

August 8, 1982

Sr.

Bogota, D.E., Colombia

Dear

I am writing to summarize for you the results of a meeting I had last weekend with Tom Kendall and Martin Myers, the president and vice-president respectively of the URANTIA Foundation. A month or two ago it occurred to me that it would be a good idea to have a chance to share, as completely as possible, the nature of the change in the translation work. The idea came to me when I learned that Tom Kendall would be at a URANTIA Brotherhood meeting in Oklahoma, which I also was going to attend. I felt that our project was sufficiently complex as to preclude being explained by phone or letter, and this meeting gave me a chance to sit down face to face with Tom and Martin and tell them all about it.

After considering the idea of sharing everything about the project with the trustees, I discussed the idea with several friends whose opinions I value, including
All were in agreement with me. Thus, we met last weekend and we talked for 2½ hours about the project.

The result of our meeting was very positive. The trustees are at a point where they can finally turn their attention to the Spanish translation, and now they are aware that the time is right for them to do so. As we were walking out of the room in which we met, Tom Kendall told me "This (the translation project) is growth. Our biggest problem would be if no one down there wanted to read or translate the book. That would be a big problem. Of course there will be some difficulties in doing this, but I think they can be overcome." Also present at the meeting were John Hales, president of the Brotherhood, and Berkeley Elliott, the new chairman of the International Fellowship Committee. They were equally enthusiastic.

I believe I learned two fundamental lessons during the meeting. The first is that there is an enormous difference in point of view between the Foundation and yourselves. Your interest is 99% directed toward getting an excellent translation down on paper and onto bookshelves. The trustees are 99% directed toward preserving the copyright. Each of you has about 1% interest in the major concern of the other but I believe that is still more than enough for a favorable outcome. I should add that their concern is not just that

the copyright remain under their control so that they can control the direction of the development of the revaluation in Latin America. They realize that they cannot do that. Rather, they understand that there will be groups around the world who find the book's message a threat or affront to their system of beliefs, and will want to change the book in some way, deleting a paper here, changing a paragraph there. It is to allow the world to enjoy as pure a text as possible that the trustees are so preoccupied with the copyright issue.

The second lesson for me was that, without direct person-to-person contact we will probably fail to bring about a harmonious translation effort, and the consequences of that would be catastrophic. With continued face-to-face negotiation between principals, you in Colombia and the trustees, the natural/spiritual brotherhood which already exists between readers everywhere will grow and be strong enough to overcome cultural and legal obstacles. Our most difficult problem will be when lawyers representing the two parties begin to exchange cold legal opinions, rather than the loving brotherly exchange which characterized my meeting this past weekend. This can and must be avoided. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Let me summarize for you what I understood to be the major issues in the minds of the trustees. Naturally, they would probably list and explain them differently, and in fact I have encouraged them to do so. Nonetheless, this is what the message from them was, as I saw and understood it.

First, it is essential that there be no copies freely distributed, that there be only one or two master copies under the control of _____ as has been the case all along. I don't believe that there is a problem in making copies for the translation group of a rough draft, which is then reviewed at the leisure of the group members. But when you meet and settle on certain revisions, the original drafts should be destroyed. The tighter _____ controls this the better, as it shows continued control for copyright purposes.

Second, the translation group must be a stable, easily identifiable one. I told them it was my understanding that the only change over the years is that you and _____ had been added to the group in place of _____. If a contract should be written in the future (and I don't know if that is something they have in mind or not) it would be essential that the contracting parties could be easily identified.

Third, they emphasized that there was no ironclad guarantee that if these steps were to be accepted that the translation produced by such a process would be the one finally printed but it would certainly greatly increase the probability that it would and could be used. The one thing essential is to avoid any legal entrapments which we might innocently and in good faith create while trying to do this translation. Tom emphasized that this is a potentially good thing if it is handled correctly, but could be a disaster if not done in a coordinated manner.

Fourth, they want to communicate through their attorney with _____ who I understand is doing the legal work for your group. They want to make sure he understands their interests with respect to copyright protection, so that a way can be found to do the work which will be good for everyone.

This fourth step is essential, but I see it as the most hazardous one, as I mentioned earlier. Lawyers who are not readers are not there to deepen a spiritual relationship between their clients. Nor are they particularly sensitive, in my experience, to the needs of the opposite parties. They are there simply to serve their client, and to make money. If the trustees or those of us active in the translation process leave it up to the attorneys to negotiate everything, relations will likely deteriorate between us and the trustees to the point where progress will come to a halt. Personal contact is indispensable for the success of this venture. I have urged Tom Kendall to go to Bogota. He wishes very much to do so, but has started a new job just a month ago and has little vacation time now. Even so he is thinking about a long weekend visit sometime next year. We also discussed the possibility of you coming to Chicago. All this and more must be done. The more we are physically together, the more sympathy and understanding will be generated. The more we are apart the more suspicion and hostility will occur.

I am more optimistic than ever before about the success of our mission. We are now pointed more in the same direction than ever, and there is no block to open communication. I will be sending a tape to _____ soon. In the meantime, my best to you and your family, and to my dear friends in Bogota.

Sincerely,



Richard F. Prince