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Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2019 9:08 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on July 20, plans for July 27
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 190521ny-Douthat_v5_Game-of-Thrones_fantasy.pdf; UB_2081-2082_P195s08.pdf; 2005-07-26_note-added_Uses-of-history_App-B.pdf; 2018-10-05_Cantor_076-079_Donation-of-Constantine.pdf; 2019-06-09_Papal-States_EncyBrit-2015.pdf

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

On Saturday, July 20, we conducted our sixteenth 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.”

Secularism and chronic concerns

Those of you who viewed our webinar on May 18 may remember that I concluded it with a rather surprising question about the implications and overtones of “The Game of Thrones” and “The Lord of the Rings.” In effect, I asked the panelists whether these two fantasy adventures that had proven to be immensely popular demonstrated quite convincingly that Western society and culture have become overwhelmingly secular. (The final episode of “The Game of Thrones” was scheduled to be broadcast the next day.)

A few days thereafter (i.e., on May 21), *The New York Times* published a relevant opinion article by one of the newspaper’s regular columnists (Ross Douthat): “How ‘Game of Thrones’ Failed Fantasy.” I am circulating that article as the second attachment, but not because of the author’s comments on the nature of fantasy adventures. To the contrary, I am particularly interested in the two paragraphs that I have highlighted in the PDF file. For your convenience, those two paragraphs read as follows:

As Alan Jacobs suggested in an essay for *The New Atlantis* several years ago, fantasy stories are concerned with the transition that the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor described in his immense and daunting tome, “A Secular Age”: the movement from a premodern world in which human lives and societies are understood to be permeable to supernatural forces (dark and light, divine and demonic) to a modern world in which both civilization and the individual psyche are “buffered” against angels and devils and fairies and the like. ...

This reality prompted Jacobs to conclude that the success of fantasy “may best be taken as an acknowledgment that the great problem of the pagan world — how to navigate as safely as possible through an ever-shifting landscape of independent and unpredictable powers who are indifferent to human needs — is our problem once more.”

In a procedural sense, this material may be a bit confusing because the cast of characters consists of three persons: (1) the journalist Ross Douthat, who wrote the article for *The New York Times* (May 21); (2) the journalist Alan Jacobs, who wrote an essay that appeared in the winter 2014 issue of *The New Atlantis*; and (3) the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, who wrote the book *A Secular Age* (published in 2007). During our discussion on July 20, I asked panelists the following questions:

(a) To appraise the net conclusion about the situation of contemporary human beings that is attributed to Alan Jacobs in the second paragraph of the excerpt.

(b) To identify aspects of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* that, if properly understood, would enable contemporary human beings to overcome and transcend these apparent concerns.

In response, the panelists' remarks were varied, diverse, and complex. Here are a number of highlights:

— One participant declared that during the last 300 years, the world has been buffeted by forces that have surfaced suddenly, while sparking surprises and disruptions. For example: enlightenment, democracy, capitalism, socialism, internationalism, militarism. In his view, there needs to be a rediscovery of God in our lives in terms of humanity as a whole and as individuals.

— Another participant commented that humanity has always had to deal with independent and unpredictable powers, such as the invading horsemen of Genghis Khan. There are teachings in *The Urantia Book* that can be of use, but they will remain theoretical and inaccessible unless they are converted into some kind of religious reality for people in general, some set of activities.

— Yet another participant agreed with the statement in the newspaper article that humanity is now struggling with the question of **“how to navigate as safely as possible through an ever-shifting landscape of independent and unpredictable powers who are indifferent to human needs.”** He added, however, that in pagan times, the threat came from nature and from the supernatural forces that humanity imagined. Now, in contrast, the value structure has been set adrift. Further, crucial concepts are relativistic, unpredictable, and threatening, especially in view of the unprecedented rapidity of the information flows that are inundating humanity. All this, in his view, heightens the importance of evolving some new symbolism, some new technique for cultural manifestation, as a Brilliant Evening Star emphasizes in section 7 of Paper 87:

Every inspiring ideal grasps for some perpetuating symbolism — seeks some technique for cultural manifestation which will insure survival and augment realization — and the cult achieves this end by fostering and gratifying emotion. ...

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. Modern man must find some adequate symbolism for his new and expanding ideas, ideals, and loyalties. This enhanced symbol must arise out of religious living, spiritual experience. And this higher

symbolism of a higher civilization must be predicated on the concept of the Fatherhood of God and be pregnant with the mighty ideal of the brotherhood of man. ...

No cult can endure and contribute to the progress of social civilization and individual spiritual attainment unless it is based on the biologic, sociologic, and religious significance of the *home*. A surviving cult must symbolize that which is permanent in the presence of unceasing change; it must glorify that which unifies the stream of ever-changing social metamorphosis. It must recognize true meanings, exalt beautiful relations, and glorify the good values of real nobility. [*A Brilliant Evening Star*, 965:5, 966:1,3 / 87:7.1,6,8]

This new symbolism, in his view, will provide an axis in life, in order to unify the stream of ever-changing reality.

One participant called attention to the role of science in dissipating superstition and helping to create an appropriate balance among the realities of matter, mind, and spirit. He cited aspects of the newspaper article evoking the concern that the old, disruptive, destructive powers might return to inflict pain on human beings, either individually or collectively. By implication, this is a survival of the ghost fear that pervaded humanity during primitive times, “an appalling and powerful terror” and a “senseless superstition, some of which still persists” [*a Melchizedek*, 766:4 / 68:3.3].

He interpreted the term “pre-modern” to mean prior to 1600, the approximate moment when science began to dissipate quite a few superstitious ideas, including those previously associated with Christian culture and tradition (e.g., belief in miracles whereby God or various saints were thought to intervene directly in the practical circumstances of human life, especially in order to heal diseases). From these perspectives, he believed it helpful to consider the remarks in which a Universal Censor discusses the cosmic mind and identifies causation, duty, and worship as “responses [that] are self-evident to clear-reasoning and deep-thinking minds” [*a Universal Censor*, 192:1 / 16:6.5]. Further, the Universal Censor states:

These scientific, moral, and spiritual insights, these cosmic responses, are innate in the cosmic mind, which endows all will creatures. The experience of living never fails to develop these three cosmic intuitions; they are constitutive in the self-consciousness of reflective thinking. But it is sad to record that so few persons on Urantia take delight in cultivating these qualities of courageous and independent cosmic thinking.

In the local universe mind bestowals, these three insights of the cosmic mind constitute the a priori assumptions which make it possible for man to function as a rational and self-conscious personality in the realms of science, philosophy, and religion. Stated otherwise, the recognition of the *reality* of these three manifestations of the Infinite is by a cosmic technique of self-revelation. Matter-energy is recognized by the mathematical logic of the senses; mind-reason intuitively knows its moral duty; spirit-faith (worship) is the religion of the reality of spiritual experience. These three basic factors in reflective thinking may be unified and co-ordinated in personality development, or they may become

disproportionate and virtually unrelated in their respective functions. But when they become unified, they produce a strong character consisting in the correlation of a factual science, a moral philosophy, and a genuine religious experience. And it is these three cosmic intuitions that give objective validity, reality, to man's experience in and with things, meanings, and values. *[A Universal Censor, 192:5-6 / 16:6.9-10]*

From similar perspectives, he pointed out that after extended discussion with two apostles of Jesus (Nathaniel and Thomas), the Greek philosopher Rodan accepted their view that God “*must be a personality since he is the Creator of all personality and the destiny of all personality*” *[the Midwayer Commission, 1784:7 / 161:1.10]*. In parallel, he also called attention to remarks in which a Melchizedek explains that science, although able to posit a First Cause, must be associated with religious faith and revelation in order to portray the situation of human beings in ways that are balanced and accurate:

Reason, through the study of science, may lead back through nature to a First Cause, but it requires religious faith to transform the First Cause of science into a God of salvation; and revelation is further required for the validation of such a faith, such spiritual insight. *[A Melchizedek, 1106:2 / 101:2.3]*

Another participant commented that the newspaper article by Ross Douthat had been helpful in contrasting secular and pre-secular eras of human life, partly by distinguishing an apparently enchanted world from circumstances that we can describe as “disenchanted.” From these perspectives, he emphasized the need for us to integrate our inner and outer lives, so as to develop a spiritual harmony that will unify them. As a Melchizedek states in section 6 of Paper 103, this task requires a partnership whereby science and religion harmonize and cooperate with philosophy and revelation:

A logical and consistent philosophic concept of the universe cannot be built up on the postulations of either materialism or spiritism, for both of these systems of thinking, when universally applied, are compelled to view the cosmos in distortion, the former contacting with a universe turned inside out, the latter realizing the nature of a universe turned outside in. Never, then, can either science or religion, in and of themselves, standing alone, hope to gain an adequate understanding of universal truths and relationships without the guidance of human philosophy and the illumination of divine revelation. *[A Melchizedek, 1135:7 / 103:6.5]*

Paper 195, section 8: “Secular Totalitarianism”

When I asked the panelists to shift to considering section 8 of Paper 195, “*Secular Totalitarianism*,” I noted that on May 18, we began discussing it. During that prior webinar, I called attention to the following excerpt from the section's second paragraph:

The mother of modern secularism was the totalitarian medieval Christian church. Secularism had its inception as a rising protest against the almost complete domination of Western civilization by the institutionalized Christian church. [The Midwayer Commission, 2081:2 / 195:8.2]

In addition, I asked the panelists to analyze and comment on the final sentence in the third paragraph:

The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists. [The Midwayer Commission, 2081:3 / 195:8.3]

Therefore on July 20 I mentioned these aspects of our prior discussion, then asked the panelists to continue analyzing this part of Paper 195. (For your convenience, the full text is attached.)

— “The tyrannical and dictatorial political state”

In paragraph 4, the Midwayer Commission describes the tyrannical and dictatorial political state as “the direct offspring of scientific materialism and philosophic secularism.” I called attention to the fact that the revelators did not declare that the tyrannical and dictatorial political state is the only possible outcome of materialism and secularism. These appalling results certainly occurred in Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and Communist China, but the United States and a wide range of other Western countries remain democratic and free.

One participant replied that we do not have a dictatorial state in the United States because we brought God into the equation. The Declaration of Independence, he pointed out, refers to God several times.

COMMENT. Nonetheless, Amendment 1 to the U.S. Constitution make it clear that in the United States, there is no official religion, no religion established by law:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”

Another participant remarked that if we do not have some serious spiritual and religious renaissance in the United States, we may be threatened with a tyrannical and dictatorial political state in decades or generations to come.

Yet another participant advocated that we avoid an entirely intellectual and philosophic discussion of these questions, for that would be superficial. In his view, we need to focus on living experience, how people move through their lives and what are their daily experiences. He declared that humans need two crucial resources: (1) a foundation that provides coherence and order; and (2) a compass that gives them a sense of where they are and where they are going.

The medieval church was one form of tyranny, for it diminished the role of the individual's free will in determining where to go and how to proceed. The modern tyrannical state achieves the same outcome by using different methods. In addition, contemporary human beings face a less obvious form of tyranny that flows from flagrant hedonism, unprincipled capitalism, and intensive pursuit of pleasure centered on me-me-me. Many professed Christians are leading secular lives because their attention and actions reflect these priorities. Although the teachings of *The Urantia Book* provide a roadmap, in themselves they are impotent.

I paraphrased his concluding thought by stating that *The Urantia Book*, as a book, is just a collection of words on paper. It will be valuable to humanity only insofar as we put the ideals into practice. I then pointed out that the Midwayer Commission is not criticizing the secular revolt as such, for the revelators commend "many liberties and satisfactions ... unprecedented material progress ... tolerance, social service, democratic government, and civil liberties" [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:6,7,8 / 195:8.6,7,8*]. The essential challenge for us is to find the path that will lead humanity to an appropriate balance.

— "True religion"

Another participant called attention to two statements of the revelators: (1) "the secularists went on to institute a revolt against God himself, sometimes tacitly and sometimes openly"; and (2) "the secularistic revolt went too far and lost sight of God and true religion" [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:6,7 / 195:8.6,7*]. He paraphrased the idea of true religion as conformity to the cosmos, then cited the final paragraph of Rodan's analysis:

The consciousness of the impulse to be like God is not true religion. The feelings of the emotion to worship God are not true religion. The knowledge of the conviction to forsake self and serve God is not true religion. The wisdom of the reasoning that this religion is the best of all is not religion as a personal and spiritual experience. True religion has reference to destiny and reality of attainment as well as to the reality and idealism of that which is wholeheartedly faith-accepted. And all of this must be made personal to us by the revelation of the Spirit of Truth. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1782:4 / 160:5.13*]

Another panelist declared that the outcome we need is not just individuals living the fruits of the spirit. That is necessary, but not sufficient. As a Brilliant Evening Star states, "The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets" [*a Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4*]. In his view, we need a new religion that is equally effective, but not a religion of authority. He believed that many values were preserved during the Middle Ages that eventually gave rise to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. He agreed that the revelators' account of the transition is true to a great degree, but maintained that it does not provide the full picture.

— Nationalism, disintegration, and world peace

I remarked that the ideas that the revelators present in paragraphs 8 through 10 of Paper 195, section 8 remind me of a ping-pong match, for they seem to intermingle positive values with negative consequences. The essential question is how we can create harmony and balance from all these divergent strands. I particularly called attention to the remarks whereby the Midwayer Commission declares:

This secularistic human society, notwithstanding its unparalleled material achievement, is slowly disintegrating. The chief cohesive force resisting this disintegration of antagonism is nationalism. And nationalism is the chief barrier to world peace. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2082:2 / 195:8.10*]

Therefore I asked the panelists whether humanity needs nationalism, at least temporarily, in order to prevent the disintegration of society, or whether we should seek to set nationalism aside, in order to pursue world peace. In contrast, I said, peace could be maintained if nations are willing to settle disputes peacefully, by means of negotiations and compromises.

There appeared to be a consensus that humanity still needs nationalism, at least for another few generations. One panelist commented that competition at the Olympics is built on nations. Another participant remarked that humanity will continue to need nationalism until we have a worldwide religion, a religion that he assumed will emerge from the fifth epochal revelation. Yet another participant noted that we are stuck in a dilemma that is also exceedingly dangerous, given the weapons of mass destruction that, if used in a massive exchange, could conceivably threaten the continued existence of human beings on our planet Urantia. In his view, the only resolution to this dilemma is a spiritual resolution: The world needs a new spiritual culture.

— “Still more terrible destruction is yet to come”

I called attention to the fact that the Midwayer Commission concluded section 8 with exceedingly ominous remarks. After the revelators referred to the fact that “[d]uring the first third of the twentieth century Urantians killed more human beings than were killed during the whole of the Christian dispensation up to that time,” they went on to warn that “still more terrible destruction is yet to come” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2082:5 / 195:8.13*]. In stating this, were they commenting on World War II (which they obviously foresaw) and perhaps on other episodes of mass slaughter that occurred in the remaining two-thirds of the twentieth century, or do their remarks portend yet other cataclysms that may yet beset mankind in the years to come?

One panelist commented that if the fatherhood of God is subtracted from humanity, we will not get the brotherhood of man. The world is shrinking dramatically because of the effects of science, industry, and technology. At the same time, there is no effective moral code whereby human beings can master their emotions.

Another panelist focused on the revelators’ prior remark, “The inherent weakness of secularism is that it discards ethics and religion for politics and power” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2082:3 / 195:8.11*]. In his view, ethics is relatively impotent when separated from religion. Nonetheless,

economic interdependence is now a stabilizing factor, one that distinguishes our current situation from the circumstances of the 1930s. In effect, nationalism and economic interdependence are now holding in check some of the dire possibilities that would correspond to the revelators' warning in the final paragraph of the section. This is not a complete answer, for he wondered whether at some point there may be terrifying events that scare humanity so badly as to make us understand that we must band together and have no other choice. He hoped and believed that our spiritual superiors have sufficient resources to prevent disaster.

COMMENT. It is reasonable to believe that several of the twelve corps of master seraphim (Paper 114, section 6) are exerting intense efforts aimed at influencing humanity toward positive and productive outcomes, partly by making effective use of their human assets in the reserve corps of destiny (Paper 114, section 7).

Previewing our webinar on July 27

Analyzing section 8 of Paper 195 was our final step associated with paragraph (c) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed* ("Doctrines and creeds"). During our webinar on July 27, we will begin discussing the implications of paragraph (d) on the same page:

(d) Special status for the clergy. Institutional Christianity distinguishes quite sharply between professional religionists (the clergy) and ordinary believers (the laity). Here we must note, however, that the clergy's prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.

As this paragraph implies, the aspects that we will discuss are particularly characteristic of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity. Although the Protestant tradition does distinguish between clergy and laity, the distinctions are less acute and less emphatic. Further, the five strategies identified in the second tick have nothing to do with the belief or observance of Protestant Christians.

— Dividing believers into two fundamental categories, clergy vs. laity, whereby the latter are distinctly subordinate and are treated as second-class citizens.

— Five conscious, considered strategies of the organized, institutional church, methods that are clearly intended to enhance ecclesiastical authority and justify insistence that believers obey the clergy in regard to all aspects of Christian belief and practice:

(1) Seizing upon and exploiting the psychological and theological implications of the word "father."

(2) Describing the initiation ceremony called ordination as a sacrament that imparts an indelible mark on the soul of the man who has just become a priest.

(3) Asserting that ordination as a priest enables that man to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of “transubstantiation”) by means of prescribed statements that he makes during a stereotyped religious service called “the mass.” Here, for comparison, is a relevant quotation from Paper 87:

The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets. The Christian cult has been devitalized by the loss of many fundamental ideas. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4]

(4) Declaring that believers receive God’s forgiveness for errors and misconduct if and only if they confess their sins to a priest by means of a prescribed ceremony that is commonly called the sacrament of penance, confession, or reconciliation.

(5) Claiming the authority to declare that a deceased former human being has found particular favor with God and can now be called a “saint” (canonization), or that he or she is entitled to the lesser honor of being called “blessed” or “venerable.” An integral part of this assertion is the authorization for believers to pray to anyone whom the Roman Catholic Church has declared to be a saint.

Civil authority of the popes

As a keynote that will serve to unify this part of the discussion, I will call attention to a statement by a Divine Counselor that we read in section 1 of Paper 19:

The true perspective of any reality problem — human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic — can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, **history**, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. [A Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6 — emphasis added: the word in bold type]

If we launch our analysis by examining the years during which Christ Michael of Nebadon bequeathed his bestowal life in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, it is important to point out that Jesus stated quite emphatically that his kingdom is not of this world. Nonetheless, the popes — who have traditionally claimed to be “the vicar of Christ” — proceeded to establish a kingdom that definitely was of this world; and in order to promote this cause, they exerted intense political and diplomatic effort aimed at maintaining and exerting civil authority in central Italy for far more than one thousand years (until 1870).

REFERENCES. Chapter 18 of the gospel according to John records Jesus’ statement that his kingdom is not of this world:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world ..." (*John 18:36 / King James Version*).

This is the beginning of Jesus' reply to a question from Pilate, whereas the revelators report the complete discussion [*the Midwayer Commission, 1991:3 / 185:3.3*]. To put Jesus' reply in a broader context, I also found 14 other passages in the fifth epochal revelation in which the Midwayer Commission reports or calls attention to Jesus' statement that his kingdom was not of this world. Here is the list of all 15 paragraphs:

- (1) 137:8.7
- (2) 138:7.1
- (3) 152:3.2
- (4) 153:2.4
- (5) 157:6.12
- (6) 158:6.2
- (7) 162:5.3
- (8) 171:2.5
- (9) 171:8.3
- (10) 172:3.6
- (11) 176:2.3
- (12) 181:2.9
- (13) 182:2.3
- (14) 185:3.3
- (15) 190:5.4

Attachments pertaining to the kingdom that the popes established

— "Appendix B: The Donation of Constantine." (This is an appendix to a memorandum dated July 26, 2005 in which I maintained quite strenuously that Urantia Foundation — the sponsor and chief publisher of *The Urantia Book* — should not use images or symbols drawn from the traditions of Christianity, for in my view this would leave an inaccurate and misleading impression.)

— "Civil authority from the chair of Peter: Papal ideology rooted in 'the Donation of Constantine'" (excerpted from pages 176-179 of *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* by Norman F. Cantor, a book published in 1993).

— "Papal States" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2015).

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

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, July 27:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 2:30 to 4:30 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 our preceding webinars associated with topic 8, live streaming in YouTube began at about ten minutes past the time stated.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[July 25, 2019 at 9:07 pm]