

OUTREACH

By their fruits...

by Larry Mullins

In late November of '84 I had the good fortune to visit the Urantia School at Boulder. At the end of my visit Don Guimond asked me to jot down some notes on my impressions of The URANTIA Book booth project on the campus of the University of Colorado. This project is an information booth set up in a traffic area for the purpose of introducing students to The URANTIA Book.

The memory of my November visit to Boulder is still vivid and exciting. The city itself has an awesome, captivating spirit, equalled by few places I have been. The people of Boulder are intriguing, with their vitality and lethargy, their conviction and their tentativeness. If you wonder where the leaders and teachers of the Urantia Movement will come from, they will come from here and a few other tinder-boxes of Urantia activity and action. Perhaps these will not be the old-style leaders of imposing stare, and poised upon white horses, but rather a new breed of leaders and teachers who will, one day, lead and teach by superlative example.

The afternoon I spent in the booth on campus was the most enlightening experience I had in Boulder. Any Urantian, before passing judgment upon such activities, should first actually see how they function when managed deftly and wisely.

The URANTIA Book booth, actually a table, is located among a row of similar tables in a building on campus. Students walk past on a broad concourse between the double row of tables, and examine or pass exhibits as they wish.

On the particular afternoon I was there I was told we had a slow day. A fundamentalist table next to ours attracted more attention by aggressively "hooking" passersby. The only attention-getting devices we used were a few books and pamphlets. Even with this subdued profile our table attracted several students.

The questions the students asked were tough ones. "Who wrote the Book?", "What does it say about Jesus?", "What does it

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teach about the Atonement?" One got the feeling that the questions often emerged from earlier discussions about the Book with other students. The temptation for a Urantian is usually to appear authoritative and armed with the ultimate truth on all conceivable subjects. In contrast, the cautious Urantians at my side in the booth sought to avoid blunt replies and elected to engage the prospect in conversation.

The URANTIA Book itself was used to demonstrate a point or to illustrate its own broad scope of cosmology.

Student fundamentalists who quoted bible verses were shown in The URANTIA Book parallel verses, often more elaborate and richer than the bible version. A deeply sincere young man asked if the quotes in the Book attributed to Jesus could be authenticated. It was suggested that they could be authenticated in the same manner that the original scripture could be: by the Spirit of Truth within.

In each case the Urantian attempted to avoid direct controversy, and sought to embellish those areas of truth that were mutually shared.

I dare not try to quote from memory the number of books sold through this booth and campus ministry. The unofficial numbers I have heard are impressive. If one were to project this successful micro-project at Boulder to equally successful campaigns in campuses across America, the result would be a tidal wave of young Urantians.

I have been in a booth on campus, and I have looked into the wide, truth-hungry eyes of the students. I have seen students avidly examine the book. The pitfalls and obstacles of such ministry notwithstanding, the fruits of this campus effort are good. "By their fruits shall you know them." All the rest is vain rhetoric.

Until now I have been against, or at least indifferent to, such projects. Not because I feared the dangers of "overfast distribution," this is patent nonsense. My reluctance was rooted in the concern that such enterprises would yield little fruit, and could even be counter-productive. Most of my reservations melted away in the light of the work being done on the campus at Boulder. And, in my judgment the work being done there is indeed the Father's work. •