

Boulder
Report

File Carolyn Kenball
January 30, 1985

John:

I realize a lot of this is pretty negative, but each comment represents the opinion of more than 1 individual. I don't know whether they all feed on each other's disgruntlement or whether each was just waiting for someone to unload on. I have no idea how widespread these attitudes are in the whole group, but they certainly exist among the Ropers, Brummetts, Krugers, Siegels, and 1 or 2 students I listened to. McNellys were also quoted. These people are the leaders in the area and they are complaining about the home office.

When the Gawryns move to the area they will exert a good influence to help dispell some of the negative information about what the Brotherhood actually does. They probably won't be much help for the Foundation, however, although they, as do I, still react strongly when someone makes light of the copyright and marks.

I suggest you show this to the other officers, at least. Use your own judgment about the Foundation. There are things they should know, and you may want to re-write some of it. I could verbalize some of it at the Executive Committee meeting.

Carolyn

M E M O

TO: JOHN HALES

FROM: CAROLYN KENDALL

SUBJECT: VISIT TO BOULDER, COLORADO, CLYDE BEDELL'S MEMORIAL SERVICE, SATURDAY, JANUARY 26. 1985

DATE: January 28, 1985

I. Clyde Bedell's memorial service. The service was held in a chapel on the campus of the University of Colorado in Boulder. It was attended by about 80 people, all URANTIA Book readers. Several, including Barrie Bedell, offered remembrances of Clyde. Jeffrey Bedell read selections of Clyde's poetry. Meredith Sprunger conducted a traditional service that was dignified and rather moving. The emphasis of most speakers was on outreach and more aggressive promotion of the "gospel" (The URANTIA Book), and upon extended personal service in the community. One or two speakers were outspoken about the Brotherhood's and Foundation's attempts to "hide the light of truth under a bushel." Clyde's graduation was viewed as fresh inspiration for a renewed effort at spreading the book.

II. The Boulder School. There are reportedly about 25 students attending the school at present. Many former students continue to live in Boulder. They are young, enthusiastic, and dedicated to the school. I spoke with several students and they bubbled over as they described outreach projects in the Boulder area.

I had heard that the school was shifting emphasis from study and scholarship of the book, to community service projects. That may be an exaggeration, and the students I talked to did seem to be interested in more guidance in "how to study." I inquired as to whether the school emphasized teacher preparation and training and study group organization and maintenance. They said it didn't. I described study group styles in various areas. They seemed intrigued, and tried to persuade me to remain another day so we could pursue the matter. They invited me to return soon to conduct a 2-day seminar at the school. I invited them to come to the Education Committee's summer seminar.

III. Rocky Mountain URANTIA Society. According to John Roper, President, and his wife, Jane, the society is involved in organizational planning activities, perhaps, they admitted, to an excessive degree. The Boulder area has 4 regular study groups of varying qualities. Does the society emphasize scholarship, teacher preparation and study group establishment? They said "No," that the trend seemed to be toward applying the teachings to one's daily life, but also active members are young family people and had little energy left for deep study. In the Boulder vicinity, the "scholars"--those with the most knowledge of the book--are Merritt Horn, Stan Hartman, Lou Meyer, and Terry Kruger.

IV. ATTITUDES. During conversations after the memorial service a certain degree of disgruntlement with "Chicago" was expressed. The Brotherhood holds little magic for some of the folks in Boulder. Some feel rejected or shunned by the Brotherhood. They don't care who gets elected to anything in the Brotherhood. They see the formal Brotherhood and Foundation organizations as flat, conservative, fearful, tired, and boring. But they will not be restrained from functioning in some meaningful way to spread the revelation. The Society isn't much fun for many of them. Most are involved in other URANTIA Book-related organizations or formal activities: Boulder School, Jesusonian Foundation, Christian Fellowship, Brummet Book Store. They speak admiringly of Austin Study Group, Asoka Foundation, Synergy, and FOG (as it once was). They believe the real movement--the real energy--is in such groups. Following are composites of some of their comments:

1) "The Brotherhood and Foundation aren't prompt in answering letters. They don't write thank-you letters." One example: Julia recommended the Rogers as field representatives, but John and Jane were never notified as to the outcome of the deliberations.

2) "We don't know what is going on. The Bulletin is irregular and the Executive Committee letter is always late."

3) "There is so much fear and negativism from the Brotherhood and Foundation every time a new idea comes along. They act like they are defending the Holy Grail against the Barbarians. They say "no" to everything."

I suggested they re-read the Dissemination Statement which is filled with encouragement for Boulder School-type of outreach projects. That was dismissed with, "All headquarters ever does is write someting. They never do anything themselves to spread the revelation or preach the Gospel. None of the headquarters people ever leave the palace. The Brotherhood will be left behind and will become irrelevant unless it exhibits more dynamism."

4) "The Brotherhood is nothing more than a book club. They don't do any work with people who are in need." I reminded them that the Green Lake conference program was devoted to all forms of outreach; but I said that the Brotherhood was not designed to sponsor specific social service, but rather to remain a simple organization, one that fosters activities related to the revelation, such as study, and teacher and leader training. And that its main function was to coordinate.

Concerning the "book club" tag, I reminded them that those who devised the revelation had given us a detailed and complex revelation, yet few people are motivated to acquire more than a superficial knowledge of it; that 4 "scholars" out of nearly 100 readers in one geographical area doesn't seem like a very good showing.

5) "Headquarters people ought to be the best examples of the teachings. Somehow you expect them to come across as warm and friendly, not cool and abrupt. They don't seem to have much real humor."

6) Comments about the Foundation: "The Foundation refuses to contribute any of their own money to the Spanish translation fund."

Don't they support their own project?" "We hear they aren't sending anyone to conferences anymore--it can't be because of lack of money. Why are they so aloof from the rank and file?" "Things like the dust jacket, Helena's book, and their own index get stuffed into a black hole and nobody ever hears about them again." "If you write to the Foundation about something, you either get a curt/terse note immediately, or a long letter a year later, or a warning by registered letter." "They flushed Tom's 20 years of service down the drain over a single issue." "How can you respect people like that?"

7) There are few left in Boulder who still believe Vern's messages, but there was criticism about "flip-flopping" by Brotherhood and Foundation people over the issue. They had heard that for 9 months, all but 2 or 3 members of the Executive Committee and Foundation believed the messages were valid, yet most of them now pretend they never believed them. This "effort to cover their (hind quarters) is viewed as a "character flaw-- a lack of integrity and honesty in leaders."

8) Several people expressly stated that they felt "the entire 'Vern episode' has been beneficial in that it has effectively cured the movement of: acceptance of traditional policies; reliance upon Forum days communications; 'special people'--the elite inner circle to whom Christy and Dr. Sadler, after publication, confided messages; 'pretenders to the throne'--the 1 or 2 individuals who were supposedly dubbed by Christy to assume the mantle of leadership; the 'we-will-chart-the-course,-you-may-either-join-us,-or-get-off-the-boat' attitude of headquarters." They are getting off the boat.

V. THE CONCORDEX. During a reception following the memorial service I was invited to meet with Barrie Bedell and Mo Siegel to discuss the Concordex. The reception and meeting took place Saturday, Jan. 26, at Mo's new house.

1) Ownership of the Concordex. The Concordex was willed by Clyde jointly to C. Barrie and Jeffrey Bedell and to the Jesusonian Foundation, Mo Siegel, President. Control is vested in the Bedells, 65% and Jesusonian Foundation, 35%. It was my understanding that the Bedells have final decision on revisions, inclusions, and redesign of the dust jacket, while J.F. will assume the responsibility for distribution. It was not clear who is paying printing costs of the new edition.

It was my impression that all negotiations had been conducted between Barrie and Mo. Although Jeff was present at the reception, he did not sit in on the meeting.

2) Revisions. A) The main body of the existing work has been reviewed, corrected, revised and entries clarified. B) The first 50 pages will remain essentially the same. Barrie does not want to tamper with Clyde's basic concept. However, he did say he would be open to slight modifications where sensibilities of other religionists might be concerned. He will invite Meredith, Duane and me to review and suggest changes.

3) New Entries. Approximately 8,000 new entries are being added. Jennifer Pickering is completing the work on a computer. The finished book will number about 500 pages.

4) Dust Jacket. A new dust jacket for the Concordex will be designed by the artists at Celestial Seasonings, one in keeping with the dignity of The URANTIA Book, according to Mo.

5) Distribution. Jesusonian Foundation will assume responsibility for warehousing and distributing the Concordex. On a tour of the basement, Mo pointed out a room with an extensive wall shelving system where books would be stored. Volunteers will process book orders. He wants to be more aggressive in getting Concordexes into bookstores through distributors.

6) Schedule. Jennifer's work will take about 2 more months. Jacket design, review of the first 50 pages, and the printing process will also require time. Barrie does not see availability before July.

6) Foundation Review. At my insistence they agreed to send the new elements to the Foundation for "review." At the time I was not aware that the Foundation's contract with Clyde specified that permission was not automatic or transferable, but John Hales reminded me. They were hoping to bypass the Foundation by following the advice of their copyright and mark attorney. The reason was that they did not want the new edition to be further delayed.

Barrie and Mo expressed the desire to cooperate with the Foundation and Brotherhood. Barrie said, "Let's forget everything that might have happened between my father and anyone in Chicago." I'm sure they are sincere. Based on what they told me, it seems like an excellent plan.