

THE BOULDER SCHOOL,
for
Students of The URANTIA Book
1622 - 18th Street
Boulder, Colorado 80302

12 November 1986

Dear sisters and brothers,

It is a pleasure to look forward to our first Board of Trustees meeting of this academic year. It has been a period of intense effort, planning, and continuous adjustments as problems have surfaced. I think it is fair to say that, on the whole, the students are content. I have developed my ideas in thoroughgoing dialogue with them.

One of the main things that you will need to judge is my proposed curriculum. It essentially follows the sketches I included in my two previous letters to you.

First let me present some of the passages from **The URANTIA Book** that have influenced my concept of the core curriculum for the Boulder School:

"Religion stands above science, art, philosophy, ethics, and morals, but not independent of them. They are all indissolubly interrelated in human experience, personal and social." (2096)

"Consider the Greeks, who have a science without religion, while the Jews have a religion without science. And when men become thus misled into accepting a narrow and confused distingtation of truth, their only hope of salvation is to become truth-co-ordinated--converted. Let me emphatically state this eternal truth: If you, by truth co-ordination, learn to exemplify in your lives this beautiful wholeness of righteousness, your fellow men will then seek after you that they may gain what you have so acquired." (1726)

"The great mistake of the Hebrew religion was its failure to associate the goodness of God with the factual truths of science and the appealing beauty of art. As civilization progressed, and since religion continued to pursue the same unwise course of overemphasizing the goodness of God to the relative exclusion of truth and neglect of beauty, there developed an increasing tendency for certain types of men to turn away from the abstract and dissociated concept of isolated goodness. The overstressed and isolated morality of modern religion, which fails to hold the devotion and loyalty of many twentieth-century men, would rehabilitate itself if, in addition to its moral mandates, it would give equal consideration to the truths of science, philosophy, and spiritual experience, and to the beauties of the physical creation, the charm of intellectual art, and the grandeur of genuine character achievement." (43)

Let me now discuss some problems and how I have responded to them.

1. As I became aware of the personal struggles of the students, I set aside a couple of hours on Wednesday--in which participation is totally optional--to make time for personal sharing and prayer support. This session has evolved freely; sometimes we spend most of the time discussing the individual projects on which the students are working. I have found thus far that personal sharing is most spontaneous and full in one-to-one interactions.

2. Next, it is a chronic challenge to experience satisfaction with our study at the average rate of three papers a week. I note that (a) the fully satisfactory study of **The URANTIA Book** will take humankind at least a thousand years; (b) not every

interesting point or insight needs to be discussed in class; (c) I have been experimenting with class formats designed to expand the opportunity for individuals to share their own comments and questions. Given my firm commitment to the program of supplemental classes, I offered to extend the duration of our morning sessions by one hour, but this could not be worked out with student time schedules. I then opened up a couple of hours on Friday, again optional, for students to review and to discuss any further points that they wished to raise. This solution has failed to attract the students who were most strongly protesting the need for a more thorough study of the papers, but we have had some good discussion about the evolving programs of the Boulder School and some excellent review for those who have chosen to attend.

3. Let me explain the occasion for the introduction of the program of majors. I have felt frustration about the proportion of students who do the minimum assigned homework—a brief outline of each paper. Just this past weekend, I focused on that problem and considered that it might be best to think of our program as having a core curriculum—the study of the papers plus the supplemental classes—in which the main goal was personal spiritual growth. I realized that I had been expecting our students to be eagerly preparing for future assignments such as advanced study group leadership—whereas some of them simply lack the time and/or interest for such a pursuit. To reduce expectations for these students is a difficult move to make, because it acquiesces in a certain way with one of the problems of the school—that the performance standards here are inferior to that of the average community college. It is not charming to contemplate this school of the Fifth Epochal Revelation operating on such a level. Nonetheless, we want to serve a variety of students. And the other aspect of this change is the inauguration of the program of majors which the student can select if she or he desires. I mentioned two majors which we can do for now—training as a study group leader and as a gospel messenger. Others are possible. Students may want to major in something that needs to be supervised by someone not listed on our faculty. Assuming this could be worked out well, it could become a way of involving more of the local talent in the school program. My hope is that if individuals generate their own contracts, so to speak, by opting for a given major, then pressure will be reduced and performance levels, though varied, should rise.

4. Let me explain the offer of special study for those who cannot devote two years to this program. Many people in the past have expressed the thought that it's too bad that the riches of The Boulder School aren't available to people with more settled lifestyles. Many, I have heard, would like to come, but cannot drop everything for two years to do so. My response is this: let us open our doors, on a case by case basis, to individuals who want to come here for a shorter period of time. These people will be able to learn our methods of study by attending class and doing the regular assignments; and we will offer a tutorial designed to help the student achieve his or her particular goal. Once the regular students have been through a segment of our program, say, New Testament survey or the papers on the human career of Jesus, the stronger students will be able to teach these units themselves. If people want to come to study with me, I am willing to direct a limited number of extra independent study projects.

5. You will note that I did not include the application form on this year's proposed bulletin. I would like to rethink our admissions policies. I do not have a proposal yet about how these might be changed. We probably will continue to have something very like our current open admissions policy for at least the next few years. But it seems that if we ask people to list two references, we should also

ask for letters from these individuals. I want some more extended application form that puts us in fuller dialogue with our applicants and which obliges them to think more carefully about how their lives intersect with the program we offer.

6. The opening advertisement about "what the Boulder School offers you" and the write-up of my own academic credentials were designed to whet the appetites of some more academically capable individuals on our mailing list.

As always, I welcome your feedback.

Until soon,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jeff", positioned above the printed name.

Jeff Wattles