

TO: Members of the Executive Committee OCT 9 1980

FROM: Carolyn Kendall URANTIA

SUBJECT: Comments on study groups and individuals in Finland, France, and Italy. Because of some rather frank remarks about individuals, it might be better if you considered this information CONFIDENTIAL.

DATES OF VISITS: Helsinki, Finland, Sept. 9 - 14,
 Paris, France, Sept. 14 - 18,
 Avignon and Apt, France, Sept. 21 - 22,
 Verona, Italy, Sept. 20.

DATE OF REPORT: Sept. 29, 1980.

FINLAND

We saw approximately 14 members of the Finnish group in our 5-day visit to Helsinki. Others who used to attend the study group have wearied of not having a final version of the translation, and turned to other interests. Several simply study on their own. The Foundation permitted limited photocopying of an early version of the translation for private study. The final version is in the last stages of polishing.

The group is not cohesive. According to one man, "We really don't get along with each other very well. We don't like each other very much." One woman stated, "Finns are rather rude and tactless." Another said, "We get along with you when you visit, but after you leave, we disagree again."

They have always wanted to do something. They are stuck in low gear, they think. During Tom's and Martin's visit a few years ago, they learned there were several things they shouldn't so, and apparently so few things they thought they could do, they felt deflated. They had wanted to advertise the book, among other things. Studying the book and building up study groups just wasn't exciting enough.

They are not ready to become a URANTIA Society, but they would like to form some kind of organizational structure. Because of long-denied freedoms, Finns go in heavily for legally chartered associations. Hundreds of thousands of such groups exist in a country of just a few million people. The local counsel advised they not use the word URANTIA in the title, which is fine with them. They prefer a generic name.

Leadership is a problem. Joel Rehnstrom (49) is the acknowledged leader. But he admits to being a pessimistic type of person and tends to give up on people and situations rather easily. We suggested he try to become more positive and enthusiastic, and he might be able to inspire the others.

An interesting character is Pentti Niiranen (48), but he is too overbearing to be accepted by the group as the leader. He is loud, funny, enthusiastic, and aggressive, but he irritates the others. Born in the Keralian sector of Finland, now under Russian domination, Pentti is like a big Russian bear. He is shamelessly ego-centric, a constant name-dropper, and loves to see his own name in print. Pentti has his own advertising business. He is multi-lingual and once traveled the world as an officer in the Finnish navy. Pentti was very helpful to us on our visit. His motto is, "I am GRRREFEDY for

service!"

Pentti has read the book 3 times in Finnish over the past 7 years and is learning to read English so he can read the original. Pentti tells everyone he meets and writes to in the Eastern and Western world about The URANTIA Book, usually with little discretion. We tried to suggest ways he could redirect his zeal. He will be applying for membership-at-large soon.

A good potential leader is Dr. Ari Kalaja (35), who recently became a member-at-large and is thoroughly dedicated to The URANTIA Book. He lives 100 miles from Helsinki, near the Russian border, but drives in frequently to help with the polishing, and to attend the monthly study group. Ari has learned English well in the past year according to Tom.

We made several suggestions:

- 1) Place more copies of the English version of The URANTIA Book in libraries. 30% of Finns, the better educated, speak and read English well. Few Finns are studying Swedish, German, or Russian in school anymore.
- 2) Place an ad in local newspapers inviting people to join a group studying religious philosophy that will be reading in English. This would appeal to the better educated class, and more likely avoid the notice of the conservative state church. The group could build up its bilingual readership who will be better able to evaluate the quality of the translation.
- 3) Write articles, stories, letter-to-the-editor, etc., that emphasize the truths and concepts, but not to quote from, paraphrase, or mention the book by name. The group has professional writers who are itching to write something to save the world.
- 4) Joel wants the Brotherhood to sponsor formal prayer and worship services, so that he can cite them as authority to proceed in Finland. We urged him to organize such services among those who want them, but to leave the others alone who don't want them. Many of them dread churchiness.
- 5) They frequently asked how the Brotherhood wants them to conduct their activities. We told them to settle on the style of study, worship, and social structure that is most comfortable for them and fits their needs.
- 6) We did urge them to try to meet oftener than once a month and to study, study, study the book more thoroughly, even line-by-line, and word-by-word. Joel's eyes were opened when he attended our study group last summer.
- 7) They want to help pay for the publication of the Finnish translation, so we suggested they begin working up a plan.

As sincere as the people in Helsinki are, they do need new blood. The group is overlaid with varying degrees of mysticism. Things are "arranged"; nothing happens to anyone simply by chance; they see "signs" and feel "leadings". Many of them are Keralian Finns and are obsessed with the idea of freeing their land from the Russians. Prayers are directed toward that goal.

PARIS, FRANCE

The old gang in Paris is breaking up. Many of them have left the environs of Paris. We did not see Nigel Hornby, Marcel Cheruay, Charlotte Muthelib, Emmanuel Desurvire, Yves Chauvin, Muroz, or Hiesse. During our 4 1/2 days in Paris and Reclouses (a suburb of Fontainebleau) we did see: Jacques and Marcella DuPont, Carol and Pierre Kostic, Paul Brick, and Alain LeCorvec, as well as Henry and Bauk Begemann

who came to Paris to be with us.

Carol (32) and Pierre (36) Kostic are an outstanding pair. She is straight-talking and can quickly thumbnail past events and evaluate qualities of the various characters. She is expecting her 2nd child. They are planning to emigrate to San Diego to live near her brother, Dick Prince, as soon as Pierre gets a job in the U.S. as a biochemist. Their departure will leave a serious void in Paris.

Jacques (65) and Marcella DuPont. She is being treated for a malignancy with acupuncture and a macrobiotic diet. She does not look well. Jacques is preoccupied with serious business problems, although he pretended to us he had no troubles. Jacques always wants to be agreeable; will never differ with you. Henry often thinks Jacques has agreed with him on a course of action, but later finds Jacques has not carried out his end, simply because he was too kind-hearted to disagree with Henry's proposal.

Alain LeCorvec (55), a pensions officer at a Paris bank. Seven children, 7 grandchildren, and an ailing mother-in-law keep him occupied. It still requires an interpreter for any useful conversation. Has an excellent mind. Many suggestions for settling the Weiss problem. See solutions and alternatives from many angles.

Paul Brick (50ish) seems to know every detail about Weiss's projects and activities. He brought us up to date on the status of Weiss's Concordex. Paul roars along in English but with a heavy French accent that has to be mentally slowed to 33 1/3 to be comprehended.

We spent over 26 total hours in conversation with these people, in several dinner and luncheon gatherings, and one all-day session.

The main large study group consisting of 6 - 40 meets at Jacques DuPont's once a month. Reportedly, they study superficially, but really prefer the wine and camaraderie at the end. Andre Heisse attends these meetings. Heisse has been convicted of copyright infringement but he continues his work, answering to a "higher law." Although several insisted that they dislike Andre personally, they, and the group as a whole tolerate him. He is the bootlegger supplying their need -- photocopies of La Cosmogonie. Heisse and his co-conspirators conduct their activities exactly as did the Resistance propagandists during WW II, moving their equipment frequently, code words, etc. Our friends said, "You'll never catch them, or stop them; they're having too much fun playing 'underground' games."

A small group met for 18 months under Henry Begemann's leadership to study the Forward. They plan similar in-depth study of the Supreme, beginning in October.

Are they interested in forming a society? There are not enough people to form a solid group. "The French are so independent," said one, "there should be one society for each Frenchman." Currently they are turned off by the Brotherhood because of what they think is too much overlap by the Foundation. Once, Carol tried to explain that the Brotherhood was a separate organization, but the others pointed to the number of trustees on the Executive Committee. So she urged them to write to Barbara Kuliecke about a publications problem. Who responded? Martin.

Henry conveyed the impression in August that the French really wanted a URANTIA Brotherhood of Europe, divorced from our organization. We asked about this. They prefer to have study groups for a while and then possibly one large society for France. They really do want unity of all French readers, something they feel is impossible as long as the Foundation and Weiss are at odds.

Our friends went out of their way to tell us that they personally uphold the copyright and marks, but that those other readers, those who deal with Heisse and those under Weiss's influence think the marks and copyright are a "joke". Those others don't have access to headquarters information explaining the need for marks and copyright.

When our friends learn about another French reader they try to contact him, but usually meet with silence. Carol describes their own group as the tiny "dissenting group" who are trying to work with Chicago. They are very discouraged because they believe the problem and its solution is misunderstood by headquarters.

The Brotherhood influence in Europe will be minimal as long as the status of the French translation remains in limbo, we were told. They feel other countries are watching the French situation to see if they wish to participate in an American Brotherhood.

AVIGNON, FRANCE

We spent one full day and night with this group. There are actually 2 or 3 small groups. They all had a U.F.O. background before coming to the book. They read LaCosmogonie at first, but now read the English version. At some point they became dissatisfied with Jacques Weiss's emphasis and contacted either the Brotherhood or Henry Begemann. They commented about the importance of Hdq. responding in French to inquirers who can only write French. Telling them to get someone else to translate our letter for them just ain't smart. They feel that French is not an obscure language and that someone surely could write French if the Brotherhood truly intends to be an international organization.

We had a 2 hour study group during which we studied 2 sections. They know how to study, thanks largely to Henry's influence. These folks seem to be a fine group of mature and stable people, and they get on well together.

Jean Rover (40) has been reading for 12 years. He has a fairly good knowledge of the book. Jean has made an impressive card file of concepts simply to help him study the book. He was critical of Bedell's Concordex. He is a high school English teacher; wife, Beryl, is English but does not read the book. He is clearly a leader and organizer.

Chris (48) and wife, Nicole (50) Ragatley. They have only been reading the book for 4 years, but that's apparently all they do! Amazing depth. Both born in Paris (he of English parents). They are currently renovating a country inn.

Guy and Marie José Antequera (mid 30s). Both of Spanish parentage. He is sergeant major at nearby French airforce missile base. She is sergeant in airforce. Speak small amount of English. Good knowledge of book and good leadership. His main obsession seems to be finding errors in Weiss's translation. He is also trying to shake loose some of Weiss's names of readers in their general area.

Bernard Dugas. Young, speaks only French. Personable. Reading 2 years. Did not meet other 5 or 6 members of groups. Some are stationed at base.

They asked many questions: "Why are certain words italicized? Why are some hyphenated? Will there be a URANTIA Church? Are there interpretations? Are you in touch with midwayers? What do you know about the contact? Who has the original manuscript? (They want us to check a list of apparent errors for them.) What is the proper pronunciation of words? (I read the pronunciation guide into a tape recorder.) Have you heard further about Abner, Rodan, or Todan? Anyone searching for the garden of Eden? Are Master Force organizers organizers of master forces, or are they master organizers of force?"

(Important, they think Weiss goofed. We told them to write Dan Massey about several science questions.) Where are you with the French translation? What about the Weiss Concordex? When will you have a Spanish translation? When will you put out a pocket book of The URANTIA Book -- a small sized book for easy traveling -- not a paperback?"

What do they think of LaCosmogonie? "It is very good French; it reads very well. Only when you compare it with the English do you discover the errors. It need a thorough revision. We write Weiss often with suggestions for revision. He always thanks us. Weiss's mistakes were made by the other translators, or by his secretary, to make it read well, we believe, not by Weiss himself."

They have a good knowledge of the purposes and functions of the Brotherhood and Foundation, but they have a low level of interest in either membership-at-large or a society (with the exception of Guy). They asked about the advantages, but shrugged, saying they just preferred to study the book. Tom explained the marks and copyright and they seemed interested, but we suspect they may have dealt with Heisse in the past.

JACQUES WEISS

In France Jacques Weiss is the MAN. He is the de facto Foundation, Brotherhood, and field representative combined. Weiss knows where his books have gone. He boasts a mailing list of 6000 names. Other people say those figures are inflated; "only" 500 are actually reading. He still employs 2 full time secretaries and conducts an active correspondence with readers of LaCosmogonie.

Weiss does not promote study groups, but rather he emphasizes the non-spiritual teachings. He dwells on the phenomena associated with the transmittal of the revelation, which he claims Dr. Sadler related to him. He does not hesitate to give his side of the law-suits story.

When Weiss dies, if relations between Weiss and Chicago have not improved, Andre Heisse will probably become the French "field representative", a role he now shares with Weiss. If a reconciliation between Weiss and Chicago took place, it is possible that Henry Begemann and/or URANTIA Brotherhood could fall heir to the mailing list. Weiss reportedly respects Henry highly.

While we were in Paris, Bauk and Henry visited Weiss for the first time in over a year. Weiss is 87 and wife, Simone, is 82. Weiss has broken both hips, cannot walk, and was described by the Begemanns as looking very old and "pathetic". Weiss is thinking of closing his office soon.

HENRY BEGEMANN

Last year after Henry wrote his "default" letter about the Foundation and sent it abroad, I almost led a drive to remove him as field representative.

This summer I discovered he still holds to an interpretation of The URANTIA Book where, in his opinion, very few people actually survive death, but that those who don't survive, continue to exist in a "borderland" state. He enunciated his theories at a study group meeting just before returning to Holland in August. He admits he reads between the lines. He told us about his ideas several years ago, and nothing will shake his conviction. Emmanuel and DuPont indicated that they entertained the same beliefs when they visited Chicago. Although the Avignon people don't seem to be con-

fused about the teaching of the book, we didn't get into it with any of the people in Paris. Henry has mentioned discussing his theory with friends in Holland.

Does Henry still think the Foundation is in "default" for allowing Weiss to control the printing of LaCosmogonie? No. Now he thinks it was just a "transgression." This is tinged with a mystical formula of atonement and forgiveness for the Foundation to get back under the "direction of the planetary supervisors."

As a consequence of the "default/transgression" charge, and the original Heisse/Foundation photocopy scheme, Henry has fallen into a serious clash with one person in Chicago. He has made some harshly intemperate accusations of that person. Henry insists he could never have said those things, however, Tom and I overheard him.

Henry has ideas for negotiating with Weiss for the right of the Foundation to revise LaCosmogonie. His ideas seem to be shared by all of the Paris and Avignon readers.

We spent upward of 30 hours in discussions, in both Wheeling in August, and Paris in September, with Bauk and Henry. I flatly told him to knock off the transgression-and-atonement nonsense, and to stop the name-calling, or no one would ever listen to his ideas. The personal relationship problem is a cloud on the landscape and doesn't help the situation in France.

While I have had doubts about Henry's judgment in the past, I don't have any doubt whatsoever about his loyalty to the purposes of the Foundation. He strongly believes in upholding the copyright and protecting the marks. Henry tries to dissuade people from buying photocopied sets, but he is fighting a losing battle.

Henry seems to be an excellent field representative. He writes to new French readers in French. He encourages the formation of study groups; he fosters thorough study; he usually encourages independent interpretation; he especially emphasizes the spiritual message of the book; he fosters loyalty to the Brotherhood and Foundation (his differences are only privately expressed to us, not to the groups). We do not think he is interested in promoting his own image. Everyone we met in France expressed admiration of, and gratitude for, Henry Begemann.

Henry will have an increasingly difficult time when he goes to Paris. Jacques DuPont will soon be forced to sell the building where Henry stays when he goes to Paris. Marcella's health will preclude anyone staying in Recloses, so he will be forced to pay high hotel costs. He seemed not to be able to afford the cost of many meals in restaurants.

ITALY

At the Lake Forest Workshops, Dr. Giuseppe Zecchinato promised that when the Italian translation is completed, he and his associate, Corina DiBonis will turn it over to URANTIA Foundation. Because of that, and because he has made 3 trips to the U.S., and 2 trips to Paris to be with us, Tom and I felt he deserved special attention.

We went to Italy not sure they knew we were coming. We couldn't reach him by phone from Paris, nor had they sent a message to our Paris mail drop. We preceeded our letter. Giuseppe spent the first hour of our visit raging about the mails.

Zecchinato(57) is an irrigations systems designer and engineer who has traveled all over the world. He is obviously well-to-do (car, suit, restaurant, etc.), and it was interesting to see how different he is on his home turf. Corina (54) has a doctorate in English literature and teaches high school English. She is a lovely

and cultured woman. She related many sidelights on Zecchinato that he would be too modest to tell about himself. She certainly admires his intelligence and knowledge.

They showed us all of Verona; took us to a large lake nearby; wanted to take us to Venice; begged us to stay longer; and made us promise to come back again for a longer visit. We had a wonderful time. In fact we had a ripping good time!

They are unselfishly dedicated to the translation effort, wanting no fame or fortune for themselves. They are striving for a perfect translation from the English, but hope others will come along to help them. So far they haven't found anyone else to help, let alone study with them. They cite the influence of the Catholic Church, few English readers in Italy, and general low level of intelligence and/or education of their countrymen.

Corina speaks English well. He reads English better than she, but because of having only 20% hearing in one ear, does not hear English, so he cannot speak it. He reads and speaks French.

He heard about the book from Jacques Weiss, and had sent Weiss a list of over 100 corrections needed in LaCosmogonie.

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Rather than go into a lengthy report at the next Executive Committee meeting, I decided to send a written report of Tom's and my visit to Europe, instead. I have tried to stick to issues having only to do with Brotherhood interests; and the movement in general. Again, I would like to stress that this report be kept confidential due to my frank discussion of personalities.

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EUROPEAN TRAVEL

Even though we cut costs to the bone it was still expensive. Of 16 nights, 6 were in hotels (3 of which were pensions), 2 were spent on night trains in couchettes, and 8 nights in homes or apartments of URANTIA Book readers. We had 10 "free" meals as guests of our friends. The other restaurant meals were exorbitant, especially in Finland.

Because inter-European air travel is so expensive we used Eurailpasses. Trains are fast, clean, modern, and on time. But always ride first class, as we did. Second class is jammed with people who look like refugees and inmates of prisons and brothels.

We followed Lynne Kulieke's advice and allowed our hosts to show us the local sights, of which they are very proud. However, sometimes, as in Paris, we found ourselves in a hotel next door to the Louvre and didn't have time to visit it.

I considered this a business trip, too, and made myself available right along with Tom, to visit people. Tom talked about Foundation matters -- translations, copyright, use of quotations, marks, ect. I stuck to Brotherhood matters -- organizational structure, societies, study groups, membership-at-large, field representatives, etc. Each of us could have talked about the other's sphere, but they seemed to need the clear distinction demonstrated. We usually referred to an issue as "his" or "her" area.

I can't urge strongly enough the importance of your making such a trip. I think Lynne and/or John would make excellent impressions. Just be prepared to sit for long periods and LISTEN TO THEM!

P.S. More than any other subject Tom and I stressed the spiritual message and teachings of The URANTIA Book itself.