, and dry dogmas so prevalent in today's religious teaching, that we felt it would be welcomed by the people. And let me say here that we see a very important distinction between spreading the book itself and the message of the book. There will no doubt be quite a furor, the like of which has not been seen since Jesus enraged the Jewish hierarchy by daring to teach without the "authority" of traditional Judaism, when the book becomes widely and publically known. The longer this can be avoided the better, we feel. But the message of the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the divine spark indwelling each man is a message people hunger to learn. This conviction, together with Vern's deep desire to be a preacher, drew us toward the parish ministry. To us, there had seemed to be no other avenue open beside the church. We knew well enough there would be many, many problems in attempting to work through the church with this book. And neither of us was enchanted with the institutional church anyway. We did not overlook the possibility of an academic profession for Vern, but he would prefer to stay out of such a career if possible. Vern's real desire is to do public speaking, writing and personal counselling. This is the main reason he continued to be drawn toward the ministry rather than a University career. We were determined that, despite all the difficulties we foresaw for us in the church, we would make such a plan work. At any rate we were going to try very hard to make it work.

This tentatively decided, both of us turned our attention, time, energy, minds to the full time job of obtaining a university education. Both of us took our studies seriously, which meant we devoted a good deal of time to them. We both graduated from the University of Kansas--

Vern with a philosophy and psychology major and I with a Humanities major. Though we often discussed the difficulty of working through the church, we never quite brought ourselves to consider, consciously at least, abandoning it. We had been growing more disillusioned with it, though.

After arriving in California to attend seminary, Vern wrote the letter he had been planning for so long to write to you. After we received your reply, your thoughts acted as the sparks that ignited in our minds the new burst of thinking which carried us across the line at which we had previously halted--we began to question the ministry as a channel. In defense of what appears to be sheer flightiness on our part in moving halfway across the country to attend seminary only to begin wondering whether to attend, I would say this: taking our studies seriously, as we did, we simply did not have the time to sit together and deeply search our motives. We had been planning seminary and the ministry for so long that to change our minds was a very slow task, and a task we did not imagine we would undertake. We were so involved with examinations, term papers, and studies that we now call that period, as far as spiritual advancement is concerned, our own "dark night of the soul." However, after working in a large church in Oakland, California, as a field work student, the role of minister began to look <sup>to Vern</sup> more and more like that of an administrator of a large plant with committee meetings, reports due here and there, membership and fund raising drives, etc. consuming his time. Living in the seminary community, we discovered that the majority of seminary students look on preaching as quite unimportant and feel the real job of the church today is to "relate" to the world and speak out clearly and strongly on politics, economics, civil rights, etc. As you know, the Urantia Book itself has much to say about the institutional church; we were becoming more and more conscious of the comments made in the book concerning the dangers of institutionalized religion and the dangers of a church functioning as a political and economic force.

All this time we were also observing first <sup>hand</sup> ~~how~~ how the church was so burdened with dogma, institutionalism, frozen forms, etc. The institutional church has ever been the last body to change. Since by this time we were becoming willfully committed, by careful decisions, to devoting our highest energies and best abilities to the furtherance of the Urantia message, the crystallization of our disappointment in the institutional church brought serious problems to our attention. We were faced with the tremendous problem of deciding 1) whether the church could be a very strong channel for the Urantia message, and, if not, 2) what would be a good channel in terms of Vern's basic desires. In the face of these perplexing doubts we turned to you, one of the few people we knew who could advise us well; there are wise people to whom we could have turned for an outside opinion, but basic to our problem was the fact of the Urantia message, and our friends and family either did not know of the book or did not share our complete belief in it.

After your second letter containing the sheet of Dr. Sprunger's comments on evangelism, and in light of his own experiences, we corresponded with him also. We then spent the next four months slowly, very slowly, discussing, thinking, and carefully talking out our situation. We did much discussing, praying and careful analysis.

We were, and are, endeavoring to be adjuster-led. After considering all the possibilities as thoughtfully and honestly as we could, and after we were sure we had been as objective as possible and were not making a hasty, rash decision, Vern withdrew completely from seminary. We doubt that he will re-enroll, though we are keeping open minds toward all possibilities and vocational areas. Vern had by this time attended seminary full time for one quarter and part of another, and was able to ascertain that, for him, the quality of information in the course could not compare with the Urantia book. Although we are very unsure of many things concerning our future, including what Vern's career will eventually be, we do know one fact for certain--no matter what Vern does in life he will first want a very thorough knowledge of the Urantia book. Vern also wants to be a public speaker and writer, and has strong feelings about using original material and illustrations instead of other men's thoughts. Therefore, in lieu of a seminary education Vern will spend the next four or five years concentrating on 1) obtaining through careful reading and study a very complete knowledge of what is in the Urantia book. 2) spending some time each day in creative thinking and writing of illustrations and 3) writing and organizing material for a semi-popular psychological-religious book with the aim of eventually having it published and 4) doing as many public speaking engagements as he can.

We have been following this program for five months. Vern is a person who can and does work very hard on his own. He has accomplished quite a bit, although he is barely started on what he intends to do. He has spoken many times already. We are both still quite young (23 and 24), and as yet without children. I am not only able and willing to work, but delighted to be able to do something so constructive in our plans.

Therefore, since we are young and while I can work we are going to strike out on our own for a while. In the four or five years we are currently planning to spend this way we will be continually alert for areas in which Vern could begin to work.

There is a good possibility we could come to Chicago for the August delegate's convention. If you will be too busy to talk to us much during the convention, we could see you sometime before it begins. We think we will be in Chicago at the first of the convention week, then go to Fort Wayne to see the Sprungers, then return to Chicago for the meeting. Perhaps we could visit with you during our initial stop before going to Fort Wayne. Let us know your schedule and if you could see us while passing through.

Sincerely,

Nancy Grimsley

P.S.

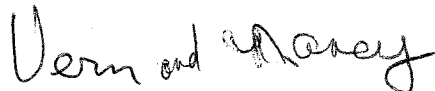
Dr. Sadler:

We have found we will be unable to attend the delegate's conference in August, but would like to make a trip to talk with you and settle some of our questions anyway. My vacation schedule would permit us to arrive in Chicago sometime Tuesday, July 28 and be there all day Wednesday the 29th and Thursday the 30th, leaving Chicago Thursday evening. We have for so long yearned to talk with you that we hope you would be able to see us during that time. And of course, we would delight in meeting any other Urantians during our stay.

Will you be free to see us on the dates specified above? Our sole purpose in making the trip would be to learn about the Urantia book, so our time would be completely at your disposal-- we might even sweep up the place and empty the waste paper baskets for you. At any rate, please let us know as soon as possible whether you will be able to meet with us then, so that we can formulate our plans.

The next time we would be free to come will be next summer, so if your schedule forbids our visit this year, we may see you then. Thank you and let us know if we can see you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vern and Nancy". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Vern and Nancy Grimsley