

M E M O

TO: John Hales, Marian Rowley, Gloriann Harris, et al
FROM: Carolyn Kendall
SUBJECT: My attendance at Tennessee URANTIA Book Conference, Aug. 19-21, 1983
DATE: August 29, 1983

The conference was held at Fall Creek Falls State Park, Tennessee, about 150 miles southeast of Nashville. About 40 to 50 people attended at various times. Besides residents of the state, others came from Texas, Georgia, and Kentucky.

PROGRAM: There were three main parts of the program organized by Knoxville, Elizabethton, and Nashville study groups. Respectively, subjects were "Michael of Nebadon," "Jesus/Joshua ben Joseph," and "Spirit of Truth" presentations. The first two series dealt with who Michael was and what Jesus did. The last, by Nashville emphasized the spiritual teachings. One issue emerged between the groups: the perpetuation of a religion about Jesus, vs the religion of Jesus -- the religious teaching concepts and truths of Jesus -- Nashville being the proponents of the latter. (The other groups were not aware of the attitude of the Nashville people on this matter.) All of the talks stayed closely with the book; no wandering off into esoteric pathways. All were well-researched and structured. The best and most amazing was by John Cogan of Nashville, on the "Spirit of Truth." He spoke for 45 minutes without prepared speech or notes, actually off the top of his head. He knows the book so well he reportedly could make any presentation with little or no preparation. It was well-structured, thoroughly consistent with the teachings, and one of the best I've heard. (More about him later.)

including Nashville
"HOW I FOUND THE URANTIA BOOK" At every conference, I hear many stories of how people found the book. In so many cases, they claim they hear about it, or just the name (some claim they dream the word, "Urantia" shortly before they encounter the book) and then meet someone who recommends the book to them. Over and over, I am hearing stories of folks who have become disenchanted with the Bible, disgusted with church, and so distraught over their personal lives that they actually prayed for revelation. They claim their prayers were answered within a few days with an introduction to the book, or by the book literally falling off a shelf ^{off} their heads! Some very well-balanced, well-educated, leadership-type of people are making these claims. I suggest we listen more closely to their stories. This kind of thing has always been so foreign to my experience, but it may be noteworthy, nevertheless.

THE ENTERTAINMENT WAS WONDERFUL! Southeastern U.S. mountain music -- ballads and hymns, harp singing (madrigal-type religious music sung as "do, re, mi, etc" in parts and rounds, instead of words),; a lyre and zither provided the instrumental ion.

BROTHERHOOD/FOUNDATION REPORT. I spoke for 20 minutes. I was introduced as a rep of URANTIA Foundation, but I clarified my status immediately and began with Brotherhood history, structure, including purpose, definition and idea that Brotherhood was designed to co-ordinate, to occupy the field, to be benign; that we have no set prayers, ceremonies; no heirarchy, intermediaries, official interpreters of meanings; we offer no guidelines for personal living; we want to be international, welcoming of multi-racial and religious groups and individ-

uals. Outlined timing -- "chaos, confusion," preparation period; emphasized priorities: 1000s of study groups, training teachers and leaders, preparing translations; reviewed publicity resolutions; book distribution changes; Study Group Fellowship; clarified relationships to F.O.G., Christian Fellowship, and Boulder School; mentioned conferences, seminars; 13 autonomous societies ("local affairs"), Triennial Delegate Assembly, election of officers and committee personnel by General Council; Executive Committee; 533 office, Foundation trustees and staff; U.F. history, purpose, copyright guidelines, marks, translation requirements, financial requirements.

I had been led to believe there would be lots of questions about origin and Foundation policies, but there were no questions or comments afterward. During my talk there were lots of nods of agreement when I stressed the publicity policy and the need to maintain the copyright and marks. They are really with us on these 3.

They had previously evidenced interest in becoming a society, but had cooled recently. Now they seem to be reviving interest. In the car back to the airport, Lee Rector and John Cogan -- 2 of the stalwarts of the Nashville group -- said they wanted to get it going again, but probably won't be ready to apply for another year. They have more than enough people, they claim.

PEOPLE. Lee Rector - publisher of MUSIC CITY NEWS, a country/western magazine, 160,000 circ. Goal to keep it high quality and not slip into sordid aspects of musicians' lives. Tries to insert higher ideals, morality, even spiritual ideas in articles. Believes in person-to-person approach/no publicity because of strong fundamentalist religions in region. Says many c/w stars read book: Merle Haggard who has distributed over 200 books, Willy Nelson, George Jones, Kris Kristofferson, and Hal Bynam.

John Martin Cogan. Born in Scotland. Age 34. Grew up in Janesville, Wisc. Reading book since 1975. Never misses study group meeting. Spent several hours with him. Combines best features of Elders, Gawryn, Grimsley, and Schlundt (when at his best). Philosophical, highly spiritual outlook on all subjects and issues, though practical. Has zany, irrepressible sense of humor. He is obviously everyone's pet and favorite object of teasing. Has a B.S. in physics and mathematics; a masters in theology and counseling; and will soon receive PhD in philosophy. Observed him to be a good small group facilitator, a fine preacher with an attractive voice, is a persuasive debater. Is militantly anti-publicity and strongly in favor of person-to-person dissemination of the book. Watch this guy.

Conley Family. Helen, Virgil "Buddy", and son, Andrew (about 21-23, a student at Boulder School). All made good presentations. Buddy was M.C. for all programs. Andy seemed cold and negative toward HDQ especially over publicity issue. He was only one who espoused publicity. Heated debate took place after programs; even his own father differed with him. Cogan and others seem to have modified his position. At end, Andy was very warm and friendly toward me and sent best wishes back to everyone in Chicago.

Smith Family. Alvin, Helen (65-70ish), son, David, and daughter-in-law, Barbara. Solid, leader-type of people. All have good knowledge of book. David is outstanding; he and wife have toured state placing books in libraries in Tom Allen's Dom. Ext. Comm. project. He is experimenting with many ways of introducing the book one-on-one and seems to have been very successful. He seems like kind of man people would trust. We saw them at Atlanta conference.

Helen Hutchinson. 70ish. Strong proponent of eugenics. Others report she emphasizes this issue during study group meetings, and in public, tho it was not clear whether she brings the name of the book into her public efforts. Has developed a homemade newsletter, attached. Sends "hello" to Marian.

Herman Sain. Friendly, big, middle aged, except he didn't have very friendly things to say about Foundation's request that there be no taping of the sessions. "Stifling!" "Counterproductive!" I told him and Lee (who had made the announcement prior to meeting) that it would have been possible to get permission to tape and distribute if they had requested and indicated cost and disposition of tapes. He also thought it was terrible there were no instructions available to "verify" the book. "How can we be sure the book is genuine?" I said he'd just have to read the book and either believe it or not.

Dean White. Woman, 45ish. Student of Boulder School home on summer vacation. Is developing curriculum design for use in public schools and Sunday schools. Emphasis will be on tenets of world religions and ethical and moral teachings, but would not mention the book. Will strive for a balanced, non-sectarian view.

Steve LeMay and wife, Lynn Neely. 4-5 year readers. Members of Helen Hutchinson's group. She doing work toward Ph.D in finance; he in industrial transportation. Steve is Russian language linguist, trained by airforce to translate Soviet cockpit pilot conversations. He is interested in someday participating in Russian translation, though says he isn't well-enough qualified to do basic translation. She is highly cultured and intelligent. He is son of late Gen. Curtiss LeMay.

Martin Peng. Nuclear physicist, Oak Ridge. Chinese/American. Reader 1½ years. Made a short, very acceptable presentation on life of Jesus. Very nice young man.

Travis Binion. Reading 1½ years. Son introduced him to book and he read it over summer, 1982. Fully agrees with Brotherhood/Foundation dissemination policies. Is an engineer at missiles testing facility at Tullahoma, and works with my cousin, Rich Womack, who is chief operations engineer. My cousin had the book at one time and Travis said he will go to work on him.

Betty Hall. She and husband had been members of a commune in New Orleans many years ago and were introduced to book by John Lincoln who happened to stop in one day. John told them: "Don't open this book if you don't want your entire life to change."

Donna and Frank Buchannan. Had been associates and investors in Otis T. Carr's space capsule project in California desert in 1960s. Carr read the book, and an article in Argosy Magazine about Carr contained the first public mention of The URANTIA Book. The rocket fizzled, but their interest in the book remained. They were at the Kansas City conference a couple of months ago.

No Improper Use of Marks or Copyrighted Material was Observed.

Rec'd by Carolyn Kendall
from Lee Rector
9/1/83

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