

December 1, 1959

Dr. Edward R. Dyer  
Space Science Board Secretariat  
1145 19th Street, NW., Room 716  
Washington 6, D. C.

Dear Dr. Dyer:

Apropos your memo dated November 13. I believe that every committee that has concerned itself with planetary problems has reached much the same conclusion namely that a great deal of important preparatory work remains to be done in terrestrial laboratories and from terrestrial observatories if we are to make the most effective use of eventual space probes. Dr. Edson's remarks are particularly to the point; I wonder if the most difficult problem may be to recruit, indeed to find, the competent people to do the work that he suggests. However, it is possible that if more publicity is given to this problem this in itself may motivate a number of people to go into planetary work.

There is a serious problem as to whether NASA or NSF should have primary responsibility for furthering research in these directions. I believe that the measure of the problem is so well understood that it is possibly supererogatory for more committee work at an advisory level. Instead, I wonder if it would not suffice to merely reiterate and add more weight to the specific recommendations from the Space Science Board that the administrations of NSF and NASA get together to work out a detailed plan.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics