

**From:** nealwaldrop@earthlink.net  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 15, 2019 10:00 PM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on October 19  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.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,

I am very pleased to announce that on Saturday, October 19, we will resume our webinar series 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.”

When phase 4 ended on August 31, panelists were examining ideas expressed on page 2 of my new essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” (the second attachment). Participants will resume where we left off, so as to examine, analyze, and comment on the following paragraph:

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As we cooperate with and seek to inspire numerous other human beings, we are also seeking to enhance and cooperate with God’s presence within them, as well as his plans for their destiny and the destiny of our tumultuous and troubled planet Urantia. None of these aspirations and efforts can conceivably be constrained or circumscribed by the doctrines or theological theories that swirl around God’s children on Urantia as a consequence of the congealed authority that various exponents of religious tradition propound and proclaim. To the contrary, as the Midwayer Commission tells us, “[the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation and ever beckons \[us\] on toward higher and holier achievements in spiritual ideals and eternal realities](#)” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1731:2 / 155:6.4*].

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Immediately thereafter, each panelist will respond to the following formal question:

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**A.** We all accept the goal of finding God for ourselves. How shall we do this? Do you believe that there are many possible approaches and, if so, what factors lead you to this conclusion? What steps do you recommend, at least as possible contributions to a personal progression that may be stimulating and inspiring?

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During the time remaining, panelists will begin reading and discussing the next section of the essay, which is entitled, “The religion of personal spiritual experience.” In part, participants will analyze and comment on the following incisive remarks of Jesus, as enshrined in section 6 of Paper 155:

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Every race of mankind has its own mental outlook upon human existence; therefore must the religion of the mind ever run true to these various racial viewpoints. Never can the religions of authority come to unification. Human unity and mortal brotherhood can be achieved only by and through the superendowment of the religion of the spirit. *[The Midwayer Commission, 1732:1 / 155:6.8]*  
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## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, October 19:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.
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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  
[October 15, 2019 at 10:00 pm]

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

On Saturday, October 19, we conducted our twenty-second 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 2 and 3 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.

Please note that our next webinar in this series will occur on **Saturday, November 2.**

## Finding God for oneself

The first segment of my essay is subtitled, “Finding God for oneself,” thereby paraphrasing key ideas included in Jesus’ second discourse on religion: “I have called you out of the darkness of authority and the lethargy of tradition into the transcendent light of the realization of the possibility of making for yourselves the greatest discovery possible for the human soul to make — 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*]. During the immediately preceding webinar (August 31), we discussed and analyzed the first page of the essay and the first paragraph on page 2. Therefore panelists began our discussion on October 19 by commenting on the second paragraph:

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As we cooperate with and seek to inspire numerous other human beings, we are also seeking to enhance and cooperate with God’s presence within them, as well as his plans for their destiny and the destiny of our tumultuous and troubled planet Urantia. None of these aspirations and efforts can conceivably be constrained or circumscribed by the doctrines or theological theories that swirl around God’s children on Urantia as a consequence of the congealed authority that various exponents of religious tradition propound and proclaim. To the contrary, as the *Midwayer Commission* tells us, “the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation and ever beckons [us] on toward higher and holier achievements in spiritual ideals and eternal realities” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1731:2 / 155:6.4*].  
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One participant commented that the paragraph refers to the contrast between what any organized religion could require of its members, versus what any human being in partnership with the God that

indwells him or her could have as a plan for the outworking and unfolding of life here on earth. It also points out how any conceivable human conception of what an individual can do pales by comparison to whatever the God that indwells us may be carrying out as a plan for each of us personally and individually. It is remarkable, he said, that God works with each of us and has a plan that begins here quite humbly, with a view that our life on Urantia will lead to all kinds of possibilities for high service wherein we become more and more useful to our fellows on earth and also to our companions on the mansion worlds.

I asked about the relationship between the idea of progressive revelation inside us and our interactions with other human beings for God's purposes. Another participant answered that we must establish a relationship with God before we can react to his leadings. The more we recognize our connection with the Thought Adjuster, the more we are able to act on its leadings and, by implication, connect with the Thought Adjusters that indwell other human beings. Inner growth, struggle, and conflict leads you to recognize that other people are seeking to pursue God's purposes as best they understand them.

Another participant analyzed the paragraph by stating that the first sentence focuses on the relationship of the individual to the Thought Adjuster, whereas the second sentence comments that traditional religion cannot constrain the results. A different panelist, however, distinguished between human aspirations and efforts on the one hand, and divine efforts on the other. The latter, he said, cannot be constrained, whereas the former can be.

He then commented that one function of organized religion is to conserve moral values, so that organized religion also serves as a basis for progressive revelation. In his view, spiritual ideals and eternal realities can exist on this planet only in the context of human consciousness; eternal realities can exist here only in terms of our time- and space-limited human understanding.

I called attention to the opening phrases of the excerpt from Jesus' second discourse on religion that is cited in the second paragraph on page 2 of the essay: ["the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation" \[the Midwayer Commission, 1731:2 / 155:6.4\]](#). This experience, I said cannot be strictly limited to any written text or epochal phenomenon.

One panelist agreed, commenting that personal revelation happens only because the person has entered on a quest. For most people, in his view, autorevelation consists of impulses that are akin to a moral imperative. He believed that he would not have found *The Urantia Book* if he had not been very hungry for answers.

I pursued this question with another participant, asking whether progressive revelation amounts to an internal spiritual experience, not just words on paper, not just the text of *The Urantia Book*.

She replied that her whole journey amounted to internal spiritual experience; she was continually led to make certain spiritual decisions. In the end, she came to realize that God knows exactly how to get through to someone who is seeking him.

I then asked a different participant to consider three words contained in the short quotation (spirit, ideals, and realities), so as to interpret how they relate to each other. In his view, these three concepts can be associated with the series consisting of thing, meaning, and value. The Thought Adjuster works in the superconscious mind, seeking to spiritize or spiritualize thoughts and ideas that are of cosmic value, of value to the cosmos, incorporating these values into our soul. An ideal, in his view, is an idea that has been promoted to the point where one can act on it, whereas a reality is something that is eternal.

## Formal question A

I then asked participants to respond to formal question A on page 2 of the essay:

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**A.** We all accept the goal of finding God for ourselves. How shall we do this? Do you believe that there are many possible approaches and, if so, what factors lead you to this conclusion? What steps do you recommend, at least as possible contributions to a personal progression that may be stimulating and inspiring?  
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One panelist said he disagreed with the wording of the first sentence. In his view, it would be much more resonant to say that we all accept the goal of finding God in ourselves for others, with the implication that we find God as much as we serve others. There are of course many approaches and different ways to do this. A personal pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness in one's life can generate inspiration, love of God, and love of other people, partly in order to create the motivation for serving them.

I explained that in my wording "for ourselves," I did not intend the idea that we find God solely for our own purposes. The phrase "for ourselves" essentially conveys the idea that this is an effort that we undertake by ourselves, mainly individually although also in groups, and not solely to benefit ourselves.

A different participant commented that in terms of sequence, one has to find God before one can enhance the process by helping others find God. He cited remarks that Jesus made before launching his public life, while he remained a private person and was traveling around the Mediterranean with Gonod and Ganid. During the week that the three of them spent in Syracuse in southeastern Sicily, the notable event of that stop was the rehabilitation of Ezra, the Jew who kept the tavern where they were staying. In part, Jesus told Ezra:

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"If you truly want to find God, that desire is in itself evidence that you have already found him. Your trouble is not that you cannot find God, for the Father has already found you; your trouble is simply that you do not know God." [*The Midway Commission, 1440:2 / 130:8.2*]  
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In addition, he called attention to the following paragraph from Jesus' second discourse on religion:

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You are my apostles, and to you religion shall not become a theologic shelter to which you may flee in fear of facing the rugged realities of spiritual progress and idealistic adventure; but rather shall your religion become the fact of real experience which testifies that God has found you, idealized, ennobled, and spiritualized you, and that you have enlisted in the eternal adventure of finding the God who has thus found and sonshipped you. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1733:6 / 155:6.18*]  
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Another participant commented on the value of meditation, focusing your mind on one point and seeking to pay attention to the harmony within; the gravity force of the spirit is doing the work. On one particular occasion, she had said to herself silently: “Dear God, tell me about yourself; I want to know you.” That, in this case, led to a very strong impression of harmony and energy that refreshed her. When I asked her whether she would describe these practices as “prayer” or as “meditation,” she definitely affirmed the latter.

Yet another participant said that his primary recommendation is to start to look for God if you have not already done so. For us the question may be whether we are still looking and how we are doing that, while perhaps inquiring what God’s will is for my life going forward. For many people, he said, it is helpful to find and join an institution that is active and available — on the understanding that the great majority of human beings in our generation will not find *The Urantia Book*, but that each individual with a normal mind benefits from the ministry of a Thought Adjuster.

I then stated a general conclusion that had emerged from many comments: The active process of a searching for God is a step that will lead to finding him. A human being will not find God unless he or she is looking or searching.

A different participant commented on the transition whereby a child makes his or her first moral choice, thereby implying that the moral discernment of the child had been operating for quite some time. The human mind can discover, recognize, and choose: moral choices, ethical choices, religious choices. He called attention to the following passage from section 3 of Paper 196:

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The human mind does not create real values; human experience does not yield universe insight. Concerning insight, the recognition of moral values and the discernment of spiritual meanings, all that the human mind can do is to discover, recognize, interpret, and *choose*.  
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The moral values of the universe become intellectual possessions by the exercise of the three basic judgments, or choices, of the mortal mind:

1. Self-judgment — moral choice.
2. Social-judgment — ethical choice.

### 3. God-judgment — religious choice.

[*The Midway Commission, 2094:9-13 / 196:3.10-14*]

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Another participant advanced a framework for understanding personal progression toward spiritual values: (1) belief; (2) faithfulness; and (3) loyalty. In his view, faithfulness includes faith and belief, but is more experiential, involving the ability to embody belief in one's life. For him, the idea of loyalty conveys the consistent practice of faithfulness. For example, the revelators sometimes apply the adjective "cosmic," so that the phrase "cosmic loyalty" can be understood as loyalty to God's plan.

Yet another participant remarked that we tend to analyze these matters by reasoning in linear ways, but other possibilities may be productive too. Being sincerely open to truth, he thought, can be a path to God. He cited C. S. Lewis as an example, a person who had been an atheist but who progressed because he was open to truth.

In addition, he called attention to the work of Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974), whose writings and theories the revelators may have drawn on in passages that relate to the superconscious mind. This panelist believed that the superconscious mind is the vehicle for a great deal that is happening inside a human being that is above his or her level of awareness.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Wikipedia article on Assagioli identifies two major works of his: *Psychosynthesis* (1965) and *The Act of Will* (1973). Here is a description of the concept psychosynthesis that I found on a different website:

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**Psychosynthesis** is a therapeutic approach that focuses on personal growth and development. Practitioners of psychosynthesis believe individuals tend to synthesize various aspects of the self to become more evolved and self-actualized. This method of therapy can be viewed as a transpersonal approach because it integrates many aspects of the human experience, including spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical aspects.

[SOURCE: <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/psychosynthesis>, accessed on October 25, 2019]

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### **The religion of personal spiritual experience**

I asked participants to begin examining the second section of my essay and, in particular, the first paragraph of it:

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**The religion of personal spiritual experience.** It is abundantly obvious that the real religion of Jesus transcends the level of matter, even though matter is a crucial and necessary component of the trio

of finite realities that provide a framework for personal experience on our planet Urantia (i.e., matter, mind, and spirit). On the other hand, we cannot be equally categorical in appraising the degree to which the real religion of Jesus transcends the level of mind, even though the phrase “personal spiritual experience,” if read strictly and literally, demonstrates that it does. The paradox that we cannot evade is that although spirit is not mind and most certainly transcends it, mind is nonetheless the channel for the expression of spirit in human experience.

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Before inviting comments by the other participants, I explained my intent and aims by giving the following personal introduction:

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I would like to go a little bit into the logic of this paragraph before I yield to the rest of you in commenting on it. It has long seemed to me that mind, the middle element in the group of three, matter, mind, and spirit, has not received enough attention in the tradition, nor indeed in the various faiths that we can broadly understand as Christianity.

The conflict beginning with Darwin about evolution was, on the one hand, aimed at matter and, on the other hand, aimed at spirit, wherein the advocates of traditional religion attacked Darwin’s theories that were based on matter as a violation of spirit; but neither side of that argument paid attention to the intermediate role of mind and why understanding how mind operates really illuminates the whole argument that they were having. They did not see that; and indeed, in effect, I’ve now explained why, at a later stage of my long document *Revelation Revealed*, we have an entire topic, topic 11, devoted to mind.

But let us talk about this in terms of the question of transcending: the fact that spirit transcends mind, but mind is still the channel for expressing spirit in human experience. Now the quotation that we will read subsequently gives greater depth than this, but I would like to call for comments about my own personal thesis — namely that the realm of mind and the role of mind have not been adequately understood, even among readers of *The Urantia Book*.

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One participant remarked that in *The Urantia Book*, we learn that the mind is the arena of choice. Even though we learn about the seven adjutant mind-spirits, the Holy Spirit, the Thought Adjuster, and the cosmic mind, we do not know how they all interact and have not adequately studied these questions. Part of what we need to do with mind is to become consciously aware that we are much more than we think we are; these additional factors are not known to us, but they are well known to God. Another approach is really to get to know the adjutant mind-spirits and how unifying their function enables a human being to reach the third circle. In his view, a great deal of all this has to do with balance and with ratcheting up all those aspects of mind that we do not necessarily associate with our identities, our sense of who we are.

In turning toward another panelist, I asked him to comment on the role of mind in the Christian tradition, commenting that this role has been very substantial. I noted that we have talked about the

limitations of doctrine, teachings, and uniformity. Having said all that, however, it is true that the Christian tradition for approximately 2,000 years has fostered inquiry, analysis, thinking, and philosophy — admittedly in a narrow field, directed toward religious inquiry and observance. But nevertheless this fostering of thinking really deserves to be understood as a function of mind, although mind itself was never identified as a channel and a component. Instead, mind was effectively a tool that philosophers and theologians used while they were pursuing religious doctrine.

The panelist responded by noting that in Jewish tradition there is a being known as Wisdom who was one of the main attributes, the divine attributes of God. In the Hellenistic tradition, he said, it was also known as Sophia, as Wisdom or the mind of God. Christ was also called the Logos (Logos meaning communication or law or idea), and Christ was understood to be the mind of God for human beings. This meant that Jesus represented the nature of God on earth.

I then asked another participant to talk about the relationship of mind as an embodiment of all phases of human consciousness, as the second element of the trio matter, mind, and spirit. Part of the problem of understanding the nature of mind in connection with the teachings of *The Urantia Book* relates to the dictionary tradition of regarding mind as simply being abstract logic and ideas, whereas the revelators give a much broader definition of mind.

The other panelist replied that reading *The Urantia Book* had convinced him that the mind is not the brain, whereas contemporary materialistic scientists have not reached that conclusion. On the other hand, certain iconoclastic scientists, notably Rupert Sheldrake, seem to have intuited the operation of the adjutant mind-spirits in fostering the forms of material life that are suited to the environment in question. In general, however, he agreed that mind has gotten short shrift in science on our planet.

At my request, the same participant read the excerpt from Paper 103 that begins at the bottom of page 2 of the essay:

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Always must man's inner spirit depend for its expression and self-realization upon the mechanism and technique of the mind. Likewise must man's outer experience of material reality be predicated on the mind consciousness of the experiencing personality. Therefore are the spiritual and the material, the inner and the outer, human experiences always correlated with the mind function and conditioned, as to their conscious realization, by the mind activity. **Man experiences matter in his mind; he experiences spiritual reality in the soul but becomes conscious of this experience in his mind.** The intellect is the harmonizer and the ever-present conditioner and qualifier of the sum total of mortal experience. Both energy-things and spirit values are colored by their interpretation through the mind media of consciousness. [A Melchizedek, 1136:1 / 103:6.6 — *emphasis added: the sentence in bold type*]  
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I introduced the discussion by offering my own view that the Melchizedek's statement "**Man experiences matter in his mind**" overcomes, by itself, the entirely materialistic approach that human beings are still struggling with. In other words, there is a definite, necessary link between matter and

man’s perception of it that occurs in the mind. Since man cannot experience matter materially, man has to experience matter mindally.

One participant responded that this makes sense to him and, he assumed, to all of us. The question is whether this needs to be proven, or will have to be taken as an *a priori* assumption about life. He said he had puzzled about the fact that science is positing the mind as consisting solely of the brain and its mechanical function; this is a difficult challenge. He wondered whether treating mind as a reality that stands alone, a reality that is distinct from a material foundation in the brain, is something that will need to be believed, or something that can be demonstrated.

I explained that my interest in these questions relates to overcoming the supposed collision between matter and spirit, or perhaps I should say the collision between matter and the proponents of a religious view of spirit. If we understand mind to be an independent reality between matter and spirit, that overcomes a great deal of the collision because mind is the channel for both of the others. By implication, I said, that is what the Melchizedek states in this paragraph.

Just as we concluded the webinar, a participant mentioned the author Thomas Nagel (b. 1937) as the author of a book in which he disputes the purely materialistic view of thought and thinking. Here is a brief excerpt from the Wikipedia article about Nagel:

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“... *Mind and Cosmos* (2012), in which he argues against the neo-Darwinian view of the emergence of consciousness.”

[SOURCE: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Nagel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Nagel), accessed on October 26, 2019].  
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## Preview of our webinar on November 2

During our webinar on Saturday, November 2, we will return to the quotation from Paper 103 that I reproduced above, in order to discuss aspects that panelists did not have the opportunity to analyze on October 19.

After that we will reflect on the fact that “the true challenge of the religion of personal spiritual experience is to find appropriate methods that will enable us to overcome and transcend the tendencies of inherited culture, the conventions of society, and even the diverse characteristics of language itself, so that we can enhance our receptivity to and respect for true spiritual experience — the realm of human life that can inspire and unify all of God’s children, all human beings who share our planet Urantia” (as stated on page 3 of the essay).

## PRACTICAL FACTORS

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Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor  
[October 26, 2019 at 11:10 pm]

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Please note that our next webinar in this series will occur on **Saturday, November 23**.

## Mind as a channel and realm of reality

We began our webinar on November 2 by returning to the excerpt from section 6 of Paper 103 in which a Melchizedek explains the crucial roles of mind, a paragraph reproduced on pages 2 and 3 of “Living the Real Religion of Jesus”:

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Always must man’s inner spirit depend for its expression and self-realization upon the mechanism and technique of the mind. Likewise must man’s outer experience of material reality be predicated on the mind consciousness of the experiencing personality. Therefore are the spiritual and the material, the inner and the outer, human experiences always correlated with the mind function and conditioned, as to their conscious realization, by the mind activity. **Man experiences matter in his mind; he experiences spiritual reality in the soul but becomes conscious of this experience in his mind.** The intellect is the harmonizer and the ever-present conditioner and qualifier of the sum total of mortal experience. Both energy-things and spirit values are colored by their interpretation through the mind media of consciousness. [A Melchizedek, 1136:1 / 103:6.6 — emphasis added: the sentence in bold type]  
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I commented that the first two sentences create the impression that mind is a channel for all human experience, then asked why the principle of mind is so little appreciated in the world at large. One participant replied that, as we previously discussed, all scientists except for an iconoclastic few believe that the mind is simply the brain. Dr. Rupert Sheldrake, a prominent exception, has advanced theories that implicitly draw on Eastern concepts related to an energy absolute and the idea of the akashic records, but almost all his scientific colleagues dispute these views and reject them.

This conventional view, I said, amounts to asserting that matter extends throughout reality and dominates all reality. From the opposite perspective, traditional religionists maintain that their field, effectively spirit, dominates all of reality and that spirit has nothing to do with mind or matter. Why do they proclaim this?

Another panelist responded that traditional religionists take this view because spirit is their field, their business. They pretend that spirit is above matter and completely unrelated, whereas we know that mind is connected with spirit and with matter, as the Melchizedek tells us.

I then commented that what we are looking at is the need for an approximate parity, matter, mind, and spirit. These three realms of finite reality are all related to each other, and mind is in the middle. The Melchizedek makes it clear that mind is the channel for our experience of matter and also the channel for our experience of spirit. In order to pursue the latter point, I asked a different participant about her spiritual experiences: Were her direct experiences with God actually experiences in her mind, mental perceptions that interpreted these spiritual leadings?

She said it was difficult for her to express how things work. The spiritual experience occurs in the soul, an inner knowing that does not involve an exercise of her human will, something that she had not thought of in the first place. The revelators tell us that even for the Thought Adjuster, she said, it takes more than our lifetime on earth really to connect with the material mind.

To me, I remarked, her answer made it clear that the circuitry of the mind that interprets these spiritual leadings is not the content, although the content that comes through the circuitry has to be affected by it — just as the flow of electricity along the path of a wire causes the attributes of the wire to affect the electricity that is transmitted. In comparison, we are told that a seraphim immediately knows how many hairs a human being has on his or her head, and that we would regard a seraphim as a mathematical prodigy: The author is describing the characteristics of the spirit mind that a seraphim possesses. We are also told that on the mansion worlds, our number of senses will be increased dramatically, and it is reasonable to interpret that as an expression of the morontia mind. If we return to our circumstances on Urantia, however, it is obvious that both the human advocates of matter and the human advocates of spirit are ignoring the fact that the experience of matter and the experience of spirit traverse the human mind and are affected by the characteristics of the human mind.

A different participant commented that in some set of circumstances, the fact that he might advance an interpretation that would differ from mine serves to indicate that the content of mind suffices to color what an interpretation may be as the human mind seeks to coordinate and harmonize various values and experiences, whether they pertain to the inner or outer life. In more primitive civilizations, human beings have expected as a species that everyone should believe alike, even though the human condition and human experience impede and prevent that. To the contrary, human beings have a range of different ideas, and we should expect our ideas and our minds to diverge, even though we are implicitly engaged in a process of correlation and harmonization.

I then asked another participant to appraise a conclusion of my own: Thinking is influenced by language, for our thoughts are expressed in words and are colored by them. In effect, words and language itself are artifacts of mind.

The other participant agreed, stating that the more an experience is complex and intense, the more it is difficult to find words to explain it. There is a part of his inner experience, he said, that he would call the inner observer. This inner observer has remained the same, whether he was six years old or at his current age of 64.

In order to probe the relationship between new words and new ideas in expressing spiritual realities, I asked another participant whether she believes that as human beings develop, greater ability to express ideas through advanced language will help diminish the distance between spiritual experiences and the words that we are able to use to describe them. When she asked me to paraphrase this question, I commented that she is imprisoned by the English language and, to some degree, cannot go beyond what the English language is able to express. Did she think that as the English language improves, as more ideas are developed, succeeding generations will be able to do a bit better job in describing their spiritual experiences?

In reply, she remarked that in regard to many words that have been used for centuries, they do not exactly describe the same thing for each of us. The words are not necessarily compatible with the experiences. A man who told her about his near-death experience declared that there is no language when you are in that all-encompassing light that is full of love. Spiritual experiences expressed through your mind are not just an intellectual concept.

A different panelist commented that two words that people everywhere around the world are craving are very simple: the words *father* and *brotherhood*. These are not difficult concepts, but putting them into practice would change everything.

I reacted to that by stating that the word *father* depends on one's understanding of who a father is and what he does. In the old tradition, fathers were domineering and dictatorial, and perhaps very cruel. So in addition to making appropriate use of the word *father*, we have to improve and upgrade our concept of a father, and that includes our concept of the heavenly Father. After all, the central thesis of the Christian faith is that the Father was angry with all human beings and it took the death of his son on the cross in order to overcome that anger. So, I said, I submit to you that this concept of an angry Father is a terrible distortion, and that human beings must upgrade our own ideas of a father in order to benefit from the spiritual advantage that you have described.

I then addressed another participant, pointing out that computer specialists and experts in computer technology have a strange way of inventing new words and may even represent the cutting edge in terms of the technology of new words. Therefore I asked him whether he looked upon this ability to invent new terms and new words in the field of computer programming and computer dynamics as an example of the progression of mind and the growth of vocabulary to express new realities.

Without a doubt, he said. On the other hand, he agreed with previous remarks to the effect that words are not necessarily compatible with spiritual experiences. He called attention to the sentence in the excerpt from Paper 103 that I had highlighted: **“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*]. This, he said, establishes that mind is not just a channel connecting the conscious and superconscious levels; it also connects experience. He then cited the following paragraph from Paper 5:

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The mortal mind consents to worship; the immortal soul craves and initiates worship; the divine Adjuster presence conducts such worship in behalf of the mortal mind and the evolving immortal soul. True worship, in the last analysis, becomes an experience realized on four cosmic levels: the intellectual, the morontial, the spiritual, and the personal — the consciousness of mind, soul, and spirit, and their unification in personality. [*A Divine Counselor, 66:4 / 5:3.8*]  
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There is a great deal going on here, realities that we would need to correlate through philosophy.

I thanked him for these insights, but then returned to the theses that I had been pursuing about the interrelationships among matter, mind, and spirit. I wondered whether increased awareness of the operations of mind as a channel may help diminish the arbitrary convictions of advocates of spirit, and also the arbitrary convictions of advocates of matter, because this awareness would establish that what they are talking about is necessarily interpreted through mind, and that they are obliged to use mind in order to talk about the concepts that they are promoting.

One participant responded that education in these regards might resolve the kinds of differences in positional arguments and positional ideas that seem to be advanced as absolutes, so as almost to disallow the ability to call them into question. To him, it seemed that the antidote for all this will allow someone to rise above his or her own intellect and say, My intellect is relative, and no one’s body of knowledge is replete. We have to allow for the input of other minds, at least for consideration, insofar as we understand that a sincere human discourse is occurring. The current problem, in his view, is that much of human discourse is predominantly insincere, amounting to taking a position in order to persuade others to accept it, whether or not it happens to be true.

I focused on the implications about the uses of language for real communication, whereas the difficulty, as the other participant implied, is that sometimes communication is used as a device for exerting authority or domination over others, so that the words that one uses are tactically designed to achieve this kind of authority or domination. In addition to that fact that mind is the channel, we are obliged to use words. The methodology of using words can convey a spirit of openness and a spirit of sincerity, but it can also be used to manipulate. This is a deep problem that human beings have: Unfortunately, the urge to manipulate others for one’s own advantage is a rather deep trait that is part of human psychology; and human psychology, of course, is another way of saying the human mind. So in addition to having limitations that mind imposes on our ability to communicate, we have

character defects, character flaws, that have their echo in the human mind and that must likewise be overcome over a period of time in order to reach higher levels of spiritual expression.

### Relevant excerpts from the revelation

While I was preparing the summary you have just read, I assembled a series of excerpts that seem to enhance the ideas we were discussing, or cast additional light upon them. In the belief that you may enjoy reading these excerpts, here they are.

-----  
While in personal status angels are not so far removed from human beings, in certain functional performances seraphim far transcend them. They possess many powers far beyond human comprehension. For example: You have been told that the “very hairs of your head are numbered,” and it is true they are, but a seraphim does not spend her time counting them and keeping the number corrected up to date. Angels possess inherent and automatic (that is, automatic as far as you could perceive) powers of knowing such things; you would truly regard a seraphim as a mathematical prodigy. *[A Melchizedek, 419:3 / 38:2.3]*

Morontia mind functions differentially in response to the 570 levels of morontia life, disclosing increasing associative capacity with the cosmic mind on the higher levels of attainment. *[A Mighty Messenger, 481:2 / 42:10.5]*

The morontia senses are seventy, and the higher spiritual orders of reaction response vary in different types of beings from seventy to two hundred and ten. *[A Perfector of Wisdom, 154:5 / 14:2.3]*

But usually, when your Adjuster attempts to communicate with you, the message is lost in the material currents of the energy streams of human mind; only occasionally do you catch an echo, a faint and distant echo, of the divine voice. *[A Solitary Messenger, 1205:5 / 110:3.1]*

The Adjusters simply cannot, in a single lifetime, arbitrarily co-ordinate and synchronize two such unlike and diverse types of thinking as the human and the divine. When they do, as they sometimes have, such souls are translated directly to the mansion worlds without the necessity of passing through the experience of death. *[A Solitary Messenger, 1208:1 / 110:5.2]*

During mortal life the material body and mind separate you from your Adjuster and prevent free communication; subsequent to death, after the eternal fusion, you and the Adjuster are one — you are not distinguishable as separate beings — and thus there exists no need for communication as you would understand it. *[A Solitary Messenger, 1213:3 / 110:7.8]*

Mortal man, subject to Adjuster leading, is also amenable to seraphic guidance. The Adjuster is the essence of man’s eternal nature; the seraphim is the teacher of man’s evolving nature — in this life the mortal mind, in the next the morontia soul. On the mansion worlds you will be conscious and aware of seraphic instructors, but in the first life men are usually unaware of them. *[The Chief of Seraphim, 1245:2 / 113:4.2]*

6. *Effectiveness of language.* The spread of civilization must wait upon language. Live and growing languages insure the expansion of civilized thinking and planning. During the early ages important advances were made in language. Today, there is great need for further linguistic development to facilitate the expression of evolving thought. [An Archangel of Nebadon, 908:5 / 81:6.16]

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## The discussion continues

I asked a participant to read the next two paragraphs on page 3 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus”:

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At first glance this intrinsic entanglement of mind and spirit may seem to be a narrow philosophic point, one that has few implications for our current purposes, but such an impression is essentially an illusion and perhaps even a delusion. To be sure, our planet does not lack for traditional religionists who congratulate themselves that their spiritual impulses and practices are not only entirely independent of all other aspects of human life, but so intrinsically superior as to be exempt from rational analysis and objective comparison.

We may be tempted to smile at all that, but the wiser and more productive strategy is to reflect that the true challenge of the religion of personal spiritual experience is to find appropriate methods that will enable us to overcome and transcend the tendencies of inherited culture, the conventions of society, and even the diverse characteristics of language itself, so that we can enhance our receptivity to and respect for true spiritual experience — the realm of human life that can inspire and unify all of God’s children, all human beings who share our planet Urantia.

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I then asked for comment on certain aspects of the second sentence in the first of these two paragraphs: Why do so many traditional religionists take the view that their ideas, their perceptions, are superior and not subject to any interpretation or challenge?

One participant replied that this is what they were taught, and so they believe it. On the other hand, he said, this is an example of a delusion, because to advance in the psychic circles, one must advance on all three levels, matter, mind, and spirit. So if someone thinks that he or she is just spirit and nothing else, that is a trick of the mind itself. When I probed his views on this, he agreed that these statements of superiority are a device for exerting authority and perhaps domination over others. They are certainly a way to control other people.

I then indulged in a short commercial for our webinar. In effect, many of the recent remarks about mind have related to the traditional insistence on uniformity, whereas our focus is pluralism and diversity: There is not a single answer that is obligatory for everyone; rather there are a variety of views. Reality is diffuse; it is diverse; and it is perfectly acceptable for a variety of views to be expressed. We are pluralistic in our intention. And so if any of you watched our programs in the past, you found that we disagreed among each other. That is perfectly all right, perfectly acceptable. The

attitude of superiority that the other participant and I were just discussing implies that there must be a uniformity of views.

A different participant then stated that unity, not uniformity, is the watchword that more than one of the revelators have expressed. Uniformity certainly leads to an authoritative mode of providing passive religion to individuals, whereas the second paragraph of the excerpt from page 3 of my essay poses the challenge of the religion of personal spiritual experience. This is hard to define, and we may have to come up with new language — as the revelators were compelled to do.

Yet another participant commented that when she connects with someone whom she has met on the street or in some other casual context, the connection must occur on the soul level, on the feeling that the other person needed her help. None of that relates to superiority or inferiority at all. She hopes to be the channel for the spirit, the spirit using her via the harmony of communication and the harmony of language.

I then remarked that based on her comments during this and previous webinars, I inferred that in relation to the communication she carries out with someone who appears to have a spiritual need, the communication does not depend upon whether the person is Jewish, a Protestant Christian, a Roman Catholic Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, or a Buddhist. To the contrary, it depends on the inner spiritual state of the person, and she is not inhibited or impeded in this ability of hers to communicate with that person. When she confirmed that, I commented that even though I would not wish to hold her up as a model or an example, her experiences confirm the point that it is possible to raise one's own view to a spiritual level that is not limited by particular doctrines or dogmas or ceremonies or traditions, and that none of this prevents her from communicating with someone whose background may be very different. In reply, she stated: "You have to love people. I have learned not to find what's wrong with them, not to be critical, but to find the good in them."

A different panelist remarked that much of what Jesus had portrayed to him in his teachings is that social integration and spiritual development are inseparable. The panelist who spoke immediately before, in his view, exemplified spirituality as she walked by.

Yet another panelist recounted a story involving two Jehovah's Witnesses who came to his front door. He asked them whether they considered themselves to be sons of the Father, servants, or slaves. They replied that they were sons, and the panelist then pointed out that God is their Father and his Father too. This approach served to upgrade the discussion to the spiritual level, no longer confined to mindal or material matters.

I commended the panelist for that experience, commenting that he had drawn on common, shared values. This was an excellent technique of overcoming conventional, inherited doctrines and creeds. What none of us is entitled to do, I said, is to impose our views on others and ask them to obey. This is the flaw in the tradition that humanity must set aside.

A different participant proceeded to read the first paragraph of the next excerpt appearing on page 3 of my essay, remarks of Jesus that come from his second discourse on religion (section 6 of Paper 155):

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Every race of mankind has its own mental outlook upon human existence; therefore must the religion of the mind ever run true to these various racial viewpoints. Never can the religions of authority come to unification. Human unity and mortal brotherhood can be achieved only by and through the superendowment of the religion of the spirit. Racial minds may differ, but all mankind is indwelt by the same divine and eternal spirit. The hope of human brotherhood can only be realized when, and as, the divergent mind religions of authority become impregnated with, and overshadowed by, the unifying and ennobling religion of the spirit — the religion of personal spiritual experience. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1732:1 / 155:6.8*]  
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I called attention to the second sentence, “Never can the religions of authority come to unification,” then asked whether this rebuts the idea of evangelization and conversion, the desire to conquer the religion of others by converting them to yours.

One participant replied that it does, but that he believed the even more effective antidote appears in the second sentence of the paragraph and, in particular, in the phrase “the superendowment of the religion of the spirit.” He called attention to the following paragraph in section 5 of Paper 195:

-----  
Religion is designed to find those values in the universe which call forth faith, trust, and assurance; religion culminates in worship. Religion discovers for the soul those supreme values which are in contrast with the relative values discovered by the mind. Such superhuman insight can be had only through genuine religious experience. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2075:11 / 195:5.8*]  
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Given this superendowment of the religion of the spirit, we experience spirit in our soul and are conscious of it in our mind. This is an additive value that we did not have before; that is the reason for these experiences and also the reason why authority is not going to achieve this, period.

I then drew attention to the relationship between this paragraph of the excerpt from section 6 of Paper 155 and our previous discussion about mind as a channel and an intervening reality. I pointed out words in this paragraph that connote or express mind directly. In the first line, “mental outlook.” In the second line, “the religion of the mind.” Then, I thought, in the fifth line: “Racial minds may differ.” This was an interesting idea, I said, the implication that there are characteristic mind patterns that are associated with different races. Then, almost to the end of the paragraph, “the divergent mind religions of authority.” This means that we are talking about the constraint of organized patterns of mind response that are dictating to others from the perspective of authority and uniformity. Further, these mind patterns become the basis for a particular religion of authority. So, I asked, how does Jesus contrast the reality of the spirit, the superendowment of the religion of the

spirit? On the understanding that personal religious experience is still going to be interpreted through the mind, how does this overcome the mind patterns that have been developed and insisted on by virtue of authority and uniformity?

One participant commented that my questions had reminded him of Jesus' eloquent response in the Urmia lectures:

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The brotherhood of men is founded on the fatherhood of God. The family of God is derived from the love of God — God is love. God the Father divinely loves his children, all of them.

The kingdom of heaven, the divine government, is founded on the fact of divine sovereignty — God is spirit. Since God is spirit, this kingdom is spiritual. The kingdom of heaven is neither material nor merely intellectual; it is a spiritual relationship between God and man.

If different religions recognize the spirit sovereignty of God the Father, then will all such religions remain at peace. Only when one religion assumes that it is in some way superior to all others, and that it possesses exclusive authority over other religions, will such a religion presume to be intolerant of other religions or dare to persecute other religious believers.

Religious peace — brotherhood — can never exist unless all religions are willing to completely divest themselves of all ecclesiastical authority and fully surrender all concept of spiritual sovereignty. God alone is spirit sovereign.

You cannot have equality among religions (religious liberty) without having religious wars unless all religions consent to the transfer of all religious sovereignty to some superhuman level, to God himself. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1486:4-6, 1487:1-2 / 134:4.1-5*]

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So long as a religion presumes to have authority, he said, it cannot come to unification. If a religion is willing to surrender that authority, and simply be a religion among other religions, then, he thought, all religions can come to some kind of unification.

I asked whether we simply need to overcome the idea that leaders of a religion exert authority toward believers, or whether we also need to overcome the illusion that one group of religionists in authority will triumph over another group of religionists in authority.

The panelist replied that both aspects need to be addressed, the first one internally. In regard to the second one, it is a matter of saying that it is okay for people to choose another brand, so to speak — that this choice will not destroy my religion unless that other religion is a religion of authority that seeks to dominate mine. Whenever we see one religion tyrannizing over another, it is not necessary for such a religion to disappear, but it must certainly stop tyrannizing.

## **The religion of the spirit**

We then turned to the second paragraph of the excerpt from section 6 of Paper 155, remarks of Jesus that come from his second discourse on religion (section 6 of Paper 155):

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The religions of authority can only divide men and set them in conscientious array against each other; the religion of the spirit will progressively draw men together and cause them to become understandingly sympathetic with one another. The religions of authority require of men uniformity in belief, but this is impossible of realization in the present state of the world. The religion of the spirit requires only unity of experience — uniformity of destiny — making full allowance for diversity of belief. The religion of the spirit requires only uniformity of insight, not uniformity of viewpoint and outlook. The religion of the spirit does not demand uniformity of intellectual views, only unity of spirit feeling. The religions of authority crystallize into lifeless creeds; the religion of the spirit grows into the increasing joy and liberty of ennobling deeds of loving service and merciful ministrations. [*The Midway Commission, 1732:2 / 155:6.9*]

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I asked whether “conscientious array against each other” versus “understandingly sympathetic” represents the difference between religions of authority and the religion of the spirit.

One participant responded that we must surrender authority; this is the key word and the essential problem. After doing that, we will start to understand that other people, with their own experience and culture, think in different ways. We have to go beyond the differences and find something that will create a link, such as the idea of the Father.

I then asked how “unity of experience” contrasts with “uniformity of belief.” One participant replied that if we can go to the common level of values, shared experiences, this is at least a doorway that may enable us to communicate with most people, because most people are looking for similar goals. If we can move away from particular differences in beliefs and find commonality, we are more likely to be successful.

My next question was to inquire about the difference between “uniformity of insight” and “uniformity of viewpoint and outlook.” The participant who responded said he had originally been puzzled about this himself, but had looked up the word *insight* and had found broad definitions such as this one: “Insight suggests the depth of discernment coupled with understanding and sympathy.” From this perspective, he had concluded that insight deals with superconscious values: The mind can experience not only the soul’s connection with the Thought Adjuster in worship, but also the soul’s ability to experience higher supervalues that we may lack, such as altruism.

I then offered an etymological analysis of the word *insight* whereby insight can be understood as “sight in” or “sight into.” This is using the idea of sight, seeing, to express understanding. Therefore in an etymological sense, insight means seeing into something more deeply; and in that event we may reach the level of spirit: We may see more deeply into the spiritual yearnings and desires of the human being, instead of merely confining ourselves to the abstract ideas that are expressed in words of the outer mind.

In relation to ideas expressed near the end of the paragraph, I asked whether the distinction between “lifeless creeds” and “loving service and merciful ministrations” serves to illustrate and explain the phrase “unity of spirit feeling.”

One participant replied that she had experienced interfaith groups seeking to work together. In part, this means that people have to see the dignity of others who are not like them. If you have real faith, you are not threatened by other faiths. Who could be against love, joy, compassion, unselfishness? The most important point was unity of values and the dignity of everyone involved. Instead of attacking each other, the essential goal was to cooperate.

For me, I said, these ideas and examples embody and harmonize with the framework that is highlighted at the end of the paragraph: “the increasing joy and liberty of ennobling deeds of loving service and merciful ministrations.”

In the webinar’s last few minutes, we began discussing the final paragraph of the excerpt from section 6 of Paper 155, remarks of Jesus that come from his second discourse on religion (section 6 of Paper 155):

-----  
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*]  
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In relation to the first sentence, I asked why trying to do the divine will is more satisfying and thrilling than trying to discover what God’s will is.

One participant replied that the question implies that you have already made some part of the discovery and are sincerely striving to do God’s will. He believed that if doing the will of God is nothing more than creature willingness to share the inner life with God, then by demonstrating a willingness to do God’s will, either by striving to worship or by seeking to find some way to serve others, there will be a definite thrill in finding that and doing that.

I probed this response by asking whether we could identify “trying to do” as a form of action, whereas we would then interpret “trying to discover” as an effort of the intellect and mind. Does that help us understand why the first activity is more important than the second?

The participant replied that trying to discover God’s will in the intellect is a first step that usually leads to the discovery that one cannot discover it in the intellect. He believed that the real discovery lies in

day-to-day living wherein one finds that it is not the how of doing something but how to do it better. Then, he thought, one may be able to discover the will of God.

I asked a different participation to interpret the second sentence of the paragraph: “And fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation.”

He replied that God the Mother, the Supreme, has provided all the circumstances, the vicissitudes of life, so that we will be able to discover, recognize, interpret, and choose. In his view, it does not matter where someone is, for the will of the Father will always be something that he or she will need to discover. The person needs to recognize that something in particular is the Father’s will, then interpret it and carry it out.

As a final and partly humorous question, I asked whether or not computer gurus who invent new terms that are puzzling and that confuse the rest of us are nevertheless doing the will of God.

The panelist replied that since he had left that operational environment long ago, it was difficult for him to answer the question. On the other hand, he had no doubt that many individuals laboring in that profession are doing the will of God.

## Preview of our webinar on November 23

During our webinar on Saturday, November 23, we will return to the final paragraph of the excerpt from section 6 of Paper 155 cited above, as displayed at the top of page 4 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.”

When we finish discussing it, we will proceed to consider the essentially historical narrative appearing on the rest of page 4 and on the entirety of page 5. Although I intend to call attention to certain aspects and promote discussion of them, I believe that we will complete that relatively rapidly, so as to turn to certain complex and rather pointed observations that appear in Papers 92 and 98 of *The Urantia Book*, remarks that are credited to two Melchizedeks (or perhaps the same one):

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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]

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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]*

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## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, November 23:

- 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 10, 2019 at 10:48 pm]

**From:** nealwaldrop@earthlink.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 30, 2019 2:35 AM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on November 23, plans for November 30  
**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:

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[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. \[A Divine Counselor, 29:6 / 1:5.16\]](#)  
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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*]

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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:

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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*]

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

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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]*

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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:

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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.

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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**

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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**

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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.

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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.

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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]*

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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.

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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):

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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]

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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]

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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:

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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.

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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:

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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:

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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]  
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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:

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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]  
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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:

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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]  
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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**

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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).

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One participant mentioned the characteristic Western emphasis on individualism, as opposed to other regions of the world that tend 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:

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**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?

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## PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

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

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

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

**From:** nealwaldrop@earthlink.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 7, 2019 2:38 AM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on November 30, plans for December 7  
**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]  
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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]  
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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:

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

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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).  
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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:

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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]  
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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:

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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]  
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In contrast, the Midwayers counsel us:

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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]  
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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:

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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]  
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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*]

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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:

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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]  
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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:

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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.

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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:

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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*]

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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:

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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?  
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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

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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.

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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]

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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*]

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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.

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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]

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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.

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“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]

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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:

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**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?

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## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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

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

**From:** nealwaldrop@earthlink.net  
**Sent:** Saturday, December 14, 2019 2:38 AM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on December 7, plans for December 14  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-06-24\_v2\_Living-the-real-religion-of-Jesus.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, December 7, we conducted our twenty-sixth 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 14.**

### **Christianity’s close links with Western society and culture**

As the webinar on December 7 began, we referred once again 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:

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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]  
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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]  
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I had previously sent the participants a document containing four questions that relate to the two excerpts shown above. These four questions read as follows:

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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.”

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).

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?

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.

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During the preceding webinars, participants answered the first three questions, and we also began discussing sub-question 4a on the aspects of Christianity that descend from the theology of Judaism. Therefore we returned to that topic on December 7.

## **Aspects of Christianity that descend from Judaism**

One participant commented that although we previously called attention to the atonement doctrine, we had not talked about the whole notion of sacrifice, which had led to the idea of atonement. Sacrifice, in his view, was a key feature that was imported into Christianity from Judaism, even though Jesus now became the Lamb of God and the ultimate sacrifice to appease the King-Judge who was God. In effect, the apostle Paul and other leaders decided that the Father nature would take second place to the King-Judge nature that had come over from Judaism, and sacrifice became all important — else we would not have an atonement doctrine in the first place.

In addition, he said, sacrifice makes its appearance in the general practice of Christians throughout the past 2,000 years, as reflected in the custom of making a pilgrimage to show one’s devoutness. During the previous year, he said, he had a meal in Berlin with someone who happened to be from the town of Santiago da Compostela in Spain, and this person had affirmed what many of us might well have suspected: For those who live in a place that is a popular destination for pilgrimages, this practice amounts to a great business opportunity.

In reply, I commented that the concept of a pilgrimage became very important in many countries that were Christian in the Middle Ages. The most notable classic of early English literature is called *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. It is actually written in Middle English and therefore is not immediately accessible to us now, who are readers of Modern English. But Chaucer wrote these stories about people who were making a pilgrimage to Canterbury; and it is very clear from the stories that their religious motivations were not consistently at a high level. In fact, some of the stories are raucous and ribald. Nonetheless, it is fair to state that the concept of a pilgrimage was an important form of reverence and belief for perhaps one thousand years of the Christian tradition.

Another participant called the idea of sacrifice a huge topic, while stating that propitiation (the approach that the other participant had focused on) was only one of the possible motivations. In addition, he said, there is expiation aimed at the forgiveness of sin, an effort to reconcile oneself with the deity. The Jewish people lived with their God in a covenant; they believed that Yahweh would be faithful to them if they were faithful to Yahweh. The idea that sacrifice was primarily aimed at appeasing an angry God is, in his view, an anachronistic conclusion about how the concept was applied in Christianity; it does not do justice to the original Jewish context.

I thanked him for this explanation, but then stated that our focus is how the ideas of sacrifice inserted themselves into Christianity. What happened ultimately in terms of the understandings of Christians and the teachings of Christian leaders was the idea that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and that his death on the cross created a pathway that allows believers to go to heaven, in the traditional phrasing. This belief has not been set aside; to the contrary, it remains an integral and important part of the Christian tradition.

I then asked participants to begin considering an excerpt from pages 112 and 113 of *Revelation Revealed* concerning the books of the Old Testament and, in particular, their misleading portrayal of key events associated with the history of the Hebrew people. (Although this excerpt appears in a document that I have attached this message, I believe it will be helpful to readers to insert the full text below.)

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*(introductory paragraph)*

In terms of content and substance, the paramount concerns associated with the Old Testament stem from the distortions and misrepresentations that the Hebrew priests propounded during their exile in Babylon, while conducting their systematic editing of previous writings. These efforts of the Hebrew priests ultimately produced “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*].

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*(excerpts from The Urantia Book)*

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The custom of looking upon the record of the experiences of the Hebrews as sacred history and upon the transactions of the rest of the world as profane history is responsible for much of the confusion existing in the human mind as to the interpretation of history. And this difficulty arises

because there is no secular history of the Jews. After the priests of the Babylonian exile had prepared their new record of God’s supposedly miraculous dealings with the Hebrews, the sacred history of Israel as portrayed in the Old Testament, they carefully and completely destroyed the existing records of Hebrew affairs — such books as “The Doings of the Kings of Israel” and “The Doings of the Kings of Judah,” together with several other more or less accurate records of Hebrew history. *[A Melchizedek, 1070:4 / 97:8.1]*

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When the Jewish priests returned to Jerusalem, they had already completed the writing of their narrative of the beginning of things. Soon they made claims that this recital was a recently discovered story of creation written by Moses. **But the contemporary Hebrews of around 500 B.C. did not consider these writings to be divine revelations; they looked upon them much as later peoples regard mythological narratives.**

This spurious document, reputed to be the teachings of Moses, was brought to the attention of Ptolemy, the Greek king of Egypt, who had it translated into Greek by a commission of seventy scholars for his new library at Alexandria. And so this account found its place among those writings which subsequently became a part of the later collections of the “sacred scriptures” of the Hebrew and Christian religions. And through identification with these theological systems, such concepts for a long time profoundly influenced the philosophy of many Occidental peoples. *[Solonia, 838:3-4 / 74:8.11-12 — emphasis added: sentence in bold type]*

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All modern religions have seriously blundered in the attempt to put a miraculous interpretation on certain epochs of human history. While it is true that God has many times thrust a Father’s hand of providential intervention into the stream of human affairs, it is a mistake to regard theologic dogmas and religious superstition as a supernatural sedimentation appearing by miraculous action in this stream of human history. The fact that the “Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men” does not convert secular history into so-called sacred history.

New Testament authors and later Christian writers further complicated the distortion of Hebrew history by their well-meant attempts to transcendentalize the Jewish prophets. Thus has Hebrew history been disastrously exploited by both Jewish and Christian writers. Secular Hebrew history has been thoroughly dogmatized. It has been converted into a fiction of sacred history and has become inextricably bound up with the moral concepts and religious teachings of the so-called Christian nations. *[A Melchizedek, 1071:3-4 / 97:8.5-6]*

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After participants took turns reading this material, one participant focused on wording in the excerpt indicating that Christian writers had sought “to transcendentalize the Jewish prophets,” thereby contributing to the process whereby secular Hebrew history was “converted into a fiction of sacred history.”

I commented on several aspects that seemed problematic at best. One element, I said, has to do with the conviction among many Christians that the Bible and everything it contains is an infallible work, completely correct. Then, if that is the case, the various stories about Hebrew history are factual, and

the narrative provides a concept of how God intervenes in human history in a very selective way in order to help a particular group of people. This creates the impression that God actively intervenes in human affairs of a political character, and it contributes to the overtones of “the chosen people” syndrome that participants partly discussed during the preceding webinar.

In particular, I called attention to the sentence in the second excerpt that I highlighted in bold: “**But the contemporary Hebrews of around 500 B.C. did not consider these writings to be divine revelations; they looked upon them much as later peoples regard mythological narratives.**” If this was the fairly common view of Jewish believers in the centuries that led to the birth of Jesus, why did later Christian believers take all of these stories about the history of Israel and Judah to be fact?

One participant replied that he was not sure that the actual difference between fact and myth was very important at that time. The idea of a fact is a very modern conception. Facts *per se* did not really exist before the 16th century. In his view, historical facts were extremely malleable, to put it mildly; there was no real dividing line between what we call fact and what we call myth.

This analysis, I said, seemed to be the view that in ancient times, the distinction between facts and myths was rather hazy. If so, however, that was not the case at the time of the Protestant Reformation or subsequent reading of the scriptures in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. Various Christian believers who were intent on studying the scriptures regarded all these stories as factual.

The panelist responded that those ideas that were prevalent in the 16th and 17th centuries became gradually outdated and outmoded when actual scientific investigation proceeded into the history of the Jewish people. That included archaeology, it included textual criticism. So those ideas were prevalent because they had no competitors. They consistently lost ground as more and more actual research was conducted.

A different participant said he did not believe it is fair to characterize everyone who dwelt on this planet before the 1600s as being ignorant about the existence of facts and what they signify. He called attention to the following paragraph about the apostle Thomas:

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If Jesus and his work had not been genuine, it could not have held a man like Thomas from the start to the finish. He had a keen and sure sense of *fact*. At the first appearance of fraud or deception Thomas would have forsaken them all. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1562:6 / 139:8.12*]  
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Yet another participant commented that the idea that the hand of God is in civilization is clearly a valuable concept that the revelators support, in part by stating that the Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men. The real difficulty with any such notion, he said, is that none of us is competent to know exactly how that hand operates in human history. The viewpoint of the Most Highs must embrace tens of thousands of years, whereas we are lucky if our viewpoints embrace a century at a time.

I then cited a very specific example of the idea that God was on the side of a particular military struggle, an example that is highly embarrassing to us now. In the 1860s, the United States went through a terrible civil war. I said I was not going to recount the events of that war, but was interested in the psychology of believers in Christianity on both sides. Unfortunately, Christian leaders on both sides were inclined to cite different portions of the Bible, with the overtones that God supported *them*. In other words, they alleged that they could deduce that God was in favor of the cause of the Union, or that God was in favor of the cause of the rebellious states in the South. Furthermore, the argument about God being in favor of particular social systems included the issue of slavery — whereby some sincere believers and religious leaders in the southern part of the United States read portions of the Old Testament that talked about slavery and used them as evidence that God is in favor of slavery. In their view, this meant that God would give victory to their arms in the field and their rebellion against the northern states that remained faithful to the U.S. Constitution.

A different participant commended previous remarks that had focused on the difference between sacred and profane history. He called that a bias and a misrepresentation of what he believes God to be. God has his plans and does rule in the kingdoms of men; but as another participant had said, we have no idea how, when, or where he does that. In his view, both Christianity and Judaism had transcendentalized the prophets, elevating them to the point where their moral pronouncements became spiritual laws. On that basis, he said, one can find a justification for anything in the Bible, even murder. If you are willing to be quite selective, so as to pick a particular line or statement that serves your purpose, you can find what you want to find in the Bible and can find a prophet who said it. This, in his view, is intellectually and spiritually dishonest, completely lacking in spiritual integrity.

Another participant focused on the question of providence, citing the following two excerpts from *The Urantia Book*:

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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 Midwayer Commission, 1340:5 / 121:7.7*]  
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To realize providence in time, man must accomplish the task of achieving perfection. But man can even now foretaste this providence in its eternity meanings as he ponders the universe fact that all things, be they good or evil, work together for the advancement of God-knowing mortals in their quest for the Father of all. [*A Mighty Messenger, 1306:7 / 118:10.18*]  
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I commended his attention to the idea of providence, commenting that the revelators' portrayal of the epochal revelations as a series, and their portrayal of God's plans for our planet Urantia and for the universe of universes, does represent a policy that can correctly be described as providence. The difficulty that we have in this connection has to do with interpreting the stories of the Old Testament that amounted, in effect, to asserting that God was acting on behalf of the Hebrew people in their struggles with their neighbors, followed by the conclusions that Christians subsequently reached that God was on their side in the wars that they were fighting.

The same participant said that in the interest of diversity, he wanted to present a different perspective on the question of secular versus sacred history. He then read the following statement that he had prepared in advance:

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The Hebrew Bible treats the secular history of the Hebrew tribes in an analogous manner to how *The Urantia Book* deals with planetary and cosmic history. Neither of the two ignores secular history, *i.e.*, there is a good deal of historical/semi-legendary/legendary detail in the Old Testament. (Whether or not all of those details are demonstrably factual is another matter.) The significant point here is that the purpose of the formulation of sacred history in the Hebrew Testament is identical to the purpose of the fifth epochal revelation: that is, to communicate the fact that a purely secular conception and understanding of human origin and destiny is false and destructive. There is no separation between the secular and the sacred, historically speaking, in the sense that secular reality only exists in the context of the sacred — that is, because of the reality of its divine origin and destiny. The Hebrews knew and understood their divine origin and destiny (and that of all nations) because they accepted the terms of the covenant that was offered to them by Yahweh as described in their sacred history.

Second: The sacred history of the Jews, as preserved in the Torah, created and supported their self identity and enabled them to persevere as a people so as to overcome repeated occupations and military defeats over the centuries. Crucially (and amazingly), this perseverance even flowered as a diaspora in the form of two hundred synagogue-based communities throughout the Roman Empire and therein “provided the cultural centers in which the new gospel of the kingdom of heaven found initial reception, and from which it subsequently spread to the uttermost parts of the world” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1333:6 / 121:2:4*]. In addition, the self-understanding of the Jewish people in large part due to their shared historical identity as being in a covenantal relationship with God promoted “[t]he centralization of the Jewish temple worship at Jerusalem [which] constituted alike the secret of the survival of their monotheism and the promise of the nurture and sending forth to the world of a new and enlarged concept of that one God of all nations and Father of all mortals. The temple service at Jerusalem represented the survival of a religious cultural concept in the face of the downfall of a succession of gentile national overlords and racial persecutors” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1333:8 / 121:2:6*].

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PERSONAL COMMENTS. The preceding statement by a particular participant does indeed contribute to pluralism and diversity, and he was amply entitled to express these views. On the other hand, my own personal views, when linked with my responsibilities as the moderator, make it important for me to call attention to the apparent contradiction between the ideas that he expressed and a number of insights appearing in the passages from *The Urantia Book* that participants considered earlier in the webinar. For example:

Secular Hebrew history has been thoroughly dogmatized. It has been converted into a fiction of sacred history and has become inextricably bound up with the moral concepts and religious teachings of the so-called Christian nations. [A Melchizedek, 1071:4 / 97:8.6]

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In addition, I am particularly concerned about the following sentence in the first paragraph of the statement by the other participant: “There is no separation between the secular and the sacred, historically speaking, in the sense that secular reality only exists in the context of the sacred — that is, because of the reality of its divine origin and destiny.” I hope that the following reflections of mine will serve to explain my concern.

— All aspects of the finite level respond to God’s creative intent (the divine plan), but his plan projects cosmic reality in three realms that are interrelated but distinct: matter, mind, and spirit.

— If we were to associate the other participant’s phrase “the sacred” with the category of spirit, it could not possibly explain matter or mind, nor subsume either of them. Quite to the contrary, for in section 6 of Paper 103, a Melchizedek tells us: “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].

— If factors pertaining to secular history were entirely a function of the category that the other participant calls “the sacred,” then it would be difficult to explain why “the angels of nation life” have missions and purposes that are separate and distinct from those associated with “the religious guardians.” [Reference: The Chief of Seraphim, 1255:6-7 / 114:6.7-8.]

— The Supreme Being’s role of summing up, unifying, and perfecting finite reality is not just a matter of spiritual values and spiritual energies, aspects that we can associate with the personal identity “God the Supreme.” In contrast, a Mighty Messenger states:

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The Supreme Being is the unification of three phases of Deity reality: God the Supreme, the spiritual unification of certain finite aspects of the Paradise Trinity; the Almighty Supreme, the power unification of the grand universe Creators; and the Supreme Mind, the individual contribution of the Third Source and Center and his co-ordinates to the reality of the Supreme Being. [A Mighty Messenger, 251:1 / 22:7.11]

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— For all these reasons, among others, I cannot accept the other participant’s assertion that “secular reality only exists in the context of the sacred.”

*(end personal comments of mine)*

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Another participant remarked that he had sought to examine the question of truth versus facts and, in doing so, had focused on the following excerpt from section 1 of Paper 155 that consists of statements by Jesus:

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*My kingdom is founded on love, proclaimed in mercy, and established by unselfish service. My Father does not sit in heaven laughing in derision at the heathen. [The Midwayer Commission, 1725:3 / 155:1.2]*  
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In comparison, he said, he had found passages in the Christian scriptures that seem to indicate the exact opposite, the idea that the Father IS laughing at people in other national groups. From his perspective, he interpreted providence as the Supreme Being making adjustments based on what is occurring in the universe of universes, then mentioned the Lucifer rebellion as a case in point.

### **A different aspect of “acculturation”**

I stated that I wished to interject a different thought based on the term “acculturation” that had been mentioned during previous webinars: the concept that the ideas of the teachings of Jesus and the evolution of Christianity were influenced by the culture of Western countries, and necessarily changed because of that. I then turned to a case in Christianity that actually represents an acculturation to the practices of the pagan civilizations, as well as a distinction from the principles of Judaism.

Judaism maintained a strong prohibition against what is called “graven images,” the idea that representations of human beings or animals were not allowed. The Christians, however, did not accept that as an inheritance from Judaism; and very rapidly their desire to portray Jesus, his mother Mary, and various saints generated images that were revered.

These images, on the one hand, can be defended in traditional Christian theology as an evocation of the spiritual purpose underneath; and traditional theologians, both in the Latin West and in the Orthodox East, maintain very strenuously that believers are not worshipping the image, they are venerating the spirit associated with the image and perhaps expressing the hope that the spiritual power of the individual represented will be helpful to their cause in a spiritual sense.

Now as a practical matter, this veneration of images became extremely controversial at a major stage of the history of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, which emphatically did not fall in the year 476 CE. People in our day call it the Byzantine Empire, but in fact it was simply the Eastern half of the Roman Empire that continued.

In the middle of the 600s, the Eastern half of the Roman Empire was under assault from the Arabs, who were coming from the East and were attacking the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople. The Arabs, like the Hebrew tradition, preserved the prohibition on images, and the Byzantine armies were losing or at least in great danger of being overrun.

So in the Greek Orthodox civilization of the Eastern half of the Roman Empire, which we call Byzantine, there was a movement that we subsequently have called iconoclasm: The veneration of icons was challenged. Different Emperors of the Byzantine Empire came out in favor of the veneration of icons, or the elimination of them. People were killed over this. This era of iconoclasm and conflict, wherein the supporters of icons were sometimes called iconophiles, went on for several generations, until the late 700s.

Now the underlying point that I was seeking to make is that the tradition of venerating images was a departure from the tradition of Judaism and was actually carried forward from the practices of pagan religions. Further, the veneration of saints and images of saints became extremely controversial in the 16th century whereby many Protestant analysts and clergymen attacked the Roman Catholic practices of art depicting saints, especially the Virgin Mary, and used arguments derived from the tradition of Byzantine conflict over icons. (As far as I know, the word *iconoclasm* is the only word from Byzantine history that has entered the English language; but it is there, and it literally means an attack on icons.)

One participant interpreted the controversy over images that occurred during the Protestant Reformation by associating it with our preceding topic, the sacred history of the Hebrew people and Judaism's well documented disapproval of any sort of art. From his perspective, he doubted that Christianity would ever have penetrated the West if it had not accommodated the Greek appreciation for beauty, including art.

A different participant drew on his upbringing in a Polish Catholic family, stating that one of the iconic images in Polish Catholicism is Our Lady of Czestochowa, also known as the Black Madonna. He said it had been very clear to him, both in catechism and in other Catholic teachings, that he was being told that we believers do not venerate the statue or an image; instead believers are venerating the symbol, what is behind the image. Although he commented that this is a difficult concept to get across to anyone, let alone to children, he believed that the point was made and that these practices are not idolatry, but the use of an image to evoke reverence. In his view, the image called Our Lady of Czestochowa, the Black Madonna, is something that galvanizes the Polish psyche around a religious national identity, something that is laudable and part of their culture and important in keeping the Polish people together — people who have obviously had to deal with much tribulation through the years and centuries. Further, he wondered whether the Black Madonna may involve some kind of superconscious symbolism that implicitly refers to the Mother Spirit.

I then asked another participant a rather prosaic question, one associated with the view in Roman Catholicism that some saint is in charge of a certain field of life or can at least be helpful in regard to it. I then cited a particular example, a spiritual being called "Saint Christopher." There is a question as to whether this was a real person or simply a legend; we do not know. In any case, the example I wanted to ask about has to do with the belief that Saint Christopher will protect people from accidents while they are traveling. This in turn is often associated with the idea of putting a little statue of Saint Christopher on the dashboard of one's automobile so that one will not get into an automobile accident.

The other participant responded that he had experienced this as a 12-year-old riding in a car at 80 miles per hour with a statue on the dashboard. He remembered his friend's mother saying, "You know, we've got Saint Christopher, he'll protect us." It did not ring true to him even then, but he believed that the underlying idea of symbolism is important. He cited the following statements by a Brilliant Evening Star:

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In religion, symbolism may be either good or bad just to the extent that the symbol does or does not displace the original worshipful idea. And symbolism must not be confused with direct idolatry wherein the material object is directly and actually worshiped. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 946:7 / 85:3.5]  
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Therefore the worshipful idea should transcend the symbol, the icon. Roman Catholic practice, however, had also included another saint to whom you could pray in order to help you find something you had misplaced or lost. The cacophony of all these saints really had not rung true to him. He was glad that he found *The Urantia Book* to sort out all these factors in his mind, even though he was never really confused because he had never accepted the popular explanation of these many practices.

In reply, I said he had implicitly described a major share of the concerns expressed by the Protestant reformers in the 16th century, to the effect that there were too many superstitions relatively prevalent among Roman Catholic believers and the hierarchy of the time, while maintaining that these beliefs actually had the net effect of detracting from the reverence due to God.

## The influence of Zoroastrian teachings

We proceeded to consider aspect 4b of question 4:

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4. Please identify and analyze those aspects of Christianity that can be traced to:
    - b. Certain Zoroastrian teachings.
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One participant cited information contained in *The Urantia Book*, to the effect that Zoroaster was in contact with some of the Melchizedek missionaries who came to his area of Persia. Further, from about 650 to 500 BCE, the Jewish people had direct contact with the Persian, Zoroastrian culture. He believed that a considerable amount of the Melchizedek tradition passed through Zoroastrianism on to Judaism, and on into Christianity. In addition, there appears to be evidence that some of these traditions entered Christianity directly in certain areas of Persia where Christianity took hold. Many of the underlying ideas have to do with eschatology, the cosmic battle between good and evil. The idea that the good guys are fighting the bad guys and that the bad guys are actual personalized demons came into Judaism, and then into Christianity, from Zoroastrianism. In addition, the Zoroastrian teachings contributed the idea of a resurrection and a judgment, which passed through late Judaism

and on into Christianity. He thought that Christianity also inherited many Zoroastrian ideas via the religion of Mithras.

I asked about the common perception in Christianity that the good guys have only a narrow edge over the bad guys and that we are always in danger of being overcome by the devil, who is portrayed as a very powerful figure. Another participant commented that what was lost in all this was the notion that good is a positive reality and indeed overpowering, whereas evil is only a negative reality. Teachings about the seven Master Spirits were another element of Zoroastrianism that did not reach Christianity.

I then sought to associate the legacy of a battle between good and evil with the parallel question of the very common superstitions still pertaining to witches and wizards and ghosts and goblins. We commemorate all this on the 31st of October every year, and children go from house to house collecting candy. I wondered whether this continuation of beliefs in witches and wizards and ghosts and goblins amounts to an emanation of the old mores, primitive religion, or may also be influenced by the Zoroastrian teachings about the struggle between good and evil.

One participant called these superstitions a mixture of all of the above, although he thought that a great deal of it is just entertaining myth — something new, something different from the sort of flatness of secular society. At this point in human evolution, he was not sure how many people really believe these stories or consider them anything more than entertainment.

## The contributions of Greek philosophy

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4. Please identify and analyze those aspects of Christianity that can be traced to:
    - c. Greek philosophy.
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One participant said it is important to realize that without the influence of Greek philosophy, there would be no such thing as Christian theology. Judaism, *per se*, did not have a theology as we understand it; it had a religious practice. As Judaism was exposed to Hellenistic influences, it did begin to develop a theology, but nothing like the theology that Christianity developed because its relationship to Hellenistic influence was much stronger. He then proceeded to read the following excerpt from *The Dictionary of Christian Thought*:

“Christian theology is inherently Hellenic because it could not exist as a discipline without the kind of intellectual curiosity that was unique in ancient Greece. The ancient Egyptians said that Greeks were like children, always asking why. The Jews asked why do the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper, but this arises out of a practical concern over the justice of God and did not incorporate a more generic exploration of what we call now theodicy. ... Greek contrast between being and becoming, the intelligible and the sensible, the soul and the body, with the soul and the intelligible becoming more important and primary, have played rich and diverse roles in Christian thinking. So the idea that the Christian can progress toward holiness and union with God has often included the idea of spiritual mastery of the bodily passions in a fashion similar to that of the Stoics. Not only intellectual ideas but

also the practice of Christian spirituality was based on Greek ideas of soul, spirit, and body and how one can essentially ascend from the flesh to the spirit. Those are all Greek philosophical concepts that can be traced back primarily to Plato, and of course later neo-Platonic thinkers developed that in a way that was totally within the Christian tradition.”

I commented on the distinction between Judaism as mainly consisting of a set of practices or observances, compared with the tradition in Christianity of developing doctrine and creeds and very explicit teachings — a set of practices that the other participant had associated with the Hellenistic and subsequently Greek philosophic tradition. Therefore I asked whether the complex process of developing a theology of the Trinity and of Jesus’ identity should be considered a cultural outgrowth of Greek philosophy.

Another participant said that although he does not have direct knowledge of this, he could not imagine any other origin and that discussion at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE seemed to display these characteristics. In addition, he said, the Greek idea of proportion and proportionality had entered Christian thought. In this regard, he cited remarks by a Universal Censor that appear in section 7 of Paper 16:

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Man’s choosing between good and evil is influenced, not only by the keenness of his moral nature, but also by such influences as ignorance, immaturity, and delusion. A sense of proportion is also concerned in the exercise of virtue because evil may be perpetrated when the lesser is chosen in the place of the greater as a result of distortion or deception. The art of relative estimation or comparative measurement enters into the practice of the virtues of the moral realm. [*A Universal Censor, 193:6 / 16:7.7*]  
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## **Preview of our webinar on December 14**

When we begin our discussion on December 14, I will ask participants to return to question 4c concerning aspects of Christianity that descend from Greek philosophy in order to compare its contributions and its tendency to make fine distinctions with the Roman insistence on uniformity of belief and practice. In other words, I will ask them to analyze and comment on how these two factors influenced Christianity as the religion developed.

After that, participants will read and comment on the analytical paragraph appearing in the middle of page 6 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.” They will then respond to formal question B, as presented at the bottom of the same page:

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**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?

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If time permits, the panelists will then begin reading and discussing the initial pages of the section of my essay headed “[The presence of God,](#)” which starts on page 7 of my essay.

## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, December 14:

- 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 14, 2019 at 2:38 am]

**From:** nealwaldrop@earthlink.net  
**Sent:** Monday, December 23, 2019 12:03 AM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on December 14  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.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, December 14, we conducted our twenty-seventh webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, "Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity." 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 during the new year, probably on some Saturday in January that we have not yet chosen.

### **Christianity's close links with Western society and culture**

As the webinar on December 14 began, we referred once again 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]  
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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]  
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I had previously sent the participants a document containing four questions that relate to the two excerpts shown above. These four 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."
  
  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).
  
  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?
  
  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.
- 

During the preceding webinars, participants answered the first three questions, as well as the first two parts of question 4, the sub-questions pertaining to the aspects of Christianity that descend from the theology of Judaism and from certain Zoroastrian teachings. In addition, we began discussing question 4c on aspects of Christianity that descend from Greek philosophy, but did not conclude that discussion. Therefore we returned to that sub-topic on December 14.

## The contributions of Greek philosophy

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4. Please identify and analyze those aspects of Christianity that can be traced to:
    - c. Greek philosophy.
- 

I launched the discussion by asking participants to analyze how the inheritance from Greek philosophy and its psychology of belief and understanding combined together with the Roman tradition of uniformity and authoritarian control that likewise was a very important element as Christianity developed.

One participant replied that these two strands were opposed, at least in some sense. Greek philosophy, he said, was a process of inquiry that was fluid and very creative — for example, the Socratic method of teaching by asking questions, while looking at actual human experience. This contrasted with the Roman need for conformity or authoritarianism.

I elaborated on my original inquiry by calling attention to an interplay of linguistic dimensions whereby, to my understanding, the Greek language is more complex in terms of its grammatical patterns and possibilities of explanation than the Latin language is. Christianity started in the eastern half of the Mediterranean, and Greek was the language of theology for centuries. The Council of Nicaea in the year 325 CE was conducted in Greek, not in Latin; and very few bishops from the western half of the Roman Empire attended.

Another participant commented that the authoritarian character of Roman rule was echoed in the evolution of the Roman Catholic Church. Very soon a hierarchy developed that was part of the ecclesiastical structure that was evolving in Catholicism. This took what had been a fairly democratic movement, or one that at least had leaders who were willing to honor all of the members on an almost equal basis, and instead started to develop hierarchy. There were those who had more to say on the subject of religion and theology than the laity, in what evolved as a concept of clergy and laity.

In reply, I commented on the other participant's view that the early years of the movement that eventually became Christianity were very tolerant and open. I said that if we look at the epistles ascribed to the apostle Paul, he did not seem to me to be very tolerant. There was room for a variety of opinions *provided that* you most explicitly agreed with him. So the theology of Christianity started off from Paul's interpretations, and then there was a great deal of theorizing that we can associate with the tradition of Greek philosophy; but the Romans landed on this and decided to enforce uniformity on all the details that their co-religionists speaking Greek had managed to come up with.

A different participant called attention to very interesting passages in *The Urantia Book* that seem to suggest that the relationship among the Romans, the Greeks, and the Hebrews who originally promulgated Christianity — namely Paul and his successors — eventually led to a tripartite arrangement involving all three groups:

-----  
Oriental law was stern and arbitrary; Greek law was fluid and artistic; Roman law was dignified and respect-breeding. Roman education bred an unheard-of and stolid loyalty. The early Romans were politically devoted and sublimely consecrated individuals. They were honest, zealous, and dedicated to their ideals, but without a religion worthy of the name. Small wonder that their Greek teachers were able to persuade them to accept Paul's Christianity.

And these Romans were a great people. They could govern the Occident because they did govern themselves. Such unparalleled honesty, devotion, and stalwart self-control was ideal soil for the reception and growth of Christianity.

It was easy for these Greco-Romans to become just as spiritually devoted to an institutional church as they were politically devoted to the state. [The Midwayer Commission, 2072:7-9 / 195:2.3-5]

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After the consolidation of Roman political rule and after the dissemination of Christianity, the Christians found themselves with one God, a great religious concept, but without empire. The Greco-Romans found themselves with a great empire but without a God to serve as the suitable religious concept for empire worship and spiritual unification. The Christians accepted the empire; the empire adopted Christianity. The Roman provided a unity of political rule; the Greek, a unity of culture and learning; Christianity, a unity of religious thought and practice. [The Midwayer Commission, 2073:5 / 195:3.1]

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The other participant conceded that these attitudes were oppositional in some sense, but said that they seemed to come together to found a sort of tripartite culture. The Romans provided political rule; the Greeks provided philosophy and education; and Christianity provided the religion.

In turning to yet another participant, I added one more element that I hoped he would consider, the element of the chosen-people syndrome that we had previously discussed. The chosen-people syndrome descending from Judaism and inflicted upon Christianity had deep theological roots; but it also had a resemblance to earlier pagan beliefs whereby the Romans believed that they had to appease their gods, and that a particular god would protect Rome if and only if appropriate worship were directed toward that god. So now, I said, I was wondering whether this idea of appeasing God and “doing the right thing” was an underlying psychological imperative for the Romans, perhaps with the view that if they did not get the religion right and did not enforce conformity on the part of all Roman citizens, God might punish the Roman Empire and might not help its armies prevail in whatever wars they were undertaking at the time.

The other participant said he had seen my original question as involving a conflict, for Greek philosophical thought did not involve a uniformity of belief. He saw this as being in conflict with the uniformity of practice that the Romans required, as others had already remarked. He then cited the following passage from section 1 of Paper 121:

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When Michael incarnated on Urantia, the world presented the most favorable condition for the Creator Son’s bestowal that had ever previously prevailed or has since obtained. In the centuries just prior to these times Greek culture and the Greek language had spread over Occident and near Orient, and the Jews, being a Levantine race, in nature part Occidental and part Oriental, were eminently fitted to utilize such cultural and linguistic settings for the effective spread of a new religion to both East and West. These most favorable circumstances were further enhanced by the tolerant political rule of the Mediterranean world by the Romans.

This entire combination of world influences is well illustrated by the activities of Paul, who, being in religious culture a Hebrew of the Hebrews, proclaimed the gospel of a Jewish Messiah in the Greek tongue, while he himself was a Roman citizen. [The Midwayer Commission, 1332:2-3 / 121:1.1-2]

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This passage, he said, demonstrates the tripartite connection. In regard to my additional question about the chosen-people syndrome, he said he did not see much in Greek mythology that represented appeasing, nor the view among the Roman people that it was necessary to appease the pagan gods.

I explained that the additional question I had given to him did not amount to denying anything that other participants had talked about, but another layer of meaning, in the sense that the pagan tradition of individual gods and goddesses had always included the idea that a particular god was on your side. For example, Athena was considered to be the patron of Athens. So if we then move into the era of early Christianity, the persecutions that happened from time to time during the first few centuries of Christianity (not consistently and not continuously) were motivated by an apparent concern of the Romans that these people called Christians were not giving proper reverence to the Roman gods, and that the Roman gods might get angry and punish some part of Rome because they were not being honored appropriately. What I was suggesting, I said, is that this psychology of doing appropriate honor to one's god or gods probably contributed to the authoritarianism that the Romans were inclined to practice anyway: They felt that if they refrained from getting it right or if they did not force all their subjects to get it right, then God might not favor them. In addition, I explained that I was simply adding that as a possible overlay on the tendency toward authority and uniformity that the Romans embodied in the first place.

Yet another participant agreed that the chosen-people syndrome was an additional layer of a larger overarching question that separates authoritarianism and free, interpretive experiences of religion and philosophy. His views on these questions, he said, were influenced by his background in the social sciences, primarily therapy, but also by subsequent graduate studies that had taken him a fair distance toward a doctorate in the history and sociology of religion. He then commented that if you look at a religious group of any size, you will see the two tendencies playing out (authoritarianism and free, interpretive experiences), and that this pattern is certainly not unique to Christianity. The tendency of the chosen-people factor is to be in alignment with authoritarianism, usually in a political or polity sense. You see religious leaders in power and authority exercising this chosen-people construct or executing it. You saw the scribes and pharisees doing it big time with Jesus, to the point where they killed him.

This is the dynamic of determining who is in the pale and who is outside. Often in its fundamentalist expressions, those who are not the chosen, who are outside the pale, are consigned to hell — to perdition or one variation or another of that. He saw this as a broad sociologic phenomenon, one that is expressed theologically: We are chosen because we believe this. But if you get underneath the surface of the phenomenon, it is we who are chosen and you who are not because we are in control and we control the power and resources — often political and financial resources — to the exclusion of you. So we are defining you as outside the pale theologically as well, and we declare that you are consigned to hell.

I thanked him for this analysis and then said I wanted to reach back to an extended discussion that we held in this series of webinars quite some time ago, one having to do with the formulation of the Christian theology of the Trinity and of the spiritual identity of Jesus — wherein there was extended controversy lasting for over one hundred years, largely starting at the time of the Council of Nicaea (325 CE) but extending at least to the year 451 CE, the Council of Chalcedon.

What emerged from this was a doctrinaire approach to the idea of Jesus' identity that included a minority who were not going along. What happened? The Romans, with their principle of uniformity, insisted on the formulation adopted at the Council of Chalcedon. This antagonized Christian believers in Syria, in Palestine, and to some lesser degree in Egypt; and these Christian believers continued to have their own view, which distinguished itself from the view of the Eastern Roman Empire.

So by the time that the Arabs emerged in the middle of the 600s, these believers in the eastern part of the Roman Empire were not in sympathy with imperial authority; and they did not fight very hard to push back the armies of the Prophet. Consequently, Islam rolled into Palestine and Egypt, across northern Africa, and into Spain. From this perspective, the presumption of the Roman system of uniformity bit very hard because it antagonized major groups of people who did not support the politics of Rome, or at least of the Eastern Roman Empire. Further, it cost the early Christian era a major share of the terrain on which Christianity had been initiated and had flourished. All this, in my view, was a consequence of the intersection of Greek philosophy in terms of theological detail with the Roman insistence on uniformity of belief and observance, and it proved to be politically damaging in very substantial ways.

A different participant called attention to the fact that I had mentioned the idea of the Trinity. In regard to that very important topic, he cited another paragraph in Paper 121:

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*Many, but not all, of Philo's inconsistencies resulting from an effort to combine Greek mystical philosophy and Roman Stoic doctrines with the legalistic theology of the Hebrews, Paul recognized and wisely eliminated from his pre-Christian basic theology. Philo led the way for Paul more fully to restore the concept of the Paradise Trinity, which had long been dormant in Jewish theology. [The Midwayer Commission, 1339:1 / 121:6.5]*  
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In his view, bringing the concept of the Trinity out of its relative submergence in Judaism was a very significant benefit. Even though the details of the Christian concept of the Trinity are not fully accurate, the essential truth of the Trinity was preserved for two thousand years.

I explained that in recounting the history I had summarized, I was not really describing the consequences of the diversity after the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451 CE in relation to the Trinity itself. The great controversies that caused the division pertained to the nature and identity of Jesus — his existence as a being of one nature or two, as a being with one will or two, and so on. The fact that Jesus was considered to be the second person of the Trinity as it was then conceived was not really a controversy. It was the insistence on the explicit doctrines adopted at the Council of

Chalcedon regarding the identity, nature, prerogatives, and will of Jesus that was the dividing point in substantial segments of the eastern half of the Roman Empire as it then existed.

I then endeavored to sum up the preceding discussion of the two elements I asked about in the first place, Greek philosophy and Roman authoritarianism. To me, I said, the discussion had confirmed that these two factors were in tension and that this combination influenced the development of Christianity for the entire 2,000 years that we have been discussing. The premise of authority has not gone away, nor the premise of conformity to established views, nor the claim of leaders that they have a right to impose their views on believers. I conceded that this pattern may be weaker than it was in previous centuries when people could literally be burned at the stake for having a divergent view, but commented that the principle of uniformity is still very deep in many strands of Christianity, although not in every strand.

## God's love for everyone living on Urantia

At my request, one of the participants read the narrative paragraph that appear in the middle of page 6 of my essay "Living the Real Religion of Jesus":

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These social and cultural associations of Christianity are highly problematic, for it would be ludicrous to assert that the insight and inspiration that we have inherited from the revelators are benefits exclusively aimed at persons who happen to live in the Western world. After all, the fifth epochal revelation enshrines God's love and the active ministry of our spiritual superiors for the entirety of Urantia and for everyone who shares our troubled planet with us! Further, the spiritual future of all humanity is intensely interlinked with the religion of personal spiritual experience that Jesus taught and proclaimed.  
-----

I asked about the relative emphasis that we apply to these conclusions: emphasis, on the one hand, on preaching to the choir, people in our own Western culture and civilization, or, to the contrary, emphasis on trying to broaden the message so that we step away from Western cultural associations in seeking to adopt and promote the true teachings of Jesus.

One panelist cited the following passage from Paper 149:

-----  
Jesus understood the minds of men. He knew what was in the heart of man, and had his teachings been left as he presented them, the only commentary being the inspired interpretation afforded by his earth life, all nations and all religions of the world would speedily have embraced the gospel of the kingdom. The well-meant efforts of Jesus' early followers to restate his teachings so as to make them the more acceptable to certain nations, races, and religions, only resulted in making such teachings the less acceptable to all other nations, races, and religions.  
-----

The Apostle Paul, in his efforts to bring the teachings of Jesus to the favorable notice of certain groups in his day, wrote many letters of instruction and admonition. Other teachers of Jesus' gospel did

likewise, but none of them realized that some of these writings would subsequently be brought together by those who would set them forth as the embodiment of the teachings of Jesus. And so, while so-called Christianity does contain more of the Master's gospel than any other religion, it does also contain much that Jesus did not teach. *[The Midwayer Commission, 1670:2-3 / 149:2.1-2]*

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The implication of the first paragraph, he said, is that Jesus' early followers, by adding ideas to his teachings and modifying them, diminished their apparent spiritual appeal that was universal. For him this raised the question of whether, in this day and age, all nations would speedily embrace the gospel as it was originally taught by Jesus.

A different participant cited the following statement in section 1 of Paper 195:

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Paul and his successors were willing but shrewd and sagacious compromisers; they were keen theologic traders. *[The Midwayer Commission, 2071:4 / 195:1.4]*

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In examining the shrewd theological trades that Paul made, he believed that they were highly beneficial in the short term for the spread of Christianity, but in the long term had placed a ceiling on the universal acceptance of Jesus' true teachings. He thought of two or three key compromises that fall in this category, stating that one of them occurred at the time of the resurrection, well before Paul even came on the scene. In the context of Jesus having been crucified, a tremendous public tragedy, the fact that three days later he began to appear (the resurrection appearances) engendered a flood of joy and relief. The apostles, he said, and Peter in particular, were enveloped in this very powerful mix of emotions. They found, as the revelators described it, that the story focused on Jesus' person and his resurrection "had great power with the people" *[the Midwayer Commission, 2060:2 / 194:1.2]*. So they ran with it, and that was the first of the major errors.

This led to an emphasis on the person of Jesus as salvational, even though this is not what Jesus taught. Jesus did not say, "If you believe in me, you will be saved." What he said is, "If you believe in the Father and your relationship with God as I do, as I show you this way, you will be saved." So it was belief in the sacred nature of the Christ that was thought to gain salvation. Further, salvation played an undue emphasis in the gospel as it was reconfigured. Believing in Jesus became the central truth of the gospel rather than a living family relationship with God and with each other, the gospel that Jesus taught.

The second error, one that Paul came along and appended to the first one, was the sacrificial atonement doctrine. He called it a grievous error and cited the following paragraph from Paper 4:

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The barbarous idea of appeasing an angry God, of propitiating an offended Lord, of winning the favor of Deity through sacrifices and penance and even by the shedding of blood, represents a religion wholly puerile and primitive, a philosophy unworthy of an enlightened age of science and truth. Such

beliefs are utterly repulsive to the celestial beings and the divine rulers who serve and reign in the universes. It is an affront to God to believe, hold, or teach that innocent blood must be shed in order to win his favor or to divert the fictitious divine wrath. [A Divine Counselor, 60:3 / 4:5.4]

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By making this trade, he said, Paul appealed to the sacrificial nature of the Jewish culture and to the fact that many of the mystery cults of that time contained a theology of sacrifice. This was a huge error. This combination of elements is embedded at the core of Christian belief, and it impedes the more universal acceptance of Jesus' actual teachings. So the issue we have to deal with is that the fifth epochal revelation makes such an overt statement about how serious the error is, depicting it an attack on the nature of God. The question for us is what we do with this: In our relationship with Christianity and in our evolutionary efforts, do we highlight this fundamental mistake? When he considered that, he reflected on how Jesus proceeded without attacking the errors in peoples' religious beliefs. He emphasized the true realities, the higher realities, and ran with them. In his view, we should move strongly and assertively with the truth of God's loving nature, maintaining that sacrifice is not necessary but not attacking this doctrine as being highly objectionable. He believed it would be a mistake for us to do that.

Another participant commented that he liked the idea of going back to the principle that the topic is not salvation, it is simply about the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. We have to become comfortable with the idea that the gospel has to be restated in such a way, and maybe in each generation, that it really does focus on the nature of God and the nature of our relationship with God, even though its appeal may bring along only small numbers of people at any one time. On the other hand, he believed that these efforts may eventually reach a critical mass whereby community has developed around those persons who start to believe this way. This could have such an effect on the remainder of humanity that it becomes an appealing living philosophy to those who would be actual or potential adherents.

I congratulated him for emphasizing the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man without succumbing to the temptation to create the acronym "FOGBOM" or declare that FOGBOM is the answer. I said I would certainly refrain from suggesting that, but did believe that there was substantial merit in the idea of simplification. On the other hand, there is also the disadvantage of lesser levels of profundity, lesser levels of sophistication. I was not sure that making things so simple that they might appeal to someone in grammar school is the answer to our current problem.

In turning to a different participant, I asked whether the effort to return to the true teachings of Jesus, the teachings as he intended them, might antagonize the leaders of the authoritarian tendencies in organized, institutional Christianity, and whether that might create an antagonism that would undermine our own efforts.

The other participant said he agreed with a previous recommendation that we refrain from attacking anything. He emphasized Jesus' approach when visiting Rome and meeting with 36 leaders of the Mithraics, Cynics, and Stoics:

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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 ... [The Midwayer Commission, 1455:5 / 132:0.4]  
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In his view, the cosmology contained in Parts I, II, and III of *The Urantia Book* is needed to put Jesus' teachings in perspective and help us understand what the revelators are really trying to tell us. Further, he commented that the Spirit of Truth operates in current circumstances, helping us understand truth in the vernacular and according to concepts that we have today. So we have these efforts operating on our behalf.

I commented that the underlying problem that all of us face is that the answers to these questions are far from intuitive. They have to do with wisdom; they have to do with experience; they have to do with receptivity and personal interest as well as cultural interest. I then turned back to the panelist who had raised the question of whether in our current circumstances, all nations would speedily embrace the gospel as it was originally taught by Jesus. This conundrum led me to wonder what we should do and what approach we should undertake — whether this would be in distinction to the organized Christian approach that has existed so far, perhaps in harmony with it, or perhaps involve yet another set of methods.

The participant commented on the extraordinary implication of the paragraph from Paper 149 that he had cited before: the statement by the Midwayers that the whole world would have accepted the gospel of Jesus if his apostles had just presented it as he intended. This implies that we could be living in a world now where everyone was following the gospel of Jesus, at least to a larger extent than is currently the case, if only the apostles had not tried to *improve* what Jesus taught, had not adapted it, had not modified it, had not adulterated it — if they had just trusted that Jesus knew what he was doing, that he understood the minds and hearts of men; if they had just taken his gospel and spread it without adding their own baggage.

I commended his analysis of what happened and what could have happened, but stated that from my perspective, this does not amount to predicting what could happen now, under our current circumstances. We really do not know.

Another participant said he would like to share a paragraph from Paper 178 that implicitly takes account of the fact that errors were made, but then casts light on what we can do to remedy the situation now:

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This gospel of the kingdom is a living truth. I have told you it is like the leaven in the dough, like the grain of mustard seed; and now I declare that it is like the seed of the living being, which, from generation to generation, while it remains the same living seed, unfailingly unfolds itself in new manifestations and grows acceptably in channels of new adaptation to the peculiar needs and  
-----

conditions of each successive generation. The revelation I have made to you is a *living revelation*, and I desire that it shall bear appropriate fruits in each individual and in each generation in accordance with the laws of spiritual growth, increase, and adaptative development. From generation to generation this gospel must show increasing vitality and exhibit greater depth of spiritual power. It must not be permitted to become merely a sacred memory, a mere tradition about me and the times in which we now live. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1931:6 / 178:1.15*]

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He noted that we cannot go back and unmake the mistakes of the early Christian leaders, but must deal with the situation that we face now. He believed, however, that we are wandering on the cusp of an error resembling what occurred in the early Christian era. The revelators describe that initial error as transforming the religion of Jesus into the religion about Jesus. Now in his view, what is easy and natural for us, and what we have been doing for the last 70 years, is to focus on a religion about *The Urantia Book* versus the religion of *The Urantia Book*. This meant making it our primary mission to spread a text and to turn people on to it, saying that there is this amazing fifth epochal revelation, and you have to read it. This parallels the error that the early Christian leaders made, which was very easy and very natural for them: focusing on the person of Jesus, the revelatory individual, as the big news.

He believed that the real challenge, as it was then and as it is now, is encapsulated in the paragraph that he had just read, which is to take the heart of the gospel and reconfigure it, restate it in a way that reaches the culture of our day and age powerfully and evocatively, so as to respond to the needs of our generation spiritually. That is far more difficult than turning people on to a book and far more challenging.

In his view, spreading *The Urantia Book* is a good and proper thing to do, but only stage one of a much larger endeavor, which requires us, as devoted students of the revelation, to understand the core elements of the gospel, to be creative evolutionarily and culturally in evolving new models for reaching out to all of humanity in a way that will speak to the needs of our generation and our emerging global culture. He believed that the world is struggling for a new vision of what the gospel was and is, and that this is our challenge.

In contrast, however, he did not think we should be busy refuting Christianity. Instead we should be busy developing the alternative that is current for our generation — and promote it aggressively, assertively, and let the error fall away. He conceded that we will encounter opposition if we run with that true and original gospel, but believed that we should bring it on, calling this inevitable from an historical perspective.

In turning to another participant, I offered him the fairly colloquial, traditional statement that one cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs. So what is the goal here: Is it to break the eggs or to create the omelet, and what is the price of creating the omelet? Should we be aggressively breaking the eggs, or should we hope that someone else will break the eggs and mix the omelet for us?

The other participant replied that he was not sure how apt the metaphor is, but commented that we are in a big conundrum in terms of how we see the problem, how we spread the message of Jesus and

how we spread the revelation. He believed that if we study the revelation, there are many competing narratives that help to instruct us about problems to avoid and solutions to pursue. He then called attention to the rebellion that occurred during the first epochal revelation, trying to do something in ways that were not evolutionary and involved seeking to upstep the cultural stream too quickly. In comparison, he said, there are plenty of examples today where cultures are at different levels intellectually and spiritually. Although we may not be as competent in being able to determine that, we can certainly, on a one-to-one basis, determine when someone is at least open to a message, if not necessarily ready for it.

The revelators also tell us about Adam and Eve wanting to speed up the process in ways that amounted to a short circuit. The net conclusion, he said, is that they were not willing to wait for a critical mass of their progeny to be available and thereby become a self-sustaining phenomenon over an extended period of time, one that could have pursued the biologic uplift that was part of the plan and also the cultural uplift that went along with it.

He cited one ray of hope, the fact that among readers of *The Urantia Book*, there are numerous micromovements that are starting to see that we need to help create competent teachers and leaders who can teach the Urantia teachings but equally, and more important, teach the gospel, all with an excellent sense of the current stage where we find ourselves. In closing, he commented that he had been impressed just a few weeks ago in the Philippines by how active interest in *The Urantia Book* is being propagated in families because of the strong family structure and an organic kind of effort to teach the teachings. Over the course of about twenty years, interest has developed so that there are 60 to 100 people who are solid readers, and this dedication crosses generations.

## Formal question B

At my request, participants began considering formal question B, as presented at the bottom of page 6 of my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus”:

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**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?

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One participant focused on the inquiries contained in the final two sentences. He thought it would be a mistake even to broach these matters at this point, returning to the idea of providing as much truth as possible but never attacking the beliefs of others. He believed it is important to listen to the truths that others already possess, taking into account the ideas that committed readers should be aware of

and understand. This is a really challenging and difficult effort, given the cacophony of religious thought and theology that we have on Urantia today. He then called attention once again to the techniques that Jesus employed during his sojourn in Rome while conversing with the 36 leaders of the Stoics, Cynics, and Mithraic believers. Jesus focused on and embellished the truths that they already understood, and these truths eventually crowded out the errors.

I then addressed another participant, noting the previous remark that the cosmological and philosophic dimensions of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* may be an attraction point that could appeal to some groups. Therefore I asked whether we have a situation of differentiating the content that we use as our message, depending on the characteristics of the listener. In differentiating the message, do we have to declare that this is not Christianity, or should we simply leave that implicit?

He replied that he would not even address these factors, for the very good reasons that various other participants had already mentioned. He then called attention to Jesus' discussion with the apostle Simon, who had tried to convert a Persian to the gospel. Basically, he told Simon not to try to take something out of someone else's belief, but to try to put something in:

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"Simply go forth proclaiming: This is the kingdom of heaven — God is your Father and you are his sons, and this good news, if you wholeheartedly believe it, is your eternal salvation." *[The Midwayer Commission, 1592:6 / 141:6.4 — a part of what Jesus said when speaking to the apostles]*  
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To me, the panelist said, this sounds like a simple spiritual appeal.

A different participant commented that he believed that there is a way to move forward that is elegant, by looking at the heart of the gospel, the vision of the gospel, and how it responds to the peculiar needs of our generation. He declared that more and more people are interacting as if we participate in a unified global culture; and indeed we are at the peculiar stage where we are moving from nationalisms to a global culture. This transition, in his view, is fraught with difficulties and challenges and antagonisms.

So, he asked, what does the gospel have to respond with to that set of challenges? He believed that it has exactly what is needed. In the overall symbolism of Jesus' original gospel, which is that we are part of a universal spiritual family beyond this world, there is the core, the kernel, of the vision that needs to be communicated to our emerging global culture. Therefore the message to Christianity, as it is to every other religion, is that what Jesus is actually speaking to us about is a phenomenon that is much larger than Christianity, much larger than Hinduism or Buddhism or Islam, or the unchurched or the nones, or those who are struggling spiritual but not religious. It encompasses every human being who is searching for relevance and for relation to the larger realities that are divine realities.

He believed that it flows from this revelation and from the original gospel of Jesus that there is a larger spiritual family that we are part of, a larger reality that we are part of, and that these smaller loyalties and affiliations fit within it. So if we move forward aggressively and we train teachers and

leaders in these spiritual perspectives, so as to express these ideas diplomatically to Christians and practitioners of every other religious stripe, we will succeed in becoming the gracious person that Jesus was, while showing them a higher vision, a larger set of possibilities that does not negate their particular tradition but includes it and warmly welcomes it into the interfaith family of all religious believers.

I then turned to a different participant, saying that I wished to give a slightly different twist to our discussion by actually dipping back into the earlier moments when we talked about the tension between Greek philosophy and Roman authoritarianism or the premise of uniformity. Now the strand that I wished to offer to him had to do with the relationship between ideas, or theories if he preferred, and insisting upon acceptance.

In other words, I said, the Christian tradition has been predicated, at least in part, on evangelization on behalf of certain doctrines or creeds or practices. Is this a tradition that we need to set aside? In other words, should we emphasize that we are not promoting uniformity; we are not promoting acceptance of particular theories or doctrines; instead we are promoting acceptance psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually of a personal relationship with God and a personal relationship with our brothers and sisters who may have different views entirely.

The other participant replied that the gospel that Jesus is trying to convey is not a doctrine requiring that we consider that God is our Father and that all men and women are our brothers and sisters. Instead, he believed, it is a way of life and an attitude that he thought can only be acquired by internalizing the message and adapting it to one's own life.

He believed that we cannot measure success in terms of numbers of souls converted, in the same way that people might have looked at that in an evangelistic way at some time in the past. He thought we have to look at to what extent the world is transforming, one person at a time. Are people conducting themselves differently, at least in our small circles? Certainly the world is going through enormous upheavals right now, on the one hand, but what gets missed is the quiet kind of evolution in the background that may be occurring as a result of person-to-person contact.

In addressing another participant, I commented on the current situation, in effect, of discontinuity in relation to the history of humanity up to now. I said it was clear to me that if the revelators had been content with the progression of the world as it stood, if they had been content with the reality of Christianity as it stood, they did not need to bother to write *The Urantia Book*. So the fact that they provided the fifth epochal revelation, I believed, is at least a convincing argument that there were concerns of theirs, there were concerns in the spiritual hierarchy, that something had to change. So, I asked, is the conviction that something has to change an essential aspect of the message? In other words, can we achieve any results among people who are not convinced that there is anything that needs to change, and is the effort to bring them to the understanding that something needs to change intrinsically a part of our communication with them?

In regard to the question of whether humanity needs to change, the other participant declared that he agreed with this. He said that it was his conclusion after studying *The Urantia Book* for a few years

that this was an emergency action, on a par with what Melchizedek had to do. We are faced with the possible extinction of the spiritual light on this planet. In his mind, that is why it is imperative that we do something different. What we have to do differently is what another participant mentioned, which is actually to start living with the spirit within us — instead of running around and trying to convince everyone to read *The Urantia Book* or to persuade people to join our religious group or this or that. We cannot do anything until we start acting from the spirit, and we cannot act from the spirit until we live with the spirit. We cannot live with the spirit until we pray to the Father. Prayer and worship are critical to spiritual development. This is where the greatest deficit lies, which in his opinion is within us. The Midwayers comment that compared with Jesus' declaration that God is spirit, the next most important thing that he said is that the kingdom of heaven is within you.

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*"The kingdom of God is within you" was probably the greatest pronouncement Jesus ever made, next to the declaration that his Father is a living and loving spirit. [The Midwayer Commission, 2084:4 / 195:10.4]*

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He said that until we start taking that seriously, really seriously, we will not make substantial progress. His answer is that what really needs to change is that we really need to start living with the spirit.

I commended that reply but called attention to another aspect of my question, one that the person who had just spoken did not address. Are we confined to reaching out to people who want to change, or is there something in the message that may persuade them that they need to change? In other words, is this process that we are engaged in inherently restricted to people who want to change, or is there some way we can increase the population of those who accept that something has to change and that they need to be part of that transformation of humanity that indeed is at the core of the fifth epochal revelation?

Yet another participant responded by highlighting the fruits of the spirit, saying that we live in a personal-value universe where the fruits of the spirit are those things that have to be lived. A different participant concluded the discussion by declaring that we cannot underscore enough how important it is for us to follow the message of Jesus.

## **Preview of our first webinar during the new year**

As previously stated, our next webinar in this series will occur during the new year, probably on some Saturday in January. When we resume, we will turn to page 7 of my essay "Living the Real Religion of Jesus," the first page of a new section that is headed "The presence of God." As a convenience for readers of this message, and perhaps as a sample that may be appealing, here are the first two paragraphs:

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**The presence of God.** In the final analysis, God is in, around, over, under, and through us. Although this includes the fact that a Thought Adjuster lives in the mind of each human being who is conscious of right and wrong, that definitely does not exhaust the reality of God's presence. After all,

a Divine Counselor tells us in Paper 1: “In Him we all live and move and have our being” [*a Divine Counselor, 29:6 / 1:5.16*]. On the other hand, in Paper 5 he concedes: “It is well-nigh impossible for human logic and finite reason to harmonize the concept of divine immanence, God within and a part of every individual, with the idea of God’s transcendence, the divine domination of the universe of universes” [*a Divine Counselor, 69:1 / 5:5.6*]. This may be as far as we should go, for this second statement suggests that attempting to probe the philosophic implications is not likely to be productive.

Nonetheless, we can acquire a modest grasp of these profound insights by reflecting that God is the ultimate source of matter, mind, and spirit. This, in turn, implies that the entire realm of finite reality constitutes eloquent evidence of the active presence of God. To enhance our understanding, we could note that it is the immanence of God the Mother, God the Supreme, that sums up, synthesizes, and cumulates the entire spectrum of finite experience — most assuredly including all the decisions and choices we make while living on our planet Urantia.

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## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar occurring during the new year (probably on some Saturday in January, although we have not yet chosen a specific date):

- 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 23, 2019 at 12:03 am]