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To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
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Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-06-24_v2_Living-the-real-religion-of-Jesus.pdf; 2019-11-07wp-McArdle_v2_post-Christian-Christendom.pdf; 2019-11-07_questions_LRRJ-page06.pdf

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

On Saturday, November 23, we conducted our twenty-fourth 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.” As a practical matter, however, our entire discussion pertained to pages 4 through 6 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” (June 24, 2019), a text that I am sending to you as the second attachment to this message.

Our next webinar in this series will occur on **Saturday, November 30**.

Wording and language to express spiritual experiences

One of the participants opened our discussion on November 23 by calling attention to the key theme of mind that we had explored during the preceding webinar (November 2). In particular, he focused on the following sentence in section 6 of Paper 103: “[Man experiences matter in his mind; he experiences spiritual reality in the soul but becomes conscious of this experience in his mind](#)” [*a Melchizedek, 1136:1 / 103:6.6*]. Many aspects of the previous discussion had made it clear that human wording and language are not suited to expressing the realities of personal spiritual experience, whereas the Universal Father is fully attuned to the entire process:

[The Universal Father realizes in the fullness of the divine consciousness all the individual experience of the progressive struggles of the expanding minds and the ascending spirits of every entity, being, and personality of the whole evolutionary creation of time and space. \[A Divine Counselor, 29:6 / 1:5.16\]](#)

In comparison, the participant called attention to the relatively recent human field called cybernetics (1948), which refers to the underlying concept and function of control and communications in humans, animals, and machines. This new field of cybernetics may give us added insight into the role of mind as a channel, although we certainly cannot aspire to rival the awareness of the Universal Father. Nonetheless, as human concepts and language improve, we may be able to do a bit better in speaking about personal spiritual experience.

Another participant said that the reference to cybernetics was interesting, but that he was a little confused about the relationship between cybernetics and the soul. In considering the idea of

explaining spiritual experiences, he believed that this inevitably involves philosophical thought that coordinates materiality and spirituality. We cannot express spiritual experiences clearly because they are not material, so we need philosophy to make some kind of bridge between the two.

Yet another participant said he was wondering about the cogency of the idea that spiritual experience seems to be equated with inner experience. His idea of experience was that it is neither inner nor outer, but both, some agglomeration of the two. He commented that human beings cannot have a purely inner experience because all of our reference points are based on outer experience. Nor, in his view, can one have a purely outer experience without having some kind of inner component to it. He was not comfortable with the idea of spirituality whereby spiritual experience is considered to be an inner phenomenon, somehow trapped in the mind or in the brain.

In reply, I said I thought that the Melchizedek's statement in section 6 of Paper 103 serves to establish that the mind is the vehicle for combining inner and outer experiences. In addition, the mind provides a framework for interpreting experiences in some manner that we may find helpful and suitable in communicating with others.

Trying to do the will of God

We then begin discussing the paragraph from section 6 of Paper 155 that appears at the top of page 4 of my essay. (This is the final paragraph of the excerpt from Jesus' second discourse on religion that begins near the bottom of page 3.)

Never forget there is only one adventure which is more satisfying and thrilling than the attempt to discover the will of the living God, and that is the supreme experience of honestly trying to do that divine will. And fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation. Some callings are not holy and others secular. All things are sacred in the lives of those who are spirit led; that is, subordinated to truth, ennobled by love, dominated by mercy, and restrained by fairness — justice. The spirit which my Father and I shall send into the world is not only the Spirit of Truth but also the spirit of idealistic beauty. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1732:4 / 155:6.11*]

One participant focused on the phrase “the will of God,” commenting that one of the problems we have with that term is that it is so often conflated with the idea of goodness, isolated goodness. We often assume that our ideal of the good is the divine ideal, and yet it is not. God's goodness is not isolated from his truth, beauty, goodness, or from his loving nature. Evolutionary religions tend to think just in terms of what is good and what is not, what is righteous moral behavior and what is not. In contrast, it seemed to him that what the revelators are trying to tell us is that the will of God encompasses more than the goodness of God. To the contrary, it also encompasses truth, beauty, and love. If one combines and associates them all, one reaches wisdom, divine wisdom:

The characteristic difference between evolved and revealed religion is a new quality of divine wisdom which is added to purely experiential human wisdom. [*A Melchizedek, 1101:4 / 100:6.9*]

I called attention to two sentences in the middle of the paragraph of Jesus' remarks excerpted from section 6 of Paper 155:

And fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation. Some callings are not holy and others secular. *[The Midwayer Commission, 1732:4 / 155:6.11]*

I offered my own view that on the obvious level of outer meaning, this seems to be a denial that God particularly likes professional religionists who embody the authority of a religious group or body, persons who have claimed in most of history to have a superior standing before God — a situation that is superior to that of regular believers who may be following the religion but who are not professionally associated with it.

One participant commented that the idea that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation makes a great deal of sense. He thought that these two sentences amount to a rebuke to those who claim to be holy and to be the intercessors for the individual.

Another participant, however, said he did not see anything in the paragraph that talks about ecclesiasticism. He emphasized the importance of the next sentence: *"All things are sacred in the lives of those who are spirit led; that is, subordinated to truth, ennobled by love, dominated by mercy, and restrained by fairness — justice."*

The essay resumes

At my request, another participant read the next two paragraphs of text appearing on page 4 of the essay:

The temptation to construct a social, cultural, and political context that embodies and advances one's own mental outlook upon human existence is a widely shared impulse, perhaps even amounting to a cultural imperative. For example, the warfare endemic throughout the middle years of the 7th century caused the armies of Islam to advance through Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and the coastal regions of north Africa, and this was most certainly accompanied by effort to evangelize on behalf of Islamic beliefs — although, in fairness, we should concede that this took place gradually, mainly as a result of social pressures occurring in everyday life and individual appraisals of advantages and benefits, not by immediate compulsion. (The new rulers were content to levy a special tax on persons who observed other faiths — mainly Judaism and the divergent strands of Christianity that different groups of believers espoused at the time.)

Islamic military conquest then traversed the Straits of Gibraltar so as to dominate almost all of Spain, followed by the opportunistic incursions into France that occurred from time to time until 732 CE, when the troops of Charles Martel (the grandfather of Charlemagne) repulsed the Islamic invaders

during the battle of Poitiers-Tours. Almost as if to intensify the campaign to preserve and expand the domains of Christendom, these impulses percolated through the decades that led to the year 800 CE, a period when the troops of the Emperor Charlemagne conquered the pagan Saxons and converted them to Christianity by force of arms.

I asked for comment on the distinction explained in the first paragraph displayed above: As the troops of Islam advanced, conversions occurred gradually, by individual choice, whereas the Christian troops of Charlemagne compelled the Saxons to convert to Christianity by force of arms.

One participant commented that the Christians in northern and north-central Europe were essentially Andites, a blend of Adamites and Nodites that the revelators have characterized as militaristic and aggressive. This, he thought, might have been a reason why Charlemagne and his followers, being Andites, were more aggressive.

I replied that this hypothesis was interesting and might be part of the answer. On the other hand, I thought that what we have is a distinction that is somewhat related to earlier trends affecting Christianity as a state religion, the linkage of church and state that we discussed from the time that Constantine favored Christianity as the religion of imperial Rome. Now even though Constantine did not oblige the subjects of the Roman empire to convert to Christianity, that happened about 60 years later on the part of his successor Theodosius — who made Christianity the sole acceptable religion in the Roman empire and required people to observe it. So this process had become associated with the Christian tradition in Western Europe, a part of the heritage of Christianity and a tradition that affected Charlemagne.

A different participant pointed out that the Christians really believed that they were saving souls. They thought they were doing a big favor to all the people they converted, thereby bringing them into eternal salvation. They were convinced that without the conversion to Christianity, these souls would have been doomed to eternal damnation. He did not think that the Muslims had the same belief. So their conversion imperative was of a completely different nature; they did not have the same scheme of salvation that was a key aspect of Christianity.

I agreed and added a different element: In addition to the lack of the conversion imperative the other participant had described as a theological matter, there is in Islam a respect for “the religions of the book.” Muslims accord respect to Christianity and Judaism both as being “religions of the book” in addition to Islam. Now in comparison, I said, the troops of Charlemagne were conquering people who were pagan, people who followed primitive religions that we can associate with nature worship and various pagan deities. This may also have been a factor that was part of this overall process.

The other participant then remarked that the Muslims were not particularly kind to pagan populations that they came across. They did come across a number of pagan populations, and they treated them much more cruelly than they did people who were either Jewish or Christian.

The next paragraph of the essay

Well, I shall refrain from recounting the adventures and misadventures that can be linked with the Crusades or with the tumultuous upheavals that stemmed from the Protestant Reformation, except to note that in the middle years of the 16th century, German Protestants and Roman Catholics cast aside their mutual hatreds just long enough to conduct coherent and effective joint action that served to eradicate their common enemies, the Anabaptists.

I asked participants why this happened, why German Protestants and Roman Catholics cooperated to attack the Anabaptists, even though they hated each other and were fighting each other. They did not combine their armies militarily, but they operated militarily in liaison and in cooperation. Why was this such a big deal for both sides?

After one participant stated that he did not know enough about the situation at that time to be able to comment, I supplemented the information in the paragraph by stating that the Anabaptists believed it was inappropriate to baptize infants. They believed that baptism should occur later in life, at a time when the individual was spiritually conscious and had a personal choice involved in adhering to Christianity. The initial syllables “ana ...” actually mean twice. So from the perspective of Roman Catholics and Protestants in Germany, these views ascribed to the Anabaptists meant baptizing twice, because the children were going to be baptized as infants by the conventional process.

A different participant said he believed that the Anabaptists were also quite anti-ecclesiastical. This threatened the structure not only of the Roman Catholic Church, but also the Protestant churches that existed at that time, which were essentially Lutheran. The Anabaptists were equally anti-ecclesiastical in terms of the role of the clergy in how they treated believers, and both Protestants and Roman Catholics were threatened by that.

In subsequent discussion, the participant agreed that the teachings of the Anabaptists were a threat to the authority of the established religious traditions, the entire ability of the hierarchy of social and political leaders to dominate the spiritual views of society.

The next two paragraphs of the essay

If we accelerate to the early years of the 19th century, it is useful to bear in mind that for the Emperor Napoleon, the most important advantage of organized, institutional religion — or, at least, the Roman Catholic version — was that it tended to make his subjects docile and obedient, a perspective that he appears to have shared with the Emperor Constantine. This, however, did not guarantee support from those who upheld the tradition of ecclesiastical authority, for popes, cardinals, and bishops seldom saw fit to promote the projects of the Emperor Napoleon — and sometimes quite to the contrary.

Several generations later, during the final one-third of the 19th century, European powers carved up sub-Saharan Africa to their political and economic advantage, and the various episodes of military conquest triggered the ensuing trek of Christian missionaries who sought to convert the indigenous inhabitants. Although it is difficult to appraise the net balance of advantages and disadvantages, these

evangelization campaigns clearly represented cultural imperialism in tandem with and as a corollary to political imperialism.

After a panelist read these paragraphs at my request, I said that while I had been reviewing them and thinking about how we might comment, I discovered a paragraph in Paper 66, section 6 by a Melchizedek that I thought was quite relevant.

When Christian missionaries go into the heart of Africa, where sons and daughters are supposed to remain under the control and direction of their parents throughout the lifetime of the parents, they only bring about confusion and the breakdown of all authority when they seek, in a single generation, to supplant this practice by teaching that these children should be free from all parental restraint after they have attained the age of twenty-one. *[A Melchizedek, 750:2 / 66:6.7]*

To me, at least, this is an example of a cultural matter descended from the social and economic circumstances of Christianity, as well as a social and cultural matter that was not attuned to the circumstances of the people in Africa that the missionaries were seeking to convert. In my view, the teachings of Western culture about the age of 21 being the age of an adult who is no longer subject his parents were added to anything that might be termed religious and were preached in sub-Saharan Africa as a matter detracting from their traditional culture and their social environment. This was an example of something out of Western cultural tradition that was infused into the preaching of Christian missionaries — in a place where the cultural and social tradition was very different. I said that I thought what we are trying to do is to see why it is necessary to emphasize the true teachings of Jesus and, by implication, set aside those aspects of the Christian tradition that represent social and cultural or even political norms that have to do with the West.

Since no one commented on the specific issue that I had just identified, we continued with the next two paragraphs of the essay and then proceeded to read the two excerpts from Papers 92 and 98 that appear at the top of page 6.

The missionaries who operated in the British Empire were almost invariably Protestant, whereas Roman Catholic clergy assumed such tasks in the colonial dominions of France, Belgium, and Portugal. In the French Empire these evangelical efforts involved at least an implicit paradox, for the Third Republic was avowedly secular and sought to disentangle itself from the overtones of the active partnership with organized, institutional religion that had pervaded the preceding royal and imperial regimes. Nonetheless, the civil officials of the French Empire could not and did not impede the efforts of Roman Catholic missionaries in sub-Saharan Africa, for French law and tradition recognized their right to hold and express religious views, as enshrined in Article 10 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (August 26, 1789): “No one should be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious, provided their manifestation does not upset the public order established by law.”

Please permit me to emphasize that I have not subjected you to this brisk, selective, and highly subjective excursion into highlights of history in order to foster intellectual insights that might illuminate these events. The main point is far more general: Religion almost invariably follows the flag, at least from very broad perspectives. Further, we need to bear in mind that the various strands of Christianity embody cultural and social assumptions that are closely associated with the traditions, norms, and experience of persons who live in Western countries. This is the cogent explanation that we find in Part III of *The Urantia Book*, as credited to two Melchizedeks (or perhaps the same one):

As the original teachings of Jesus penetrated the Occident, they became Occidentalized, and as they became Occidentalized, they began to lose their potentially universal appeal to all races and kinds of men. Christianity, today, has become a religion well adapted to the social, economic, and political mores of the white races. It has long since ceased to be the religion of Jesus, although it still valiantly portrays a beautiful religion about Jesus to such individuals as sincerely seek to follow in the way of its teaching. It has glorified Jesus as the Christ, the Messianic anointed one from God, but has largely forgotten the Master's personal gospel: the Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of all men. [A Melchizedek, 1084:10 / 98:7.11]

The Christian religion is the religion about the life and teachings of Christ based upon the theology of Judaism, modified further through the assimilation of certain Zoroastrian teachings and Greek philosophy, and formulated primarily by three individuals: Philo, Peter, and Paul. It has passed through many phases of evolution since the time of Paul and has become so thoroughly Occidentalized that many non-European peoples very naturally look upon Christianity as a strange revelation of a strange God and for strangers. [A Melchizedek, 1011:16 / 92:6.18]

I then stated that in preparation for this webinar, I circulated a variety of documents to the participants. One of the documents was an article that appeared in the November 7 issue of *The Washington Post* entitled, "Here's the weird thing about a post-Christian Christendom" by the journalist Megan McArdle. I circulated this article because it seemed quite relevant to this discussion about the cultural overtones of Christianity, those associated with the white races and Occidentalized and so on, that appear in the two quotations from Part III of *The Urantia Book* shown above. When one of the participants received this article from *The Washington Post* dated November 7, he thought it was extremely important and valid for our purposes, and he recommended that we read it aloud during the course of the webinar.

That participant then commented on why he thought the article was so relevant. He said he had wondered about the whole idea of Occidentalization that the Melchizedek brings up, and that the article gave him an idea of what this means.

"Here's the weird thing ..."

The full text of the article by Megan McArdle is the third attachment to this message. In brief, she introduced the acronym WEIRD, standing for "Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic."

Such persons, she said, constitute only about 12 percent of humanity, whereas virtually all research psychology studies only the countries in which they live. In the paper entitled “The Weirdest People in the World?” that three research psychologists of the University of British Columbia wrote in 2010, they commented: “members of WEIRD societies, including young children, are among the least representative populations one could find for generalizing about humans.” The author of the newspaper article then proceeded to remark:

WEIRDos are more individualistic and independent, less conformist and obedient, more likely to favor “impersonal prosociality” — the idea that one set of moral rules should govern how you treat everyone, from the most distant stranger to your nearest kin. This seems normal to them, but in a global context, WEIRD people really are *extremely* weird. And as modernity erodes the last vestiges of traditionalism, they are probably getting WEIRDer and weirder by the day.

This is, well, rather odd. How did we get so WEIRD? Christianity, says [Joe] Henrich (now at Harvard University), in a paper published Thursday in the journal *Science*, with co-authors Jonathan F. Schulz, Duman Bahrami-Rad and Jonathan P. Beauchamp. More specifically, *Western* Christianity; the number of years that one’s ancestors were exposed to the medieval Catholic Church correlates pretty nicely with things like social trust, creativity and willingness to do things like donate blood — and correlates negatively with traits such as nepotism.

The world abounds in spurious correlations, of course. But the authors of “The Church, intensive kinship, and global psychological variation” propose a very plausible mechanism: the Catholic Church’s extreme obsession with incest, which isn’t found in the Eastern Orthodox branch. The church kept banning marriages between more and more distant relations, up to sixth cousins, which smashed the tight kin-based networks common to agricultural cultures.

Over the centuries, Europe thus had to reinvent its society around the individual rather than the family. After which all sorts of possibilities arose that had not been available in a world where “family values” ruled every aspect of individual life. Ironically, one of those possibilities is not being religious at all, which is where WEIRD societies seem to be heading.

Participants read the entire text of the article during the webinar. I commented that in the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church seized authority over marriage and adopted many rules pertaining to it. This trend actually emerged after the year 1000. Among the rules that were enforced rather strictly were prohibitions on marrying someone who was a close relative. One of the paragraphs that appears above mentions up to sixth cousins, and I was not sure I could explain what a sixth cousin is; I have enough trouble with second cousins. To get to a sixth cousin would involve a genealogical network that would go back quite a few generations, and I was not sure I could evaluate that term.

One of the panelists commented that when he read the article the first time, he had thought about the issue of secular totalitarianism, a topic that participants previously discussed in connection with a webinar devoted to section 8 of Paper 195. He was not sure that there was a direct connection, but

the newspaper article makes clear that Europe had to reinvent its society around the individual. Management thought, he pointed out, has to deal with the individual, and the style of individual management had to focus on that during the 20th century. In the 1970s, however, U.S. companies discovered that manufacturers in Japan were implementing quality in ways that focusing solely on the individual could not achieve. The fact that the individual is not the key factor when it comes to ensuring the quality of goods and services was a concept that was very difficult for the Western world to be able to embrace.

I responded that I was treating the article as an illustration of the Occidentalization of the Western tradition of Christianity. Therefore I preferred to proceed rather briefly. On the one hand, the article seems to center on very specific practical traits of Western society — Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic — but much of what the author is saying also has to do with the relationship between the individual and the group.

The first question about the Melchizedek’s remarks

I had previously sent participants a set of four questions, the fourth attachment to this message. These questions pertain to the two excerpts that consist of remarks by a Melchizedek, as quoted at the top of page 6 of my essay and reproduced above. Here is the first question that I put before them:

1. Please analyze and comment on the Melchizedek’s statements that: (a) the teachings of Jesus “became Occidentalized”; and (b) since the time of Paul, Christianity “has become so thoroughly Occidentalized that many non-European peoples very naturally look upon Christianity as a strange revelation of a strange God and for strangers.”

One participant replied that in his view, becoming Occidentalized apparently means that the Christian religion has become well adapted to the mores (or morals) of the white races. The white races that settled Europe, he said, are Andites, a blend of Adamites and Nodites with some of the Sangik tribes. He then cited excerpts by an Archangel of Nebadon:

And to every nation to which [the Andites] journeyed, they contributed humor, art, adventure, music, and manufacture. They were skillful domesticators of animals and expert agriculturists. For the time being, at least, their presence usually improved the religious beliefs and moral practices of the older races. [An Archangel of Nebadon, 873:4, 78:5.8]

The Adamites were pacific; the Nodites were belligerent. The union of these stocks, as later mingled with the Sangik races, produced the able, aggressive Andites who made actual military conquests. [An Archangel of Nebadon, 892:6 / 80:4.3]

He surmised that from what they say about Occidentalization and the European influence — the European nature of Christianity — one cannot remove the characteristics of Christianity, as it

developed from the teachings of Jesus, from the race that adopted it. In other words, the white race has certain characteristics which show up in Christianity, characteristics that were not there in the religion that Jesus taught.

In subsequent discussion, the participant clarified this by stating that in the combination with the Sangik race in question (i.e., the blue man), the Andite percentage is less than 20 percent, somewhere in the teens. In essence, he said he was simply making the point that the characteristics of the white race are an issue with the way that Christianity has developed.

I said I agreed but would like to restate the point in a way that will not seem racist. We are not talking about the white race as such, we are talking about the social, economic, and political customs associated with the white peoples. This is the net content of the statement by the Melchizedek that Christianity “has become a religion well adapted to the social, economic, and political mores of the white races” [*a Melchizedek, 1084:10 / 98:7.11*]. So this is not a defect of the race as such, nor a characteristic of the individuals in the race. To the contrary, this is a characteristic of the group behavior of the people in these racial groups that distinguish the general group that Christianity appealed to from those in other groups such as the Semitic races, such as the Oriental races, such as the sub-Saharan African race. The point that the Melchizedek seems to be making is that there are certain social, economic, and political traits that have become infused into Christianity, as a consequence of the background of the people who largely adopted it as the religion prevailing in their particular locations.

Another participant commented that the teachings of Jesus became Occidentalized in the Occident. We have to remember that Christianity cannot be conflated with Occidental Christianity, westernized Christianity. At the time of the Council of Nicaea, most Christians did not live in the Occident. Many Christians lived in what was called the churches of the East, and in what is now Coptic and Ethiopian Christianity. In those cultures, we did not have Occidental Christianity, we had other forms of Christianity that had different ideas and values than those that were characteristic of Roman Catholic Christianity.

For instance, he said, the churches of the East were not founded on state recognition. Therefore the churches of the East did not have the same ecclesiastical conflicts as Roman Catholicism did.

In his view, it is not strange to say that the teachings were Occidentalized in the Occident; that has to do with many factors beyond religion itself and beyond the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. He said he just wanted to warn that the reality of Christianity cannot usefully be treated as if it consists solely of Western Christianity.

I responded that at the time of the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, most Christians spoke Greek; and the deliberations of the Council were conducted in Greek. The other participant commented that this was not the case of the Christians who were living east of the Euphrates or south of the Mediterranean Sea (in the Coptic and Ethiopian churches in Africa). He believed that right up to the 14th century, these believers constituted somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of the total Christian population on the planet.

I said I understood, and that the other participant's comments and analysis make it clear that the Papers in which the Melchizedek is commenting are written from the perspective of Western Christianity. I conceded that Ethiopian and Egyptian Coptic Christianity have different traits, and that those groups are part of the term Christian. Nonetheless, it seemed to me that the comments of the Melchizedek are basically attuned to Western Christianity.

Another panelist called attention to the important principle that a Divine Counselor identifies in 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]

He thought that as we consider origin and history, we should also do our best to foresee where all this is headed, destiny. In considering the attributes of Eastern thinking, he wished to call attention to a Melchizedek's remarks about the concept of Brahman:

In the concept of Brahman the minds of those days truly grasped at the idea of some all-pervading Absolute, for this postulate was at one and the same time identified as creative energy and cosmic reaction. Brahman was conceived to be beyond all definition, capable of being comprehended only by the successive negation of all finite qualities. It was definitely a belief in an absolute, even an infinite, being, but this concept was largely devoid of personality attributes and was therefore not experiential by individual religionists. [A Melchizedek, 1030:2 / 94:3.2]

I sought to contribute to his remarks about the Brahman theology or philosophy by saying that this strain of thought is largely associated with Hinduism. It does not necessarily apply to Buddhism, and it certainly does not apply to the Shinto tradition of Japan. On the other hand, it does have a relationship to the idea of a collective reality, and the concept of the collective is generally given greater prominence in Eastern culture than it is in the West. The idea of the individual versus the group seems to be an important part of the traits that the Melchizedek is commenting on.

A different participant declared that the larger question is the nature of revelation and how it interacts with evolutionary religion. In his view, there is no such thing as epochal revelation or personal revelation that does not interact with evolutionary religion. He also was convinced that there is no such thing as the pure teachings of Jesus, either in *The Urantia Book* or out of *The Urantia Book*. He commented that when he reads *The Urantia Book* now, he is very aware that the Forum was composed of White American Protestants, for he thought that the teachings of Jesus are so clearly Protestantized in *The Urantia Book* that he cannot escape the mental association. It is unrealistic to

think that we can ever have the pure teachings of Jesus as they were taught to Jewish people in the first century, for they would be almost meaningless to us. Instead we need a translation of the teachings of Jesus for our current, Occidental situation in the 20th or 21st century. That, in his view, is *The Urantia Book* is, and that is why we can appreciate it.

I said we have to bear in mind that the entire text of *The Urantia Book* is a translation. Nothing in *The Urantia Book* was originated by people who spoke English. The revelators who gave us Parts I through III were converting, as best they could, from one of the celestial languages, the language of Uversa or the language of Nebadon. The Midwayer Commission, in composing Part IV, was doing its best to portray teachings and ideas and events that transpired mostly in one of the three languages that Jesus spoke — which is to say, predominantly Aramaic, occasionally Hebrew for religious purposes, and sometimes Greek, because Greek was a very common language in the eastern Mediterranean that would be accessible to people who were not Jewish.

None of the words in Part IV of *The Urantia Book* were ever spoken in English, for the English language did not exist at the time. As a general matter, it is reasonable to say that the English language is about 500 years old in terms of its current usage, although it descends from a tradition of the preceding 800 years or so. Any wording in English, Middle English, Old English that is older than about the year 1500 is practically unreadable to us now. The English that we are speaking and reading is basically a creation of the last 500 years, and obviously the events narrated in Part IV of *The Urantia Book* took place essentially 2,000 years ago.

Now the point that I was trying to reach has to do with focusing on the teachings of Jesus in his two discourses on religion that are outlined in Paper 155, sections 5 and 6. That is the basic framework for my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” — what the revelators have told us was the essence of Jesus’ teaching about religion, as embodied in those two sections of Paper 155.

The second question about the Melchizedek’s remarks

2. In your view, what are the factors that led the Melchizedek to declare that Christianity “has become a religion well adapted to the social, economic, and political mores of the white races”? Please interpret this statement by analyzing each of the three dimensions that the Melchizedek identifies (*i.e.*, social, economic, and political).

One participant mentioned the characteristic Western emphasis on individualism, as opposed to other regions of the world that tend to emphasize to emphasize social complexities. Given this difference in emphasis, he was not sure how well *The Urantia Book* will go over in cultures that lack this strong emphasis on personal experience, meaning individual experience. The West, in his view, is the place on the planet where the concept of personality has its highest degree of development. Without the concept of the individual, there is no concept of personality.

I then called attention to a domain that might not have occur to occurred to the other participants, but that seems to be one of the differences: the domain of law. The newspaper article we considered

referred to impartial factors that are supposed to apply equally. The idea of the law in the West is that law should apply equally to everyone, and that provisions of law apply to officials holding power as well as to ordinary citizens. In contrast, the rulers of China, the Communist Party, proclaim that the Party is superior to law.

In effect, the idea of law in the ways that we conceive it really is Western. Another aspect of the question of law relates to specificity, the level of detail (*e.g.*, the precise details of canon law pertaining to marriage that the Roman Catholic Church enacted in the Middle Ages). Another factor is that the Western principle of law regarding contracts does not honor the principle of equity or fairness. To the contrary, the Western approach to contracts and agreements is based on the detailed wording of the written text. In some other cultural contexts, I pointed out, resolving disputes depends on personal relationships.

We then concluded the webinar, on the understanding that we will return to the second question during discussion on November 30.

Preview of our webinar on November 30

We will continue discussing the two passages by a Melchizedek shown at the top of page 6 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” — excerpts from Paper 92 and Paper 98 in which the Melchizedek calls attention to the fact that “[a]s the original teachings of Jesus penetrated the Occident, they became Occidentalized, and as they became Occidentalized, they began to lose their potentially universal appeal to all races and kinds of men” [*a Melchizedek, 1084:10 / 98:7.11*].

For this purpose, participants will answer questions 2 through 4 of the series of questions that I previously sent them (*i.e.*, the fourth attachment to this message). If time permits, participants will also consider and respond to formal question B, as presented at the bottom of page 6 of the essay:

B. In section 2 of Paper 99, a Melchizedek declares: “Only the real religion of personal spiritual experience can function helpfully and creatively in the present crisis of civilization” [*a Melchizedek, 1087:4 / 99:2.1*]. As we endeavor to embody, encourage, and advocate the religion of personal spiritual experience and simultaneously seek to stimulate active interest in the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, how should we avoid or at least diminish the possible impression that our efforts are actually intended to promote the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity? Would it be wise for committed readers of *The Urantia Book* to make emphatic statements disavowing these motives, and then repeat such assurances every so often? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of doing that?

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, November 30:

- 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
[November 30, 2019 at 2:35 am]