

5511 Michigan Blvd.
Concord, CA 94521
30 April 1986

The Board of Directors
The Boulder School
1622 - 18th Street
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Dear John, Errol, Joan, Jill, Don, Tom, and Mo,

I am most pleased with the prospect of teaching classes for The Boulder School. Hagiko and I look forward warmly to years of friendship and fruitful association. Here's an opening proposal of, first, what I would offer for next year and, second, what I would request. Obviously, these proposals need to be adjusted in the light of the group wisdom of (at least) the board members, the experienced faculty, and the students.

Each three-hour class session would devote two hours to The URANTIA Book and one hour on a supplemental topic for the quarter. Here's how the courses would work. Though everybody is expected to keep up with the readings in The URANTIA Book, the additional readings are optional. Students can elect that extra program of scholarship according to their time and interests. And even though advanced works will at times be selected for study, lectures and discussions will make it possible for all to participate.

First year (daytime class):

We will study parts I-III to learn as much about God as possible, to understand our ascendant career through the universe so as to identify patterns for daily living, and grasp the interrelated material, cultural, and spiritual evolution of our planet.

Supplemental courses:

First term: Introduction to theology. Some introductory background and the reading of one selected work. The purpose of this course would be to help us understand the Christian tradition as we begin to learn of God from The URANTIA Book. Possibly this Fall something on the feminist challenge to the "Fatherhood" of God, or possibly some masterwork of theology from the tradition of Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Kierkegaard, Barth, Rahner....

Second term: The harmony between religion and science. Cosmology and contemporary understandings of evolution. Possibly reading Ian Barbour's book, Issues in Science and Religion, with added articles from the journal Zygon.

Third term: Philosophy of religion. The reading of a work that would advance the page 43 project of constructing a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the expanded and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness. We might read Hegel, Whitehead, or a contemporary anthology.

Each term: additional classes such as are currently being offered by the staff and visitors to the school.

Second year (evening class):

During the year on Part IV, attention will be given to comparative studies--

Jesus as interpreted from the perspectives of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Scholarly studies on "the historical Jesus" will be sampled. Special attention will be paid to the gospel.

Supplemental courses:

First term. Varieties of religious experience. This will include some study in world religions and highlights from research I am engaged in designed to expand our conceptual vocabulary for sharing religious experience.

Second term. Principles of the evolution of religion. Correlation of principles from The URANTIA Book and sociological and historical studies of religion. This will help us think how the gospel and the teachings of The URANTIA Book and the book itself can best find their way into the life of our planet. For the Winter term, I propose the classic study by Sidney Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People. It will provide case studies of how religions within our own society have risen and foundered. It will help us recognize in what ways we are typical of other religious groups in the United States. It will help us understand our own environment.

Third term. Ethics. Principles for our own lives. Social issues, e.g., racism, which the book addresses. Perhaps Sissela Bok's book, Secrets.

Each term: additional classes such as are currently being offered by the staff and visitors to the school.

Here's why I think we need this expansion of focus.

1. One purpose of the school is to promote the development of a well-balanced personality. Though The URANTIA Book is balanced, and teaches balance superbly, a student needs to be exposed to other materials, lest s/he become unbalanced in relating to our culture. This principle is already accepted in the school brochure.
2. The primary activity of the school is to study The URANTIA Book. But any book reveals its full character in dialogue, so to speak, with others. We do not fully appreciate the theology of the book unless we read other theology. I am convinced that such an added secondary focus would enliven the time devoted to discussion of the Papers.
3. Comparative study helps us both appreciate the greatness of the book and appreciate the marvelous things that others have done. With this appreciation we are better equipped to go forth to share truth, to build study groups, and to explain the book to a culture which will have so many questions to raise.

Again, this proposal should be submitted to the students and faculty. If it seems important that I be present for dialogue, then I want to come out for a visit--soon. Once the new plans have been made, a flyer explaining the revisions can be sent out to the mailing list.

There are many visions of what The Boulder School can become. As I indicated last year, I envision the school providing specific training for spiritual teachers. The above proposals provide, I believe, a stable foundation for such further developments as we might choose.

What I request is this. I would like to hold the daytime class in the afternoon. That would leave mornings for class preparation and for writing. Such a schedule would be a great help in preserving freshness, combatting fatigue, and ensuring the satisfaction of a variety of interests. Every one of these classes is a new preparation for me. And I hope to keep on advancing the frontier of what the Boulder School "think-tank" has mastered, by using new materials each year in the supplemental courses. Fifteen hours in the classroom is considered a heavy teaching load on the university circuit. From a faculty with that heavy a load not much is expected in the way of creative scholarship from a faculty with that heavy

a load. A certain amount of administrative work is normal in a full-time teaching job. But if you saddle your academic director with heavy administrative responsibilities and eighteen hours a week of contact time in the classroom, you will exhaust your scholar quickly.

Thank you for considering these ideas. We are looking forward to working together with you towards the highest goals we can conceive.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff", written in dark ink.

Jeff Wattles