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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; 2019-11-07_questions_LRRJ-page06.pdf; 2019-11-02_excerpt-RR-112-113_Old-Testament.pdf

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

On Saturday, November 30, we conducted our twenty-fifth 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 page 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, December 7.**

Christianity’s close links with Western society and culture

As the webinar on November 30 began, we returned to the two paragraphs at the top of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” consisting of excerpts from Paper 92 and Paper 98 in which a Melchizedek offers candid remarks about Christianity’s close links with Western society and culture:

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]

Well before the webinar, I sent to the participants a one-page document containing four questions that relate to the two excerpts shown above (i.e., the third attachment to this message). The first of these questions read as follows:

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.”

Since participants had discussed this during the preceding webinar (November 23), we moved immediately to the second question:

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 preferred to back up to a more global sense of the situation, the fact that Christianity became pervaded by the institutions around it, although not right away. Once this happened, the religion made political alliances. By becoming affiliated with the Roman empire, it was influenced by Roman institutions. In addition, Christian observance largely consisted of complying with a set of moral precepts. As a result of not focusing on the individual’s relationship with God and having intermediaries in the form of a priest class that was developing and expanding, believers did not have a decisive influence on the religion that they were observing. To the contrary, religion largely became a set of beliefs and practices, something that was dictated by the priest class.

I asked participants to comment on the sociology of belief in terms of how a believer relates to the principle of authority vested in the clergy in general, but especially in bishops. This, I said, differs from the practice of religion in other parts of the world. For example, in Buddhism there is no affiliation with a particular denomination or clergyman, and I believed that is likewise true in Hinduism.

A different participant responded that all social, economic, and political institutions originate in the mores and descend from traditional practices. He cited the following statements appearing in section 4 of Paper 68:

All modern social institutions arise from the evolution of the primitive customs of your savage ancestors; the conventions of today are the modified and expanded customs of yesterday. What habit is to the individual, custom is to the group [A Melchizedek, 767:1 / 68:4.1]

Traditional customs, he said, are those that have been proven to work, the moral rules of a culture that sustain and perpetuate it. In the West, the evolution of morality has been heavily influenced by the dominance of the Occidentalized version of Christianity. In relation to the Melchizekek's statement that Christianity has become well adapted to Western civilization, he believed that this may have been true in the 1930s. In contrast, however, he considered it apparent that the West has now entered a post-Christian period in which it is in the process of rejecting its traditional mores and religion, which many now see as socially unjust, economically inequitable, and politically tyrannical.

The panelist believed that the moral values of secular humanism have increasingly displaced the moral values of Christianity, as embodied in the 1933 manifesto of the American Humanist Association, whose motto was "Good without a God." Although its 14 goals for secular humanism were radically at odds with Western mores in the 1930s, none of them now seem particularly radical, and several of them have become part of civil law. The Midwayers, he said, warned us of this potential outcome:

Secularism did break the bonds of church control, and now in turn it threatens to establish a new and godless type of mastery over the hearts and minds of modern man. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2018:4 / 195:8.4*]

In contrast, the Midwayers counsel us:

Do not overlook the value of your spiritual heritage, the river of truth running down through the centuries, even to the barren times of a materialistic and secular age. In all your worthy efforts to rid yourselves of the superstitious creeds of past ages, make sure that you hold fast the eternal truth. But be patient! when the present superstition revolt is over, the truths of Jesus' gospel will persist gloriously to illuminate a new and better way. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2082:6 / 195:9.1*]

For two millennia, Christianity has consistently glorified the divine personality of Christ Jesus. In spirit, this is he whom we know and adore as Christ Michael, son of God and son of man. In the final Paper of *The Urantia Book*, the Midwayer Commission declares:

Paul's Christianity made sure of the adoration of the divine Christ, but it almost wholly lost sight of the struggling and valiant human Jesus of Galilee, who, by the valor of his personal religious faith and the heroism of his indwelling Adjuster, ascended from the lowly levels of humanity to become one with divinity, thus becoming the new and living way whereby all mortals may so ascend from humanity to divinity. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2092:2 / 196:2.4*]

To “follow Jesus” means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master’s life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2090:4 / 196:1.3*]

I told the participant that I was not clear in regard to his net conclusion about the norms and moral principles that have traditionally been associated with Christianity, as opposed to the current social and cultural emphasis that can correctly be described as secular. If we take this as a mixture of influences, I asked him to identify the path forward in trying to interest people in other cultures in the real religion of Jesus.

The participant replied that he was more inclined to emphasize the principle, “Physician, heal thyself.” Before we go out and heal other people, we need to heal ourselves. We are not part of other cultures; we are part of the West. So it seems a little premature to think that we can come up with some religion or religious doctrine that will universally appeal to all cultures when we are in fact part of the Western culture. He believed that in principle, the spirit of the two quotations he had just offered serve to suggest where the potential path lies: blending the adoration of the divine Christ with appropriate attention to the personal ascent that he achieved in his human identity as Jesus; and the fact that knowing about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it has the greatest value of all human knowledge.

A different participant commented on the spirit of early Christianity as it developed around the Mediterranean. He believed that what Paul was able to do, and what made him such an effective evangelist, was somehow to integrate the universalistic aspects of Christianity (the idea that everyone is equal in Christ) with the additional idea that no one should change what they were in order to become included in the body of Christ. Paul did not expect Gentiles to become Jews, or vice-versa. He believe that we may be able to apply similar methods now: respect the particularities of each culture that we try to address with the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and especially with the life of Jesus as it is portrayed there; respect the viewpoints of the cultures that we are addressing; and let it be a true dialogue. Even though *The Urantia Book* is intended for the whole planet, it will not be able to reach the whole planet unless we escape the process of Occidentalization that affected Christianity. If the fifth epochal revelation is going to escape that trap, then the people that we bring it to have to be thoroughly engaged in transforming the truths that we understand from our Western perspectives. In his view, this is not a matter of what we bring to them, it is what they bring to us as those truths become transformed by each and every cultural group that we interact with.

I asked whether there might be a parallel to the practices that I thought were described as a system of the government and people of the advanced continent on a neighboring planet, whereby they pull people from other places into their own culture, and then encourage them to go back to their initial home cultures to make adaptations and adjustments. The other participant thought that this approach is possible, but commented that there is not enough detail in that Paper of *The Urantia Book* in order to be able to appraise it.

COMMENT. The practice that I asked about is not actually in effect on the neighboring planet; it just amounts to a recommendation by the Melchizedek who wrote Paper 72 (“Government on a Neighboring Planet”). Here is the paragraph in which he explains the concept:

Just now this superior government is planning to establish ambassadorial relations with the inferior peoples, and for the first time a great religious leader has arisen who advocates the sending of missionaries to these surrounding nations. We fear they are about to make the mistake that so many others have made when they have endeavored to force a superior culture and religion upon other races. What a wonderful thing could be done on this world if this continental nation of advanced culture would only go out and bring to itself the best of the neighboring peoples and then, after educating them, send them back as emissaries of culture to their benighted brethren! [A Melchizedek, 819:6 / 72:12.2]

Another participant said he had looked up the idea of mores and had tried to get a view of how they fit in the three domains (social, economic, and political). Based on what he read in various places, he developed a kind of definition:

What are mores? They refer to social norms that are widely observed and are considered to have greater moral significance than others. Mores include an aversion to societal taboos such as incest, for example. The mores of a society usually predicate legislation reinforcing their taboos. Often countries will employ specialized vice squads or vice police to combat specific crimes offending against societal mores.

Morality, however, can be defined as a subset of the mores. The particular mores that are of high significance at any particular time in a society are formalized as a moral code, one that very often ends up in the political realm and becomes law.

He said he was still considering Occidentalization and Orientalization as two different patterns of thought in which all three aspects (social, economic, and political) play significant roles. If we were to take Hinduism as an example, could we say that Hinduism has passed through many phases of evolution and is so thoroughly Orientalized that many European peoples would very naturally look upon Hinduism as a strange revelation for strangers?

He believed that the many demigods in Hinduism seem to serve specific purposes in upholding the universe. In comparison, the many celestial beings described in Parts I, II, and III of *The Urantia Book* also have specific roles that pertain to the universe. Perhaps the concepts set forth in *The Urantia Book* can be considered a substrate that underlies and unifies human thinking in many human realms and cultures.

I asked for his reactions to a thesis that a participant had advanced two webinars ago, the concept that certain key ideas at the core of the revelation are relatively simple and need to be actively emphasized: the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In effect, that participant during the previous webinar said it would be reasonable for us to focus on those two points, and then refrain from adding elements that come from our own society and civilization. What did he think of that?

In reply, the participant called attention to important practices of Jesus while he was in Rome. He met with 35 religious leaders, some Cynics, some Mithraic leaders. Jesus never told them that what they were thinking was incorrect. Instead he provided them truth, and this truth eventually crowded out error. When Christian messengers reached Rome much later, their teachings took hold, even though the ideas were a modified version of what Jesus had said to the Cynics and Mithraic leaders.

COMMENT: This is the passage in Paper 132, "The Sojourn at Rome," to which the participant was referring:

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. Before the end of the first week in Rome Jesus had sought out, and had made the acquaintance of, the worth-while leaders of the Cynics, the Stoics, and the mystery cults, in particular the Mithraic group. Whether or not it was apparent to Jesus that the Jews were going to reject his mission, he most certainly foresaw that his messengers were presently coming to Rome to proclaim the kingdom of heaven; and he therefore set about, in the most amazing manner, to prepare the way for the better and more certain reception of their message. He selected five of the leading Stoics, eleven of the Cynics, and sixteen of the mystery-cult leaders and spent much of his spare time for almost six months in intimate association with these religious teachers. 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 Midwayer Commission, 1455:4 / 132:0.4*]

A different participant said he was not sure that any concept we have in *The Urantia Book* can be entirely free of Occidentalization, including the ideas of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In these regards, he was concerned about practical circumstances in many countries and cultures around the world where patriarchy and subjugation of women are very much in effect. He was not confident that broaching the idea of God in terms of fatherhood would be appealing and persuasive when this idea is confronted with the brutal realities of hierarchy that exist in many less developed societies around the world. On the other hand, he subsequently clarified this by saying that this was just an example of certain practical concerns. He did not mean to imply that we cannot

communicate on any subject with anyone other than persons in our own culture. To the contrary, his essential point was to emphasize the need for an authentic dialogue, not a one-way discussion.

The third question

I then asked participants to turn to the third question of the four that I had circulated in advance:

3. The second excerpt begins with the Melchizedek's statement that "The Christian religion is the religion about the life and teachings of Christ" How does this differ from a much more general remark that the Melchizedek most emphatically did not make, a statement whereby he would declare that the Christian religion IS the teachings of Christ? Do the key differences solely pertain to the word *about*, or do there appear to be other factors that are at least equally important?

One participant commented that any time a revelation — in this case, the revelation of Christ Michael — becomes acculturated, the net result is to lose things that were obviously included in the original teachings, and to add things that the original teachings did not contain. That, in his just view, is just a realistic analysis of what happens when revelation enters the evolutionary stream of religion. No one should be surprised about this, and no one should condemn Christianity for the fact that it happened in the early centuries of our current era.

He posed a rhetorical question: Is *The Urantia Book*, as it stands, the teachings of Christ? Well, we believe so, but we have to remember that the authors of *The Urantia Book* admit that Jesus' teachings were modified and translated, so that we would be able to understand what he said in first-century terms for a Jewish audience. We do not have the original teachings of Jesus either; we have a modification based on our cultural and religious needs in North America in the 20th or 21st century.

I asked him whether, in his view, the parts of *The Urantia Book* that pertain to Jesus amount to the interpretation of the Midwayer Commission and the other revelators of the teachings of Jesus, rather than the teachings themselves. In other words, did he believe that the revelators interpreted Jesus' teachings to the best of their own understanding, and then used the English language to express these interpretations?

The participant agreed in substance, but went a bit farther. He believed that the revelators targeted the text to a specific cultural and religious demographic, which in this case was the Forum in Chicago, so that the members of the Forum would be better able to deal with what they were being told. In his view, the teachings we have in Part IV of *The Urantia Book* were modified and targeted very substantially.

Another participant conceded that we will never know the exact words, the language and conceptual matrix in which Jesus presented his teachings. On the other hand, he believed that the spirit of the teachings presented to us in *The Urantia Book* faithfully portrays Jesus' true intent. Although he agreed in terms of the technical analysis that the other panelist presented, he nevertheless was convinced that the spirit and meaning of the teachings is faithfully portrayed in *The Urantia Book*. The

revelators tell us that Jesus declared more than once that his teachings were for his whole universe, that he had sheep who were not of this flock. Therefore the participant did not think it is accurate to assert that the teachings of Jesus presented 2,000 years ago are irrelevant to anyone else who was in some other location in the universe then or at any time since.

Yet another participant commented that most of us would come from the perspective that yes, there have been insertions and deletions in the Christian teachings, whether they have been Occidentalized, whether they have been attenuated. In his view, however, the true intent of the teachings has largely been thwarted by the fact that Christianity is predominantly a religion that is purveyed second hand, one that requires ecclesiastical authority in order for it to be passed along to its adherents. This approach misses the fact that if I have a personal relationship with God, I do not need an intermediary of any kind in order to live my religion. In his view, the main goal and value lie in the teaching of a loving God who loves all of his children, so that all God's children should, in faith, see his love as sufficient reason to consider all their fellows on the face of the earth to be brothers and sisters.

A different participant said he had been thinking about the gap between the true teachings of Jesus and the concepts that Christianity presents. One key factor is the atonement doctrine, which was definitely not part of the teachings of Jesus; and the Divine Counselor who wrote the first five Papers criticizes it most emphatically. In reply, I agreed that the atonement doctrine is a tremendous gap, a huge imposition on the teachings of Jesus that needs to be overcome.

The fourth question

4. Please identify and analyze those aspects of Christianity that can be traced to:
 - a. The theology of Judaism.
 - b. Certain Zoroastrian teachings.
 - c. Greek philosophy.
-

I explained that we would of course be obliged to consider the three factors one by one, starting with the theology of Judaism.

One participant declared that Judaism did not have a theology until it was exposed to Hellenistic influences in around the 3rd century BCE. Judaism was a practice, less a collection of beliefs than a collection of observances. Monotheism was obviously a primary aspect, but equally important was the idea that the Jewish people were in a covenant with one God. There was no such thing as a belief system that was separate from the practice of the Jewish religion. All these factors contributed to the writings of Paul and his evangelization efforts, and to the gospels.

In addition, he wished to emphasize that the Jewish religion was not an individual endeavor; it was a group endeavor. When one has a group endeavor, one needs organization, ecclesiology. You can call that organization an impediment and you can call it an intermediary, but it is also a means that permits a group to have access to the God that its members are worshipping together. Now

ecclesiology obviously has its shortcomings; we all know that from 2,000 years of Christianity; but you cannot have group religion without some form of ecclesiology. The authors of *The Urantia Book* use the word *ecclesiasticism*, but that is not the same thing. (The term ecclesiology comes from the idea of a congregation, which is what the word *ecclesia* meant in Greek.)

I asked about the principle of a covenant as an element of the Hebrew tradition. I noted that the revelators talk about the relationship between Abraham and Melchizedek, and perhaps Abraham's understanding that he had a special role and that his descendants would have a special role, in regard to the substantive teachings that Melchizedek was putting forward. On the other hand, I said I would like to turn the idea of covenant into the direction of chosen people and effectively ask for comment on that — but most emphatically on the concept of chosen people as it was imported into Christianity, whereby Christians became convinced that they were the elite of God, that God favored them, that the others in the world around them definitely had a secondary role and were inferior, were not favored.

The participant declared that when Paul basically founded Christianity, he had to deal with the idea of Jews as the chosen people. He transformed that idea into saying that not only are Jews the chosen people, everyone is the chosen people, and that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Unfortunately, people soon transformed Paul's idea into once again a concept of superiority. That, he believed, had much to do with cultural, political, military, and economic prerogatives, as much as the idea that Christianity in some way restricted which human beings are closely related to God. He said he agreed that the chosen people concept does have negative aspects in Christianity, but said that this was not the original approach that Paul sought to promote.

I asked for comments on the concept of morality and a strict moral code as a legacy of Judaism that had an important role, but also some disadvantages. In effect, this tended to constrain the view of God strictly to a moral level.

One participant called attention to the following quotations from Paper 5 and Paper 121.

The Christian concept of God is an attempt to combine three separate teachings:

1. *The Hebrew concept* — God as a vindicator of moral values, a righteous God.
2. *The Greek concept* — God as a unifier, a God of wisdom.
3. *Jesus' concept* — God as a living friend, a loving Father, the divine presence.

It must therefore be evident that composite Christian theology encounters great difficulty in attaining consistency. [A Divine Counselor, 67:8-10, 68:1-2 / 5:4.10-14]

Paul's cult of Christianity exhibited its morality as a Jewish birthmark. The Jews viewed history as the providence of God — Yahweh at work. The Greeks brought to the new teaching clearer concepts of

the eternal life. Paul's doctrines were influenced in theology and philosophy not only by Jesus' teachings but also by Plato and Philo. In ethics he was inspired not only by Christ but also by the Stoics. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1340:5 / 121:7.7*]

The participant believed that the intense focus on righteousness, moral behavior, has tended to obscure the other spiritual attributes of the personality of God, such as truth, beauty, and love.

I then invited participants to take turns reading the following four paragraphs from section 7 of Paper 2. The Divine Counselor starts with the phrase "The great mistake of the Hebrew religion" and, in effect, portrays the almost single-minded focus on goodness as a shortcoming because it did not include adequate and appropriate attention to truth and beauty as the other two elements, nor indeed to God's love.

The great mistake of the Hebrew religion was its failure to associate the goodness of God with the factual truths of science and the appealing beauty of art. As civilization progressed, and since religion continued to pursue the same unwise course of overemphasizing the goodness of God to the relative exclusion of truth and neglect of beauty, there developed an increasing tendency for certain types of men to turn away from the abstract and dissociated concept of isolated goodness. The overstressed and isolated morality of modern religion, which fails to hold the devotion and loyalty of many twentieth-century men, would rehabilitate itself if, in addition to its moral mandates, it would give equal consideration to the truths of science, philosophy, and spiritual experience, and to the beauties of the physical creation, the charm of intellectual art, and the grandeur of genuine character achievement.

The religious challenge of this age is to those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual insight who will dare to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness. Such a new and righteous vision of morality will attract all that is good in the mind of man and challenge that which is best in the human soul. Truth, beauty, and goodness are divine realities, and as man ascends the scale of spiritual living, these supreme qualities of the Eternal become increasingly co-ordinated and unified in God, who is love.

All truth — material, philosophic, or spiritual — is both beautiful and good. All real beauty — material art or spiritual symmetry — is both true and good. All genuine goodness — whether personal morality, social equity, or divine ministry — is equally true and beautiful. Health, sanity, and happiness are integrations of truth, beauty, and goodness as they are blended in human experience. Such levels of efficient living come about through the unification of energy systems, idea systems, and spirit systems.

Truth is coherent, beauty attractive, goodness stabilizing. And when these values of that which is real are co-ordinated in personality experience, the result is a high order of love conditioned by wisdom and qualified by loyalty. The real purpose of all universe education is to effect the better co-

ordination of the isolated child of the worlds with the larger realities of his expanding experience. Reality is finite on the human level, infinite and eternal on the higher and divine levels. [A Divine Counselor, 43:2-5 / 2:7.9-12]

To me, I said, this is one of the crucial elements in explaining the difference between the fifth epochal revelation and the traditional focus on morality that has become a characteristic of Christianity. I clarified that remark by stating that I consider morality to be a very important element of spiritual adaptation. The point is not to disregard morality, but to supplement it. We are not disassociating religion from the idea of goodness, but we would like to associate truth and beauty *also*. That includes, of course, science and art and other disciplines.

I then asked participants to evaluate one particular point that emerges from the first sentence in the second paragraph: the implicit contrast and perhaps the paradox of having the Divine Counselor talk about a *religious* challenge, as expressed in developing a *philosophy of living*. It is interesting, I said, that a religious challenge is described as the development of a philosophy. What is the relationship between the word *religious* and philosophy?

One participant replied that philosophy is in the center of all these concepts, synthesizing them in ways that include religion. Philosophy has to incorporate all three concepts that are being portrayed — truth, beauty, and goodness.

Another participant declared that all of us, after having read Paper 160, “Rodan of Alexandria,” would agree that philosophy is important, actually essential. We have to have an art of living. The reason that this is a religious challenge is that one really needs this art if one truly wishes to grow, in the sense that the authors of *The Urantia Book* are urging us to grow: really to find God in this life and to have contact with him. Further, mastering the psychic circles has something to do with achieving successful results in life, whatever that may be for any specific individual.

As an additional insight into the Divine Counselor’s emphasis on the need for a philosophy of living, I read the following paragraph from section 7 of Paper 132. It takes place during Jesus’ sojourn in Rome and consists of remarks that Jesus addressed to Gonod, the father of the young man Ganid with whom Jesus was in daily contact.

“You see, Gonod, Buddha knew God in spirit but failed clearly to discover him in mind; the Jews discovered God in mind but largely failed to know him in spirit. Today, the Buddhists flounder about in a philosophy without God, while my people are piteously enslaved to the fear of a God without a saving philosophy of life and liberty. You have a philosophy without a God; the Jews have a God but are largely without a philosophy of living as related thereto. Buddha, failing to envision God as a spirit and as a Father, failed to provide in his teaching the moral energy and the spiritual driving power which a religion must possess if it is to change a race and exalt a nation.” [The Midwayer Commission, 1467:1 / 132:7.5]

I commented that if we look at the Jewish tradition as coming into Christianity as a heritage, this gap in regard to a philosophy of living was a gap in Christianity too.

One participant replied that we should bear in mind that Christianity was influenced not only by Judaism, but also by Hellenism, which very much had not only philosophy in general, but also philosophies of living. He cited stoicism as a classic example, but also mentioned Epicureanism and Cynicism. Christianity inherited these traditions as well, but we can certainly discuss whether they acquired a rightful place as elements of the religion. Further, he called attention to the fact that in the first paragraph of the long excerpt, the Divine Counselor speaks of [“the relative exclusion of truth and neglect of beauty.”](#) In his view, the word *relative* is important. After all, we should remember that Christianity has produced a great deal of art and music.

I asked another participant about the fact that in the first paragraph of the long excerpt, the Divine Counselor expressed regret, in part, at the [“failure to associate the goodness of God with the factual truths of science and the appealing beauty of art.”](#) After commenting that we are emerging from perhaps a period of 100 years of apparent confrontation between organized religion and some elements of science, I wondered whether the other participant could comment on the ability that we have as students of this revelation to overcome that apparent gap or conflict.

The other participant replied that these aspects had been a concern of his for some time, primarily because of the close relationship between religion and science. After all, both of them pursue truth, but we have been told ever since the Enlightenment that there is no way to reconcile them. He believed that this idea has now become a traditional convention in Western civilization, one that has prevailed in our era almost without question.

He said that when he first encountered *The Urantia Book*, he was struck at how much scientific thought it contains. After he began examining the cosmology, he found real, substantial evidence that the cosmological model of a revolving universe is accurate — more accurate and a better scientific theory than the current hypothesis of a big bang. As far as he was concerned individually, he believed he has the proof he needs as a matter of his own personal experience, that the high-level scientific thought in *The Urantia Book* is superior to the level of scientific thought that is generally accepted on this planet.

I stated that even though we had reached the end of the time available for our webinar on November 30, we had not finished discussing question 4a, aspects of Christianity that descend from the theology of Judaism, and would return to that topic on December 7. In particular, I called attention to quotations presented on pages 112 and 113 of *Revelation Revealed* describing defects in the Old Testament that amount to [“a fiction of sacred history”](#) that has been [“disastrously exploited by both Jewish and Christian writers”](#) [*a Melchizedek, 1071:3-4 / 97:8.5-6*]. (For the details, see the fourth attachment to this message.)

[Preview of our webinar on December 7](#)

After participants have discussed all three parts of question 4, they will comment on the analytical paragraph appearing in the middle of page 6 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.” Thereafter, they will consider and respond to formal question B, as presented at the bottom of page 6:

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, December 7:

- 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
[December 7, 2019 at 2:38 am]