

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

21 January 1988

Dear Trustees,

The upcoming Society meeting on February 6 will be important for the Boulder School, not only because some new trustees need to be elected (replacing Jill Hull and Joan Batson and ?), but also because the team that will be assembled then has a hard situation to face. John Hay has definitely stated that he is withdrawing his support for the school after the expiration of my contract (after the Spring of 1989). After the new board has been elected, we need to meet to share ideas. We are grateful to John for carrying the school this far. Even if it were to end abruptly, it would still have been worth every effort, and the blessings will continue to radiate from the lives of all who have been touched by a class they visited, a talk they heard, an article they read, or a program they completed. His continuing support and guidance will be tremendously appreciated. Fortunately we have a reasonable length of time to work on the problem.

This news, which casts such a question on the school's future, provokes at the same time a review of the last couple of years.

MAY 1986. The school was in crisis due to low morale, low enrollment, low prestige, and conflicting ideas about the direction the school should take. I was brought in under the assumption that better qualified and more experienced academic leadership might turn this situation around. I was given a free hand to revise the curriculum, and off we went. The conflicts over personnel and direction ceased, and prestige and morale took an immediate upturn.

FALL 1986. Enrollment, however, proved a continuing challenge. In the fall term of 1986 we began with 13 students and ended with 8. Tom Pfeiffer consistently portrayed the bright side: these students left not because of complaints about the school but because of the economic struggle. We lost two more in the winter; the spring held firm, and we graduated Brian Stafford, John Fisher, and Lenny Coles.

MAY 1987. Studying Part IV with the wonderful students and visitors, experiencing the presence of the spirit in our midst so regularly, and beginning to share in the discovery of underlying pattern in the papers was a very profound experience for me. By May of 1987, I became deeply convinced that the enterprise of this school was worth a profound commitment, and I worked with an added sense of purpose.

AUGUST 1987. The General Conference in Maine brought many peak experiences, including generating interest in the school. Serious interest in French and Australian readers as well as Americans sprang up. The school received a great deal of exposure and the response was strongly positive. I returned to Colorado filled with a concrete vision of how The Boulder School could serve, utilizing its media capabilities, coordinating educational resources, and moving into high gear.

SEPTEMBER 1987. The end of the summer, however, was the time when bitter division ripped our community for the second time. The allegations surrounding Lou Meyer, our former secretary, the way in which John Hay and I tried to manage matters, and the legal aspects of the drama furnished the occasion for countless difficult human hours. The gathering of trustees was postponed. The partial outcomes that occurred were the result of the pushes and pulls of conversations, mortal prayer, and efforts to interpret different passages of The URANTIA Book. No one can say that we did as well as we could have. And lessons still need to be drawn. Perhaps the passage of time has made it possible to convene more productively on these concerns. In September, however, the atmosphere was tense, and the school started under a cloud.

FALL 1987. This year is a different kind of year. Studying Parts I-III, sometimes at the rate of two papers a day, is a different experience from studying Part IV, sometimes at the rate of two days per paper. Tom Pfeiffer and Kristen Maaherra were the only returning students, so continuity was slender. (Liz Kruger, reportedly, is sailing around the world. How we miss her spiritually relaxed devotion to service and her skills in facilitating human communication!) Socially, this year's class has been less smooth, but it is a very strong class: a superbly conscientious student with a Master's degree in English; a spiritually gifted genius with a Master's in geology; one of the best spiritual story-telling extemporizers I've ever heard; a man with a profound intuition for pattern; a woman with an extraordinary knowledge of the Bible, conservative Christianity, and Indian philosophy; a man with the finest ability to penetrate the factual detail of The URANTIA Book that I've ever met; a brilliant student with powerful faith; a deep and humble whose presence adds love to the environment.

We started the fall with eight students, and this year not one has dropped. In November Sheena Fraser came for six weeks from Scotland. She had found out about the school in Maine; during her stay with Hagiko and Ben and me, she attended class, participated in the detailed preparation sessions that Kristin Maaherra and Eric Schaveland conduct, and did a tutorial on "Growing Up With Jesus" based on the early papers of Part IV. This winter, we added two more: Bob Reno, who is simultaneously studying at CU in preparation for a mission in Korea, and Joshua Maaherra, Kristen's son (best in the class in logic, so far). We seem to have halted the enrollment decline and are perhaps recovering a stronger base.

After Lou's resignation from the school, no one was hired to replace him. Eric Schaveland and Kristin Maaherra volunteered to do the work of vacuuming, handling some of the mail, collecting tuition, chopping kindling and building fires for the stove in the winter, cleaning up the mess after Society meetings, and diverse weekly details. Norman Ingram—a student who commutes from Denver, has a small travel business and a business selling computer systems to lawyers—has answered the telephone when it rings during class (pending the time when our notorious answering machine will be working).

DECEMBER 1987. John Hay told me about the decision regarding the school and encouraged me to look for a new position . . . or try to seek alternate funding. The 18th street properties will go on the market and the school will move to the 205 Canyon building, probably sometime in the spring. The budget for seminars has gone to zero.

JANUARY 1988. Two nights ago I heard from a student planning to join us this spring term. Today I got a call from someone planning to come in the fall who had heard from a reader in Hawaii that this school is "on the cutting edge of the movement." I just heard that a rich and famous person, not known to be a reader

of The URANTIA Book, is interested in contributing to the school. (Name to be publicized later if anything significant comes through and if the donor is willing to be known.)

Even now we are raising a standard of study that is needed and important in a movement of students of a book. My appreciation for what this book IS and my enthusiasm for it has DOUBLED during the superb experience I have had here. And I'm not even into high gear yet on the projects which could truly extend the services of the school to the world-wide community of readers, because the demands of teaching classes for the first time are so time-consuming that the larger things we want to build here do not yet have the human resources to get them going. Next year was to be the year not of intense job hunting, but of really getting this operation off the runway, building on the base of study that has been so carefully laid down. This is the time to expand, not constrict, our operations.

Where do we go from here? This is a matter for prayer. What further adjustments can save money without seriously compromising quality? Most important, we need a couple of major donors willing to make a commitment to the further development of what has been so hopefully begun.

It is a time for attentiveness to doors of opportunity. Often each person is given a different piece of the puzzle. I believe in the school and cherish the dream whose initial phase is about to be completed this spring. I am committed to pursuing whatever threads of opportunity for the school that I see, and I shall circulate my message of opportunity to those who may be able to help. If you feel led to join me, I certainly wish you well. Let's get together and pray together and talk and try to see glimmers ahead.

Thank you for your continued concern for the school and for those special moments when our relationships have grown and when your help has been so meaningful.

Love,



Jeff Wattles