

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 15, 2019 10:00 PM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on February 9, plans for February 16  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-01-17\_Romanità.pdf; 2019-02-09\_Christianity bar chart.jpg; 2019-02-09\_Christianity pie chart.jpg; 2019-02-09\_Institutional religions on Urantia.jpg

Dear fellow readers of *The Urantia Book* and friends of the Global Endeavor,

On Saturday, February 9, we conducted our seventh webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.”

### **Data on Christianity and other institutional religions**

We began by considering data that Bob Debold had assembled at my request: bar and pie charts depicting the various denominations of Christianity, plus a pie chart portraying institutional religions on Urantia (i.e., the final three attachments to this message). Bob introduced the data, stipulating that the numbers shown are probably inexact but seem approximately valid in general. In the charts depicting Christian denominations, persons affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church were clearly the most numerous, recorded as 1.285 billion (1,285 million). The next largest group is Protestant Christians, recorded at 920 million, on the understanding that the term “Protestant” encompasses many denominations that differ quite substantially among themselves. The third largest group, Bob said, corresponds to members of the various Eastern Orthodox Churches (a total of 270 million people).

Bob then proceeded to introduce the pie chart summarizing persons affiliated with institutional religions on Urantia, which contains three large segments: Christians (33 percent), persons affiliated with other religions (51 percent), and “no religion” (16 percent).

In part, I commented that when we make statements about Christianity in general, we should do our best to encompass the full range of possibilities, not just describe views and practices associated with a particular denomination that we tend to identify with or favor. In relation to the pie chart for the world as a whole, I noted that the heading “no religion” should really be understood to mean “no affiliation with any institutional religion,” for it implicitly includes persons who consider themselves as religious in general and is certainly not limited to those who are atheists.

### **Instructions from Immanuel to Michael**

Bob’s next step was to post a slide consisting of the following paragraph from the instructions that Immanuel gave to Michael shortly before he left Salvington:

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“5. As you may see fit, you are to identify yourself with existing religious and spiritual movements as they may be found on Urantia but in every possible manner seek to avoid the formal establishment of an organized cult, a crystallized religion, or a segregated ethical grouping of mortal beings. Your life and teachings are to become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples.” [Mantutia Melchizedek, 1330:1 / 120:3.6 — excerpted from Paper 120, section 3, a section that is entitled, “Further Counsel and Advice”]

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The excerpt appearing immediately below was not discussed during the webinar on February 9. While I was drafting this report, however, I came upon this excerpt and concluded that it supplies additional insights that are quite useful. Therefore I am now citing it.

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“6. On the planet of your bestowal, set rebellion-segregated man spiritually free. On Urantia, make a further contribution to the sovereignty of the Supreme, thus extending the establishment of this sovereignty throughout the broad domains of your personal creation.” [Mantutia Melchizedek, 1328:3 / 120:2.6 — excerpted from Paper 120, section 2, a section that is entitled, “The Bestowal Limitations”]

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During the webinar, I stated that another reader and I had previously discussed Immanuel’s instructions that Michael should “in every possible manner seek to avoid the formal establishment of an organized cult, a crystallized religion, or a segregated ethical grouping of mortal beings.” The other reader, I said, had pointed out that these instructions were those that Immanuel had given to Michael, whereas Michael (while bestowed on Urantia in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth) had not passed them on to his followers. Since this distinction is valid and important, I preferred to focus attention on the final sentence of the same excerpt: “Your life and teachings are to become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples” [Mantutia Melchizedek, 1330:1 / 120:3.6]. We should bear in mind that Immanuel was speaking for the Universal Father, so it is reasonable to consider this sentence decisive and definitive, not just an opinion. Therefore I asked the panelists how these results will actually be achieved on our planet Urantia.

One participant remarked that Jesusonian standards should apply to all religions. At a later stage, he called attention to eloquent remarks in section 7 of Paper 87 whereby a Brilliant Evening Star declared: “Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps, every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism” [a Brilliant Evening Star, 966:1 / 87:7.6]. In reply, I pointed out that we will indeed ponder and analyze this important challenge when we reach the concluding pages of topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed* (i.e., pages 142-146).

Another panelist gave a quite different answer to my question about how the life and teachings of Jesus will become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples. In his view, one should begin with the true teachings of Jesus. He thought that faith is the place to start.

Yet another panelist commented that the phrase “common heritage” can be understood as a legacy or tradition. This understanding does not tell us how the people of Urantia will eventually reach the degree of spiritual unity that Immanuel described to Michael, but it helps to clarify the question.

### **My personal views on a different topic**

I began this segment of our webinar by stating that as the moderator, I mainly strive to direct traffic, while ensuring that each panelist has appropriate opportunities to express his views and opinions, in a context of respect for pluralism and diversity. On the other hand, I said, circumstances occasionally arise that cause me to conclude that for the sake of clarity, I must state my own views. This occasion, I said, pertained to the group’s previous consideration of a quotation from *The Urantia Book* that appears on page 95 of *Revelation Revealed*:

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Many times during the training of the twelve Jesus reverted to this theme. Repeatedly he told them it was not his desire that those who believed in him should become dogmatized and standardized in accordance with the religious interpretations of even good men. Again and again he warned his apostles against the formulation of creeds and the establishment of traditions as a means of guiding and controlling believers in the gospel of the kingdom. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1592:2 / 141:5.4*]  
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During our webinar on February 2, one participant highlighted the phrase appearing at the end of this warning, namely “as a means of guiding and controlling believers.” In his view, formulating creeds and establishing traditions are not contrary to Jesus’ instructions unless these techniques are aimed at guiding and controlling believers. This was the viewpoint to which I found it necessary to reply.

- In abstract terms, I said, it is true that Jesus’ warning applies if and only if the effort to formulate creeds and establish traditions is intended to guide and control believers.
- On the other hand, if we turn from grammar and logic to the reality of the entire previous history of the Christian tradition, I could not identify any occasion in which a creed was formulated without seeking to guide and control believers. Therefore the linkage is extremely strong. Further, many strands of the Christian tradition continue to violate Jesus’ instructions in exactly this way right now.
- If we talk about traditions, however, the question of intentions is not as clear, especially in relation to the present and the future. For example, a Christmas tree can be considered a custom or a tradition, and I agree that it is essentially harmless. No one will say, “Thou shalt put up a Christmas tree,” just as no one will say, “Thou shalt not put up a Christmas tree.” I realize, however, that the only aspect of a Christmas tree that is truly Christian is the word “Christmas.” After all, a Christmas tree has nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus, nor with the tenets and practices of Christianity as a religion.

In response, several participants thought that current trends within the various strands of Christianity attest to or imply greater flexibility and tolerance in regard to creeds and how they are used.

One panelist thought that in the future, even the most fundamentalist denominations will not be able to impose belief in a particular creed as a condition for active membership. He believed that the young persons who often called “millennials” will continue to influence the established denominations toward more flexible attitudes and approaches.

Another participant commented that based on current trends in the United States, there seems to be good reason to believe that the nature and function of creeds will be redefined, and then redefined again. In his view, egalitarian impulses are very strong.

### **Resuming discussion of Romanità**

After this we returned to my essay “Romanità” (the second attachment). As previously stated, this document explains that the social, cultural, and political systems of the Roman Empire ended up inflicting certain birthmarks on the organized, institutional church — birthmarks that still exert substantial influence on Christianity as it is currently practiced in the Western world. In effect, these organizational and structural changes became so closely associated with the Christian tradition as to be almost indistinguishable from it. Further, the resulting entanglement of church and state exerted very substantial influence for well over one thousand years.

At my request, one panelist read the first two paragraphs on page 2 of “Romanità,” which, in part, call attention to an important statement that Jesus made during the crisis at Capernaum: “I have come to proclaim spiritual liberty, teach eternal truth, and foster living faith” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1710:4 / 153:2.6*]. I then explained that I had chosen the two quotations from *The Urantia Book* that appear at the bottom of page 2 because they are balanced and can be interpreted from many different perspectives. Therefore I asked two participants to read these quotations, on the understanding that the group would then discuss them.

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*[First quotation excerpted on page 2 of “Romanità”]*

The world is filled with lost souls, not lost in the theologic sense but lost in the directional meaning, wandering about in confusion among the isms and cults of a frustrated philosophic era. Too few have learned how to install a philosophy of living in the place of religious authority. (The symbols of socialized religion are not to be despised as channels of growth, albeit the river bed is not the river.)  
*[A Melchizedek, 1098:4 / 100:5.1]*

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*[Second quotation excerpted on page 2 of “Romanità”]*

When a member of a social religious group has complied with the requirements of such a group, he should be encouraged to enjoy religious liberty in the full expression of his own personal interpretation of the truths of religious belief and the facts of religious experience. The security of a religious group depends on spiritual unity, not on theological uniformity. A religious group should be able to enjoy the liberty of freethinking without having to become “freethinkers.” There is great hope for any church that worships the living God, validates the brotherhood of man, and dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members. *[A Melchizedek, 1135:2 / 103:5.12]*

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Although participants expressed a wide range of reactions and interpretations on a general level, I prefer to focus on the remarks of one panelist who called attention to a particular paragraph located in section 7 of Paper 101. (**Editing note:** For clarity and ease of understanding, I have inserted the numbers shown within brackets and in bold. In other words, these editorial insertions of mine are not part of the paragraph as it appears in The Urantia Book.)

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The great difference between a religious and a nonreligious philosophy of living consists in the nature and level of recognized values and in the object of loyalties. There are four phases in the evolution of religious philosophy: **[1]** Such an experience may become merely conformative, resigned to submission to tradition and authority. **[2]** Or it may be satisfied with slight attainments, just enough to stabilize the daily living, and therefore becomes early arrested on such an adventitious level. Such mortals believe in letting well enough alone. **[3]** A third group progress to the level of logical intellectuality but there stagnate in consequence of cultural slavery. It is indeed pitiful to behold giant intellects held so securely within the cruel grasp of cultural bondage. It is equally pathetic to observe those who trade their cultural bondage for the materialistic fetters of a science, falsely so called. **[4]** The fourth level of philosophy attains freedom from all conventional and traditional handicaps and dares to think, act, and live honestly, loyally, fearlessly, and truthfully. [*A Melchizedek of Nebadon, 1114:2 / 101:7.4*]

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One participant analyzed this paragraph by commenting that in his view, the progression whereby most human beings living on Urantia reach level 4 will take tens of thousands of years. He believed that the majority of human beings living today fall in levels 1 or 2, and that most intelligent people are stuck in level 3. He thought that it is important to make provisions for the vast majority of human beings, perhaps as high as 90 to 95 percent, who do not attain level 4. The progression to that level is not supported by our contemporary culture, and in some ways our social and cultural circumstances actively interfere with it. As compared with the situation on a normal planet, our difficulties on Urantia are multiplied by a factor of ten.

Another panelist was surprised at the prediction that this evolution of human beings will take thousands of years. Circumstances have changed and are changing now, as illustrated by previous comments about “millennials.”

Yet another participant stated that time is accelerating and that cultural change is accelerating too. In his view, the changes in human beings during the next one thousand years will greatly exceed those that occurred in the last thousand.

Readers, I regret that at this stage of the report, it does not seem appropriate for me to try to summarize other general comments pertaining to the excerpts from *The Urantia Book* that are reproduced near the bottom of page 2 of “Romanità.” Instead I shall move on by indicating that I proceeded to ask the panelists to comment on the evocative and intriguing phrase “**albeit the river bed is not the river**” that concludes the first of these two quotations.

One panelist responded by interpreting the idea of “the river bed” as a reference to symbols, while commenting that he personally had collected hundreds of images of angels. Although he did not NEED these symbols, he appreciated the fact that he has them. He interpreted the phrase “the river” as a metaphor for the fruits of the spirit.

Next I asked participants to focus on the final sentence of the second quotation, commenting on whether, in their view, the “great hope” highlighted there is a present reality or, on the contrary, amounts to a future aspiration. Everyone who responded described this sentence of the Melchizedek’s as a hope for the future, not a current reality.

## **Our agenda for February 16**

During our webinar on February 16, panelists will focus on the final three pages of my essay “Romanità.” These pages pertain to the entanglement of church and state that ensued when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, an entanglement that is now considerably weaker in countries whose social and cultural background is predominantly Christian but that still afflicts humanity, in some locations more acutely than elsewhere. In addition, participants will take careful note of comments in section 12 of Paper 70 whereby a Melchizedek warns that if human beings wish to maintain our freedom, we must avoid “Union of church and state” [*a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17*].

## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

1. Since the recordings of our previous webinars remain available on YouTube, you could watch any or all of them whenever you wish. Here is the link that would take you to the specific location on the Internet:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg)

As a workaround that would help you if you do not have this link immediately to hand, you could log onto the main site for YouTube and then search for “Global Endeavor.” The results would include a reference to our programs, although it may not appear at the top of the list.

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, February 16:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

Please be aware that the starting time is only approximate, for it usually takes us a few minutes to make the adjustments to the rather complicated software that cause all the participants to be viewed

and heard correctly. In relation to the webinars on topic 8 that we have conducted up to now, live streaming in YouTube has usually begun at about ten minutes past the hour indicated above.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[February 15, 2019 at 10:00 pm]