

Neal Waldrop

From: Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2019 11:53 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on May 18
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; UB_1254-1256_P114-s06.pdf; UB_2081-2082_P195s08.pdf

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

On Saturday, May 18, we conducted our fifteenth 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."

NOTE: Our webinar on May 18 was the final program of the five webinars in phase 3 during which we continued our panel discussion of topic 8. We originally intended to conduct a program on May 25, but conflicts on the part of several potential participants made it impossible to assemble a panel that would have honored our guiding principle of seeking to demonstrate pluralism and diversity. Therefore we are now taking a break. We plan to return with another series of webinars (i.e., phase 4) that is likely to start on a Saturday in late June or early July.

Christianity: key features and practices

This major segment of topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed* begins on page 109. The third sub-element reads as follows:

(C) Doctrines and creeds. Although the atonement can correctly be considered Christianity's most prominent doctrine, the religion also advances a range of other standard teachings amounting to methods intended to guide and control believers, while simultaneously promoting uniformity and discouraging original, imaginative, or creative thinking.

As I previously stated, doctrines and creeds seem to represent group authority aimed at uniformity of belief, practices that reflect an overall devotion to authority and hierarchy and that descend from the spirit of *Romanità* that we discussed in previous webinars of this series. In relation to the need for balance between religion and society as a whole, I had previously called attention to the following analytical remarks that the Midwayer Commission shares with us in section 8 of Paper 195:

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

As the revelators imply, the organized, institutional Christian church dominated Western civilization for approximately one thousand years (500 – 1500 CE). During that millennium, Christian clerics held a monopoly on education, learning, and thought. In effect, they insisted that all aspects of human life had to be understood and pursued from the intellectual and theological perspectives of accumulated Christian doctrine.

During our webinars on May 4 and May 11, we discussed a philosophy lecture that portrays the underlying situation in conceptual ways that I considered particularly interesting. I was planning for participants to devote most of the webinar on May 18 to intensive discussion of section 8 of Paper 195 by the Midwayer Commission, a section entitled, “Secular Totalitarianism” (the second attachment). On the other hand, I decided that my first step should be to promote discussion of two topics that would serve as a conceptual transition between ecclesiastical totalitarianism and secular totalitarianism. As a practical matter, we ended up devoting almost all of our webinar on May 18 to these two topics, as explained below.

Question 1. Why did the fixation of certain Protestant Christians on a literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis lead them to undertake heavily politicized campaigns whereby they advocated prohibiting science teachers from teaching the theory of evolution in U.S. public schools — a prohibition that was actually enacted into law in some states of the United States?

BACKGROUND. John T. Scopes, a substitute high school teacher, was put on trial in Dayton, Tennessee in July 1925. He was convicted of teaching evolution in a public school, thereby violating a state law enacted in March 1925. Scopes was fined \$100, a sum equating to about \$1,400 in 2018 (according to the Wikipedia article on the subject). In the end, however, the verdict was overturned on a technicality.

— One participant commented that the fixation on the literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis became possible because the printing press had enabled many people to read the text of the Bible. By the late 19th or early 20th century, a sizable number of Christians had rejected the theories of Charles Darwin, at least partly because they believed his ideas about evolution undermined the Bible.

I responded that that the printing press had ended the church’s former monopoly on interpreting the scriptures. On the part of those Protestant Christians of the United States who mounted a political campaign based on their literal interpretation of the Book of Genesis, this involved the theological conviction that the Bible is inerrant and the cultural attitude that the right to interpret Christian scriptures trumps all other elements in society, including education. In this context, I asked what was the premise that these campaigners believed entitled them to dictate to all of society, including many people who had other religious beliefs, or perhaps none.

— Another panelist remarked that these particular Christians felt very much on the defensive, believing correctly that their orientation was threatened by secular society. They overreacted, but

certain conservative elements of Christianity did not know how to respond; they saw themselves in a cosmic battle to the death. He cited the following passage from section 8 of Paper 195 by the Midwayer Commission:

Materialism denies God, secularism simply ignores him; at least that was the earlier attitude. More recently, secularism has assumed a more militant attitude, assuming to take the place of the religion whose totalitarian bondage it onetime resisted. Twentieth-century secularism tends to affirm that man does not need God. But beware! this godless philosophy of human society will lead only to unrest, animosity, unhappiness, war, and world-wide disaster. [The Midwayer Commission, 2081:5 / 198:8.5]

— Another participant agreed that the traditional Christians concerned did feel paranoid. Another reason for passing laws against the scientific theory of Darwinism related to the fact that if this theory is true, then the Bible is not infallible. He commented that this is important because in historical terms, infallibility has always been a characteristic of the spiritual world. He then cited the following analytical comments by a Melchizedek:

Evolutionary religion makes no provision for change or revision; unlike science, it does not provide for its own progressive correction. Evolved religion commands respect because its followers believe it is *The Truth*; “the faith once delivered to the saints” must, in theory, be both final and infallible. The cult resists development because real progress is certain to modify or destroy the cult itself; therefore must revision always be forced upon it. [A Melchizedek, 1006:1 / 92:3.4]

Comment no. 1. This paragraph makes a statement about *evolutionary* religion, whereas Christian leaders and theologians have always proclaimed that the Christian faith is a *revealed* religion. Since Christianity includes a great deal that Jesus did not teach, it seems considerably more accurate to echo the evaluation that the Midwayer Commission provides in section 10 of Paper 195: “Christianity is an extemporized religion” [the Midwayer Commission, 2086:4 / 195:10.18]. In effect, this means that they made it up as they went along, on the understanding that the word “they” refers to Christian leaders and theologians.

Comment no. 2. I agree that over the centuries, many Christians have considered the Bible to be inerrant and infallible. On the other hand, describing that conviction of theirs as problematic would be a grave understatement, for the revelators do not hesitate to identify many ideas contained in the Bible as mistaken or highly misleading. For example, a Melchizedek states that while the Hebrew priests conducted their systematic editing of previous writings during their exile in Babylon, they propounded many distortions and misrepresentations that 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].

During the webinar, I agreed that the underlying issue in 1925 was closely associated with diverse convictions about the Bible. The established Roman Catholic view had always been that the Book of Genesis is symbolic, an allegory. This conviction prevailed until the Protestant Reformation, at which time a variety of other interpretations were advanced. One such view was the literal interpretation, but not all Protestants accepted it. In effect, this was a particularly rigorous view that could perhaps be described as fundamentalist. Therefore those who lobbied militantly for the law adopted in Tennessee were not only seeking to impose their own view of the teachings contained in the Book of Genesis, they were doing so in a situation in which other Christians disagreed with them. Further, they were seeking to impose these views so as to cause their own religious convictions to dominate civil institutions — in this case, public schools.

— Yet another panelist pointed out that the two extremes that we are considering — ecclesiastical totalitarianism and secular totalitarianism — obviously center on a common element: totalitarianism. Both extremes embody the conviction that one particular viewpoint should dominate everything else, whereas there must be a balance. In the case of ecclesiastical totalitarianism, those who practice it claim to speak for spirit and to dominate matter. In the case of secular totalitarianism, those who practice it claim to speak for matter and to dominate spirit. On the other hand, both sides have implicitly neglected the third reality of human life called mind. Neither extreme accepts that mind itself is a major reality that needs to be considered carefully and thoroughly.

We then went on to the second question, which from my perspective is likewise an intermediate factor that falls between ecclesiastical totalitarianism and secular totalitarianism.

Question 2. Please evaluate the pattern of assigned responsibilities among the twelve corps of master seraphim (*Paper 114, section 6 — the second attachment to this message*). In other words, please comment on the apparent balance of the interests of the seraphic planetary government and, by implication, the relative share of emphasis and attention that topics related to religion receive.

At my request, one of the panelists read the names of the twelve corps of master seraphim:

1. The epochal angels.
2. The progress angels.
3. The religious guardians.
4. The angels of nation life.
5. The angels of the races.
6. The angels of the future.
7. The angels of enlightenment.
8. The angels of health.
9. The home seraphim.
10. The angels of industry.
11. The angels of diversion.
12. The angels of superhuman ministry.

Participants agreed that the work of seraphic corps 3, “The religious guardians,” is clearly devoted to religion, as their name implies. In addition, there seemed to be agreement that the work of seraphic corps 7, “The angels of enlightenment,” can be partly associated with religion in the broad conceptual sense, for the revelators make it clear that education should include appropriate attention to moral and ethical principles. In addition, one participant discerned religious implications in the work of seraphic corps 9, “The home seraphim,” while pointing out that in the advanced continent on the neighboring planet (Paper 72), religion is not a matter of priestcraft at all, instead being entirely a feature of family life.

In general, however, panelists expressed diverse opinions about the degree to which spirituality and/or religion should be associated with the work of the other nine corps of master seraphim. One panelist described the seraphic planetary government as “a cosmic theocracy,” while declaring that the master seraphim are all working as religious agents in various fields on earth. He later commented that if we think of religion as the motivation of all our activities, then they are all religious in intent. Another panelist emphasized his view that the work of all twelve corps of master seraphim is interconnected and therefore related to religion by implication.

The discussion was complex and detailed. In the course of it, I pointed out that the work of several corps of master seraphim clearly bespeaks practical concerns that are not predominantly religious. For example, it is obvious that seraphic corps 4, “The angels of nation life,” must be seeking to promote the peaceful, orderly, and progressive development of the world’s nations. Further, seraphic corps 8, “The angels of health,” must devote a very substantial share of its efforts to physical health, although the reality of health certainly includes mindal and spiritual dimensions. In addition, another participant noted that the primary task of seraphic corps 10, “The angels of industry,” must be to promote industry.

I called attention to the fact that the work of the master seraphim is the spiritual model for the Global Endeavor, while pointing out that a detailed study guide on their work can be downloaded from the committee’s website (www.globalendeavor.net). I found it logical and convincing to associate the work of the twelve corps of master seraphim with overall efforts to promote the progressive growth and development of human society in the general spirit of Paper 52, “Planetary Mortal Epochs.”

Further, I called attention to the fact that in section II of the Foreword, the Divine Counselor has stated that **“GOD is a word symbol designating all personalizations of Deity”** [*Divine Counselor, 3:19 / 0:2.6*]. This includes God the Supreme (the Supreme Being) and our Paradise Creator Son Michael of Nebadon — and, by implication, the work of his immediate partner the Creative Mother Spirit. (As the Divine Counselor states in section VIII of the Foreword, the Paradise Creator Sons are the first level of God the Sevenfold.) For all these reasons, it is clear that God’s purposes on our planet Urantia are not limited to the plans and purposes of God the Universal Father.

Although there was no discussion of the implications associated with the broad understanding of the word “God” that I sought to summarize, participants agreed with the following statement of mine: The ideals and goals of God in regard to our planet are not limited to fostering religion as such.

In this vein, one participant commented that the revelators do not expect us to become 100 percent religious all the time. To the contrary, we must also pay appropriate attention to other aspects of life, those associated with matter and with mind.

Section 8 of Paper 195

Although the time remaining did not permit us to go very far in seeking to examine section 8 of Paper 195, one of the participants read the first three paragraphs at my request:

8. Secular Totalitarianism

But even after materialism and mechanism have been more or less vanquished, the devastating influence of twentieth-century secularism will still blight the spiritual experience of millions of unsuspecting souls.

Modern secularism has been fostered by two world-wide influences. The father of secularism was the narrow-minded and godless attitude of nineteenth- and twentieth-century so-called science — atheistic science. The mother of modern secularism was the totalitarian medieval Christian church. Secularism had its inception as a rising protest against the almost complete domination of Western civilization by the institutionalized Christian church.

At the time of this revelation, the prevailing intellectual and philosophical climate of both European and American life is decidedly secular — humanistic. For three hundred years Western thinking has been progressively secularized. Religion has become more and more a nominal influence, largely a ritualistic exercise. The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2081:1-3 / 195:8.1-3*]

Since we had largely addressed the first two paragraphs during previous webinars, I asked the panelists to analyze and comment on the final sentence of the third paragraph: “The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists.”

One panelist mainly traced this to the atheistic science of the 19th and 20th centuries, saying that the philosophy of materialism has corrupted so much of the thinking of contemporary life. In addition, he called attention to the word “majority,” which implies that other Christians, the minority, are not secularists. I accepted the dichotomy he presented, but identified yet another possibility, turning on the question whether some professed Christians may be well aware that they actually are secularists (i.e., “wittingly” instead of “unwittingly”).

Another panelist remarked that the sentence is correct in the sense that everyone in Western society is a secularist, whether they want to be or not. This, in his view, includes readers of *The Urantia Book*.

Excursions into mass entertainment

As a somewhat surprising change of pace at the very end of the webinar, I noted that during our first webinar in our series on topic 8 — one that we conducted in late November — I commented that we were going forward on the Saturday that was immediately after Black Friday. I then asked whether Black Friday amounted to a pagan holiday, whereas Good Friday is clearly a Christian event.

On May 18, I said, we were concluding our webinar on the Saturday immediately preceding another event of considerable significance for contemporary culture: the final episode of the immensely popular television series “The Game of Thrones.” I then compared it with another fantasy adventure that had been approximately as popular in previous years, “The Lord of the Rings.” I then asked whether these exercises in mass entertainment advance certain ideals that are important in human life, or are solely secular.

The panelists who replied agreed that “The Lord of the Rings” had included certain idealistic elements linked to previous traditions that we can associate with Western civilization. On the other hand, one participant declared that “The Game of Thrones” represents the complete triumph of secular materialism. Another panelist called it “secular fundamentalism.”

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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_6QHPLuABZojhdiE8XJRQg

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.

In conclusion and as noted at the beginning of this message, we are now taking a break, but we plan to return with another series of webinars that will probably begin in late June or early July.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[May 24, 2019 at 11:53 pm]