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To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on August 24, plans for August 31
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-06-25_Hasler-book_dust-jacket.pdf; 2019-06-26_Hasler-book_introduction.pdf; 2019-06-29_Hasler-book_excerpts.pdf; 2019-06-24_v2_Living-the-real-religion-of-Jesus.pdf

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

On Saturday, August 24, we conducted our twentieth 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.”

During the webinar, we finished discussing the implications of paragraph (d) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*, “Special status for the clergy,” and then launched discussion of my new essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” (the final attachment).

Special status for the clergy

During the three preceding webinars (July 27, August 3, and August 17), we had begun discussing the implications of paragraph (d) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*:

(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.

On August 24, we continued discussing a specific application of this general set of issues, **the civil authority of the popes** and, in particular, **the kingdom that the popes established** — a kingdom whereby the popes ruled the middle one-third of Italy for over one thousand years (until 1870). To put this discussion in context, I read a statement by a Divine Counselor that appears 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*]

I pointed out that in early phases of this series of webinars, we had indeed talked about the church's origin, in part by discussing the apostle Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost and the evangelical work and writings of the apostle Paul. After that we went on to talk about the teachings of Augustine of Hippo, but it is probably more accurate to call those teachings a part of history. From time to time, we have exchanged preliminary ideas about destiny, and we will continue to discuss these aspects during future webinars associated with topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

I then cited two explicit statements of Jesus that are prominent in the New Testament and in *The Urantia Book*:

— “My kingdom is not of this world” — verse 36 in chapter 18 of the Gospel According to John, and reported or referred to in fifteen paragraphs in Part IV of *The Urantia Book*.

— “Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's” — as recorded in two verses of the New Testament (Matthew 22:21 and Mark 12:17) and in four paragraphs in Part IV.

In addition, I pointed out that a Melchizedek has warned us that “Union of church and state” is one of the grave dangers that human beings must avoid if we wish to maintain our freedom [*a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17*].

These references, taken together, establish that the political authority that the popes exercised in central Italy for a period of over one thousand years directly contradicted the teachings of Jesus, as recorded briefly in the New Testament and in greater detail in *The Urantia Book*.

Specific questions on the kingdom that the popes established

(**Note:** Questions X1 through X9 all related to ideas expressed in documents that I had circulated to the panelists in advance. Since they answered questions X1 through X6 during our webinars on August 3 and August 17, I have limited the corresponding attachments to this message to documents that seem immediately relevant to questions X7 through X9. For a complete list of the attachments, see the end of this message.)

X7. Please comment on the doctrine of papal infallibility that was adopted during the First Vatican Council.

The first panelist who responded actually preferred to revert to part of our prior discussion of question **X6**, so as to take issue with ideas expressed in one of the excerpts from the book by August Bernhard Hasler that another participant had read at my request on August 17. For clarity, this is the excerpt that the panelist commented on.

(Excerpt 5 taken from page 19 of the PDF file, corresponding to page 277 of the book)

The new dogma taught that the pope was infallible in matters of faith and morals — a uniquely ideological thesis. This claim extends not to one doctrinal statement but to all of them; it covers every single one. It shields the entire doctrinal structure of the Catholic Church from criticism. Papal infallibility — the formal principle, as it were, of Catholicism — becomes the crowning conclusion of the system. The insurance policy is flawless: There can be no appeal from the pope to any other authority. Infallibility in this context functions as a meta-ideology, the ideologizing of an ideology. The many ideological elements in the system are protected by a single, constitutive, all-encompassing ideology. The aim of all this is stabilization and integration. Presupposing the fundamental principle of infallibility, the Church's entire operation can run smoothly.

In particular, the panelist stated that the excerpt is not an accurate description of how the Roman Catholic doctrine of infallibility applies to doctrinal statements of the pope. It does not cover “every single one” as the author of the book declared. In his view, infallibility applies only to existing doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church that conform to sacred scripture and tradition, not to developing or generating new doctrine. Further, the ordinary and universal teaching authority of the Church is not included, as embodied in statements by Roman Catholic bishops, and it likewise does not apply to a statement of the pope that he is not making *ex cathedra*. (Note: The Latin phrase *ex cathedra* literally means “from the chair”; it has traditionally been interpreted to mean “from the chair of Peter.”)

I then followed up by asking the panelist to state his own view of the doctrine of infallibility. He replied that this doctrine is nothing that he can relate to, then cited remarks by Pope Benedict XVI in 2005 whereby he stated that he was not an oracle and was infallible only in very rare situations. In comparison, he said, Pope John XXIII declared that he was infallible only if he spoke infallibly but that he never did that, so that he was not infallible.

Another participant began his reply to question X7 by stating that he was not familiar with Roman Catholic teachings and therefore would rely on his personal background of study and reflection based on the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. As a practical matter, the question is how the doctrine of infallibility plays out in human life. We know that inside each human being, there is a fragment of infinite deity, but we also know that a human being's ability to discern the true meaning of God is always very limited. With these factors in mind, he did not believe there is such a thing as papal infallibility, nor human infallibility in general.

Yet another participant commented that only the Creators are infinite. To assert that a human being is incapable of error is crazy. The contention that doctrines are infallible is closely associated with the traditions of primitive religion and the practices that prevailed during earlier eras of history. Many contemporary Roman Catholics are not familiar with detailed aspects of the Roman Catholic doctrine of infallibility and instead associate it with the high authority of the Church. They tend to feel guilty if they do not comply with all aspects of the Church's teachings and are concerned that they might be excommunicated.

I then commented from my own perspective, saying I thought that unsophisticated Roman Catholic believers tend to associate the idea of infallibility with all teachings of the pope. For example, the teachings of Pope Paul VI on birth control have tended to be considered authoritative and final.

Another participant interpreted the hidden message of the doctrine of infallibility. In his view, the underlying implication is that the pope is a superior spiritual being; it introduces a spiritual dimension into his personality and identity. In contrast, however, another participant subsequently disputed this, declaring that the intention of the doctrine of infallibility does not relate to the superiority of a person, but to the nature of the office that he holds.

A different participant drew on his upbringing as a Roman Catholic, stating that verses from Chapter 16 of the Gospel According to Matthew had been cited very prominently:

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall not prevail against it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

[Matthew 16:15-19 / Revised Standard Version]

In contrast, he called attention to statements of Jesus that the revelators record in Paper 174:

To Peter he said: "Put not your trust in the arm of flesh nor in weapons of steel. Establish yourself on the spiritual foundations of the eternal rocks." *[The Midway Commission, 1897:2 / 174:0.2]*

COMMENT. From my personal perspective, I am inclined to cite the following paragraphs from Paper 157, for they seem to embody a closer resemblance to the verses of Chapter 16 of the Gospel According to Matthew that are a prominent aspect of Roman Catholic teachings:

After they had partaken of their meal and were engaged in discussing plans for the forthcoming tour of the Decapolis, Jesus suddenly looked up into their faces and said: "Now that a full day has passed

since you assented to Simon Peter's declaration regarding the identity of the Son of Man, I would ask if you still hold to your decision?" On hearing this, the twelve stood upon their feet, and Simon Peter, stepping a few paces forward toward Jesus, said: "Yes, Master, we do. We believe that you are the Son of the living God." And Peter sat down with his brethren.

Jesus, still standing, then said to the twelve: "You are my chosen ambassadors, but I know that, in the circumstances, you could not entertain this belief as a result of mere human knowledge. This is a revelation of the spirit of my Father to your inmost souls. And when, therefore, you make this confession by the insight of the spirit of my Father which dwells within you, I am led to declare that upon this foundation will I build the brotherhood of the kingdom of heaven. Upon this rock of spiritual reality will I build the living temple of spiritual fellowship in the eternal realities of my Father's kingdom. All the forces of evil and the hosts of sin shall not prevail against this human fraternity of the divine spirit. And while my Father's spirit shall ever be the divine guide and mentor of all who enter the bonds of this spirit fellowship, to you and your successors I now deliver the keys of the outward kingdom — the authority over things temporal — the social and economic features of this association of men and women as fellows of the kingdom." And again he charged them, for the time being, that they should tell no man that he was the Son of God. [*The Midway Commission, 1747:2-3 / 157:4.4-5*]

The panelist went on to comment that in promoting the doctrine of papal infallibility, Pope Pius IX seems to have intended to circumvent or at least diminish the pope's traditional obligation to operate collegially, while consulting councils of bishops. In addition, he appears to have sought to reinforce the authority of the papacy as a general matter, not only within the Roman Catholic Church but also in relation to the world as a whole. In fact, however, his broader aspirations were not fulfilled, and proclamation of the doctrine of infallibility actually brought about a range of results that were adverse.

Another participant said he would draw on his professional background in the social sciences and as a therapist. In any set of organizational arrangements, he said, there are three important elements: (1) power; (2) authority; and (3) responsibility. Further, it is important to understand how these three elements relate to each other and interact. Infallibility is one arrangement for the three elements, but it conflicts with the questioning of leadership structures that he associates with relativism and "the post-modern world."

From my personal perspective, I commented that the movement toward papal infallibility that Pius IX enforced seem to be aimed at proclaiming absolute authority of a dictatorial type; he seems to have desired to be an absolute monarch, a dictator in the religious sense.

As a way of concluding this discussion, I addressed a question to the panelist who had previously explained the Roman Catholic doctrine of infallibility in analytical terms: Was the doctrine of infallibility itself an infallible doctrine? He replied that this was a new doctrine and therefore not considered infallible; on the other hand, it had been approved by an ecumenical council of cardinals.

X8. In December 1979, Pope John Paul II disciplined the German theologian Hans Küng by stripping him of his ecclesiastical teaching privileges, so that he could “neither be considered a Catholic teacher nor engage in teaching as such” (page 3 of attachment 4). Further, in the year 2000, the same pope beatified Pope Pius IX (i.e., by presiding over a formal ceremony in which Pius IX was given the title “blessed”). How do these two official actions of John Paul II compare with his carefully cultivated public image as a kindly and congenial grandfather?

One participant stated that some years ago, she had met Hans Küng during a private meeting held in St. John the Divine in Manhattan. During this meeting, he steered well away from the question of why Pope John Paul II had disciplined a theologian who had devoted so many years to the Roman Catholic religion. In his book, however, Küng commented that the pope had two faces, one directed to the public and the other one aimed at persons operating within the Roman Catholic Church. He did not treat the bishops very well, and collegiality did not happen. Further, it was clear that prospective bishops were selected according to their willingness to be absolutely loyal to the party line in Rome. He was opposed to allowing priests to get married, and during his time in office the number of new priests in Germany declined very substantially: 366 in 1990, but only 161 in 2003. His views on women had two sides: on the one hand, he revered the Virgin Mary and preached a noble concept of womanhood; on the other hand, he forbade women from practicing birth control and opposed the idea of ordaining women as priests. The result was an exodus of women from the Church. He liked to be seen as a spokesman for the ecumenical movement, but continued the Church’s policy of not acknowledging the ecclesiastical offices and communion services associated with various other faiths of the Christian tradition. In a more positive vein, Pope John Paul II did issue statements in which he confessed failures and transgressions that occurred in earlier eras, but the apology was vague and ambiguous. Further, he assigned the responsibility to individuals and not to the Church itself.

Another participant analyzed the question in relation to the responsibility of a leader to serve others, while citing Jesus’ remarks to this effect: *“Whosoever would be great among you, let him first become your servant. He who would be first in the kingdom, let him become your minister” [the Midwayer Commission, 1868:1 / 171:0.6]*. From this participant’s perspective, Hans Küng had really ministered to believers, and therefore one could ask who was the more important servant, Hans Küng or Pope John Paul II.

Yet another panelist commented that John Paul II was not the greatest pope of the 20th century, but the most contradictory. Outwardly he called for conversion, reform, and dialogue with the rest of world, but his internal policies were aimed at restoring the situation of the Roman Catholic Church as it had been before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and, for that purpose, obstructing reform, reinstating the status quo ante, and asserting the dominance of Rome.

An additional panelist called Pope John Paul II paradoxical, portraying him as very conservative in theological and institutional terms, but progressive in relation to pointing fingers at previous actions of the Roman Catholic Church in ways no one had done before him. On balance, he was best known for fighting communism in Eastern Europe. He issued apologies for the treatment of Galileo, for Roman Catholic involvement in the African slave trade and for the Church’s involvement in the burnings at the stake that occurred after the Protestant Reformation, for injustices committed against

women and historical denigration, and for the inaction and silence of many Roman Catholics during the Holocaust. He instituted quite a number of the first steps within the Roman Catholic Church against the sexual abuse of children, and was criticized for not going far enough. Criticisms along such lines can always be made, but starting on that road was extremely significant. It is important to bear in mind that John Paul II, like any other pope, had to deal with institutional resistance from others within the Roman Catholic Church. The criticisms of Hans Küng are valuable, but the question of institutional resistance did not affect Küng, and he had no power to change anything.

Another participant remarked that question **X8** and the entire discussion of it pertained to political organization, political actions, and political deception. Since there did not seem to be any spiritual content to any of this, he declined to comment further.

X9. Although the preceding eight questions serve to explore key aspects of the documents that I attached, I am confident that examining this detailed and complex material led you to additional insights. Please permit me to offer you the opportunity to comment on any factor that you may wish to identify and focus on.

One participant responded by referring to the E-mail message he sent in the late afternoon of August 17 to me and to the vice-chairman of the Committee for the Global Endeavor, thereby following up on the webinar held earlier that day. His substantive remarks read as follows:

1) When Bob was describing the foundation of the [Roman Catholic] approach to dogma (scripture, tradition, magisterium) I thought of the Anglican “three-legged stool,” which performs the same function: scripture, tradition, and REASON. The difference between magisterium and reason? — HUGE!

2) About the practice and principle of *sola scriptura*: In order to attain the ideal of uniformity or commonality of understanding of the Bible, it leads directly to the idea of “literal interpretation” of the Bible. If you think about it, “literal interpretation” is an oxymoron and is logically impossible. Hence, the endless proliferation of Protestant sectarianism. It’s pretty much the opposite of the [Roman Catholic] magisterium, and leads to its own set of problems.

3) Neal asked if the First Vatican Council was valid. John Henry Newman (the famous Anglican church leader and theologian) questioned whether the Council was sufficiently ecumenical in its agreement in order to be considered valid. I believe that he ultimately consented to the doctrine of infallibility.

During discussion on August 24, the panelist commented that in the Roman Catholic Church, the magisterium employs reason but actually uses institutional power instead of the reasoning mind — whereas in the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church, reasoning is not essentially an institutional matter. In regard to his remark that the phrase “literal interpretation” amounts to an oxymoron, he declared: (1)

if something is an interpretation, it is not literal; and (2) if something is literal, it is not an interpretation.

Another participant commented that after reading all the material I had circulated, she wondered why this profound religion always emphasized Jesus dying, with overtones of blood, guilt, and fear. How is that attractive? She contrasted the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, calling them beautiful and stating that they have a wonderful spiritual value.

Yet another participant remarked that throughout the discussion of this topic, we certainly have identified problems, misconceptions, and delusions. On the other hand, he said, we did not spend any time on personal or social religion, nor addressed where the search for truth fits into all this. He said he was glad that my new paper has this dimension.

A different panelist commented that the general theme of the last few webinars have related to the issue of leadership, especially in relation to the structures of authority of the Roman Catholic Church. He wondered how these questions relate to the evolutionary developments centered on the fifth epochal revelation, as associated with our movement going forward. He believed that there are plenty of provisions for intellectual leadership, but thought that the more profound question going forward is how readers of *The Urantia Book* can work with the phenomenon of spiritual leadership. In his view, the general approach is to avoid the issue and focus on personal spiritual experience; the net emphasis is that we distrust spiritual leadership in a group setting. He believed that the revelators are very clear about the importance of spiritual leadership in contexts that relate to group activities, on the understanding that the essence of leadership is service to others. Therefore, in his view, the question is how to confer the function of leadership on the part of those who are strongly called to service ministry in outreach, thereby exercising spiritual leadership related to how people's lives develop from a spiritual perspective. How do we give such committed readers their lead and provide some sense of sanction and support to their efforts to act as spiritual leaders in our movement? He perceived a cultural bias, a suspicious and skeptical attitude toward the possibility of spiritual leadership in our movement. He conceded that skepticism is good in some respects, but believed that such viewpoints will be counterproductive in hobbling the evolution of the mission of the fifth epochal revelation if we (committed readers) do not come to a more mature place around spiritual leadership — its role and how to sanction it.

I responded on a personal level, stating that for me the issue of leadership is complicated because of the tradition to associate leadership with authority, followed by the efforts of authority to promote uniformity of belief and conformity to patterns. Therefore, in my opinion, we need to invent ways to circumvent the association of leadership with authority and conformity. We will not be able to reach a comfort zone pertaining to the idea of spiritual leadership unless and until we manage to overcome these patterns, which are very deep in the Christian tradition.

The participant stated that he heartily agreed. Jesus, he said, identified the greatest service with devotion to the welfare of the flock. He believed that we would be in safe territory if we recognized the spiritual leadership of individuals who have demonstrated this by their lives and actions. The

question is not about power or authority, but about who can provide the greatest service to the community of readers of the fifth epochal revelation.

Another participant identified one factor that may be inhibiting the movement's ability to embrace spiritual leadership: confusion and conflation related to the practice of individual versus personal religion. Personal religion, he said, includes both the individual and the group, whereas individuality is atomistic. He believed that the movement has been entranced by a uniquely American approach to individuality, and that we are living under a real impediment when we conceive of *The Urantia Book* as promoting individual spirituality or individual religion. If we think of religion as an individual phenomenon, that will prejudice against any idea of spiritual leadership because individuality is a zero-sum phenomenon: the conviction that if someone else is gaining authority over me, I am losing authority of my own. In contrast, he thought, the idea of personal religion is a much more productive way of letting people integrate the idea of persons and the group.

Launching discussion of my new essay, “Living the Real Religion of Jesus”

Background. When I wrote *Revelation Revealed* in 2015 and 2016, I thought that the ideas and ideals portrayed in topic 7 (“The extended transition from institutional to personal religion”) would remain an active influence during consideration and discussion of topic 8 — especially in view of the reading assignment on page 79 of *Revelation Revealed* that called for participants to read Jesus’ two discourses on religion out loud and discuss them in depth (i.e., sections 5 and 6 of Paper 155).

To my disappointment, however, this did not happen. To the contrary, Jesus’ teachings about personal (individual) religion seemed increasingly missing in action as we conducted phases 1 through 3 of our webinars on topic 8: “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.” As a result, I became concerned that the first two pages of topic 8 had not been sufficiently thorough, for they did not seem to have created a conceptually complete baseline that will permit us to do justice to our task of “Comparing and contrasting”

In close consultation with the two members of the Committee for the Global Endeavor who provided cogent comments and recommendations while I was drafting *Revelation Revealed* in the first place, I decided to write new material that will eventually be inserted immediately after formal question 59 on page 89. The actual insertion will occur when we issue an updated version of the long document that will include my essay “Romanità.” On the other hand, it will not make sense to issue this update until participants in our webinars finish discussing topic 8 as it stands, an achievement that seems rather distant since the existing text extends through page 146.

My personal introduction

(Note: The following transcript incorporates minor editorial improvements, but no insertions or deletions of substantive ideas. I began the introduction by asking another participant to read paragraphs 1 through 3 in section 1 of Paper 99.)

Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization; certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny.

Religion must become a forceful influence for moral stability and spiritual progression functioning dynamically in the midst of these ever-changing conditions and never-ending economic adjustments.

Urantia society can never hope to settle down as in past ages. The social ship has steamed out of the sheltered bays of established tradition and has begun its cruise upon the high seas of evolutionary destiny; and the soul of man, as never before in the world's history, needs carefully to scrutinize its charts of morality and painstakingly to observe the compass of religious guidance. The paramount mission of religion as a social influence is to stabilize the ideals of mankind during these dangerous times of transition from one phase of civilization to another, from one level of culture to another. [A Melchizedek, 1086:4-6 / 99:1.1-3]

To me, at least, these paragraphs supply a general explanation of the situation that the revelators were facing as a whole; these are comments by a Melchizedek. But in addressing their task of providing us the fifth epochal revelation, they had to deal with this situation of extremely rapid transition and perhaps even a spiritual and cultural emergency.

Strictly as a matter of logic, if the revelators had been satisfied with the traditions of humanity in a general sense — religious, cultural, and every other element — then they need not have devoted so much effort to providing *The Urantia Book*. If you turn that around in the other direction, the fact that they went to this effort means that they were *not* satisfied, in fact that they were indeed worried; and the three paragraphs that the Melchizedek wrote in this context that was just read establishes that they were worried.

So humanity as a whole has an issue that we need to address. It is an issue of massive transition on a very rapid basis, and a readjustment and a reaffirming of the role of religion in helping human beings to address these changes.

Now let me then turn to the context of our discussion in these webinars as a whole. I wrote *Revelation Revealed* in the year 2015 and the year 2016 as a way of calling greater attention to aspects of *The Urantia Book* that I felt had not been attended to, had not been emphasized enough.

Topic 8 is as follows: “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.” So I emphasize by looking at that sentence that it is not our task to analyze Christianity. Our task is to compare and contrast the true teachings of Jesus with these practices of Christianity. That’s a different question.

If we were just going to analyze Christianity as a whole, we would be proceeding in other ways; but the question is how can we associate, how can we contrast, how can we compare the true teachings of Jesus with the traditions and practices of organized, institutional Christianity — a rather different matter.

I have noted comments, especially last week by the colleague who is not with us today, that he felt we had neglected the spiritual content of Christianity. Perhaps there are reasons to think that, but our task is to compare the true teachings of Jesus with what has happened in Christianity for the last 2,000 years.

Now if we go back to the wording of the portion of *Revelation Revealed* that we have been dealing with, and that we will continue to deal with later, I submit to you that starting on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*, there are a series of headings that go through different elements related to Christianity.

We've been discussing several of them so far. The first element was: (a) A religion *about* Jesus instead of the religion *of* Jesus. The second element: (b) The atonement. The third element: (c) Doctrines and creeds. The fourth element: (d) Special status for the clergy. And in connection with that, as we have just concluded, there was a great deal to talk about in terms of authority and structure.

After the interval devoted to my new essay "Living the Real Religion of Jesus," we will go on to another element, (e) Monasticism; and I think there will be quite a few positive comments to be made about monasticism, along with some reservations. Then: (f) Second-class status for women; (g) Emphasis on celibacy; (h) Reverence for saints and for objects believed to be sacred; (i) "A personal relationship with Jesus Christ"; (j) Social ministry and charitable activities; and the final element in this series, (k) Intense respect for scripture.

So without wishing to congratulate myself, it seems to me that this series of attributes is a reasonable series that helps us, that has been helping us, that will help us perform our task of comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.

If now I can give a sort of mega-comment, the fact that we were doing this starts with the premise that the true teachings of Jesus have not been implemented. I think that's intuitively obvious: They have not been implemented in the world, and the issue that we have been discussing from time to time about destiny has to do with the question of *when* the true teachings of Jesus *will* be implemented in the world — probably not in our generation. In fact, I think it's very unlikely that any of us would argue that these true teachings will be implemented in our world, in our lifetimes. But they will be implemented *sometime*, and the Midwayers assure us that these teachings have spiritual power and will eventually stimulate humanity.

So that is part of our discussion; that is certainly an element that we will continue to talk about for quite a while, and it is an element that is inherent in my essay "Living the Real Religion of Jesus."

The essay concludes with questions about timing and the sequence of events which are largely an invitation to speculate; and they must be, because the underlying reality is that we are talking about the future and no one knows. There was a rather humorous remark ascribed to the baseball manager Yogi Berra, who said: “It is very difficult to make predictions, especially about the future.” So that is an issue that we have to face, but we’re going to do our best.

Now as I explained in the introduction to the webinar that I circulated as a message, I was concerned at the net trend of discussion during phases 1 through 3 of this series of webinars that we were losing sight of the real teachings of Jesus, the real religion of Jesus, and that in fact, the introductory pages in the text of topic 8 did not establish a clear baseline, a spiritual baseline that we could associate with the real religion of Jesus, even though the previous topic, topic 7, had been devoted to personal, individual religion, and even though I hoped that these ideas would largely carry forward. They did not, at least not to the degree that I hoped would happen.

And so I spent a considerable amount of time after phase 3 ended writing this essay of 18 pages. I think that even though I do not anticipate complete agreement from any of you, and even though I anticipate a very vigorous discussion of this new document, it does embody important aspects of the spiritual challenge that we, as human beings, and that we, humanity, do face.

It was my earnest effort to try to portray, the best I could, the real religion of Jesus, the true teachings of Jesus; and the essay includes many elements that will undoubtedly be controversial; but I welcome that. As before, as we have always carried on during these webinars, the discussion is a matter of pluralism and diversity. We are *not* looking for a lowest common denominator, we are not trying to get any of you, or all of you, to sign on to some set of agreed principles.

In writing the essay, I obviously had to incorporate my own point of view; and as in previous webinars, you will be free to criticize my point of view as embodied in the writing that I did. But I hope that this will be an occasion for you comment thoughtfully. I am confident that you will, and I hope also that it will draw attention to the real challenge of the true teachings of Jesus — as a way of creating a better baseline for us to appraise and contrast what has actually happened in organized, institutional Christianity for the last 2,000 years.

All right, I have now run on a fair amount of time here. I thought it was necessary to explain my motivations for this transition, and I realize that there are undoubtedly aspects of what I have just said from my personal viewpoint that some of you may differ with. You have a right to differ. I will not proceed for a round of inquiries to each of you, but I will offer the opportunity to anyone who wishes to comment on anything I said, or to put forward different views from your own perspective. If any of you wishes to do that, please signify. *(This concludes the transcript of my personal introduction.)*

Reactions and comments

In response, one panelist commented that the real religion of Jesus is a subject that has a great deal of interest for him. He hoped we can focus on the spiritual content of what we can be about and the tasks that the teachings are setting out for us. He believed that the section 7 of Paper 87 on the

nature of cultism has a tremendous amount to do with the central and higher symbolism that the revelators are calling on us to discern and move forward with in our evolutionary efforts.

I replied that from a purely procedural perspective, this question of the need to develop a new cult, as stated in Paper 87 by the Brilliant Evening Star, is the final segment of topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed* as I wrote it [pages 142 through 146]. That is a long way ahead of us, but we will definitely go into it in great depth when we finally do reach that point.

I then said I wanted to put the first page of “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” on the table. I proceeded to read the first paragraph myself, and another participant read the second paragraph at my request. Thereafter, I inquired about elements that I described as a commonality in these two paragraphs, to the effect that thinking and belief are not the whole question. To the contrary, we are talking about activity, activity that encompasses many other human beings and the entire fate of our planet Urantia.

One participant replied that this is an excellent question about what it means to live the true teachings of Jesus — in part, whether the gospel of Jesus is inseparable from a changed way of life, from moment to moment, and whether it also calls for profound changes in relationships between us and God and between us and every other human being we encounter. In his view, an appropriate way of understanding these dramatically improved relationships is the family metaphor, a family of children who are devoted and profoundly engaged in relationships with our spiritual parents — our Father, Jesus, and our Mother, the Supreme Being — and also in much better relationships with our sisters and brothers all around us.

Another participant called attention to a profound statement by a Melchizedek that appears in section 3 of Paper 102:

[The pursuit of knowledge constitutes science; the search for wisdom is philosophy; the love for God is religion; the hunger for truth is a revelation. \[A Melchizedek, 1122:8 / 102:3.12\]](#)

This hunger, he said, is a revelation because it is alive, a real spiritual experience, finding God because we are searching for him, not just because we turn over a book. In his view, everyone who finds God begins as a truth seeker; people who do not seek truth never find God because they are not looking for him.

Another participant took issue with the first four words in my essay, the subheading that appears at the beginning of the first paragraph. In his opinion, the words “Finding God for oneself” are very dangerous because he associated them with seeing religion and spirituality as an individual phenomenon. He advocated replacing this phrase with “Finding God in the other” or “Finding God as the other.” In addition, he disagreed with a statement of mine that appears in the first paragraph, “Slogans, procedures, and ceremonies are all entirely irrelevant.” This, he thought, goes against what the revelators tell us about spiritual culture or a spiritual cult; slogans, procedures, and ceremonies

are absolutely integral in the creation of a spiritual culture. He thought that we are still stuck in the idea that spirituality is primarily or originally or initially an individual effort, and that we then have the fruits of the spirit that are expressed in the social context. In contrast, he believed that the situation is really the opposite, that we find God in the social context, that we find God as our social context, and that we grow as individuals spiritually.

I replied by calling attention to a statement appearing in of the second paragraph of my essay, a sentence that in my opinion partly fulfills the goal that the other participant was seeking to express. This passage declares: “After all, ‘[seeking for a knowledge of the will of the Father in heaven](#)’ is not just a process of analysis, inference, or contemplation, for the will of the Father inevitably and intrinsically immerses us in a social context: active association and engagement with many other human beings”

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OF MINE

— As explained above, the other participant contested the phrase “Finding God for oneself,” which appears as a subheading at the very beginning of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.” This wording is a close paraphrase of remarks by Jesus in the first paragraph of the excerpt from Paper 155 cited near the bottom of page 1: “[I have called you out of the darkness of authority and the lethargy of tradition into ... the supernal experience of finding God for yourself, in yourself, and of yourself, and of doing all this as a fact in your own personal experience](#)” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1731:1 / 155:6.3*].

— In addition, another statement by Jesus is immediately relevant: “[When you once begin to find God in your soul, presently you will begin to discover him in other men’s souls and eventually in all the creatures and creations of a mighty universe](#)” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1733:1 / 155:6.13*]. (This quotation appears on page 10 of my new essay.)

— In addition, the other participant challenged the remarks in the first paragraph of my essay whereby I declared, “Slogans, procedures, and ceremonies are all entirely irrelevant.” In context, it is clear that this remark of mine pertains to the personal task of finding God for oneself. I did not intend it to refer to the entire experience of religion in general, and it is reasonable to believe that this misunderstanding was closely associated with the other participant’s concerns. On the other hand, there is ample room for caution in regard to slogans, procedures, and ceremonies, for they have often operated as an integral part of group practices aimed at asserting spiritual authority over other human beings and telling them what they must do and believe.

Another panelist declared that “Finding God for oneself” is absolutely necessary because it’s so personal and mysterious. God, she said, created us in a certain way, so that we seek him. She indicated that she began this search when she was six years old, at a time when she did not know she was establishing a relationship. In her view, this is the most extraordinary experience that anyone has; it is the spirit driving force that actually brings people to you and also enables you to recognize God in others.

Yet another panelist called attention to the paragraphs in which the revelators describe Jesus' approach to truth during his six-month sojourn in Rome:

Jesus learned much about men while in Rome, but the most valuable of all the manifold experiences of his six months' sojourn in that city was his contact with, and influence upon, the religious leaders of the empire's capital. ... And this was his method of instruction: Never once did he attack their errors or even mention the flaws in their teachings. In each case he would select the truth in what they taught and then proceed so to embellish and illuminate this truth in their minds that in a very short time this enhancement of the truth effectively crowded out the associated error; and thus were these Jesus-taught men and women prepared for the subsequent recognition of additional and similar truths in the teachings of the early Christian missionaries. It was this early acceptance of the teachings of the gospel preachers which gave that powerful impetus to the rapid spread of Christianity in Rome and from there throughout the empire.

The significance of this remarkable doing can the better be understood when we record the fact that, out of this group of thirty-two Jesus-taught religious leaders in Rome, only two were unfruitful; the thirty became pivotal individuals in the establishment of Christianity in Rome [*The Midwayer Commission, 1455:4, 1456:1 / 132:0.4-5*]

With all this in mind, the panelist concluded that Jesus' contacts with these religious leaders were not just a way to enhance or illuminate the truth that they already possessed, but also the stimulus for and catalyst of a dynamic process that took place within them. He found it highly significant that only two of Jesus' thirty-two contacts were not fruitful.

Plans for our webinar on August 31

On August 24, panelists will continue discussing my new essay "Living the Real Religion of Jesus." In particular, we will start with the two-paragraph excerpt from Jesus' second discourse on religion that appears at the bottom of the essay's first page [*the Midwayer Commission, 1731:1-2 / 155:6.3-4*].

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, August 31:

- 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
[August 29, 2019 at 8:50 pm]

Complete list of attachments

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

Attachments pertaining to Infallibility and the First Vatican Council of 1870

[Source: *How the Pope Became Infallible* by August Bernhard Hasler (1981)]

2. Biographic information about the author appearing on the dust jacket, along with excerpts from a review.

3. Introduction by the German theologian Hans Küng.

4. Excerpts from the book.

A new essay of mine that I completed on June 24, 2019

5. “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.”
