

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 8:50 AM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on July 20
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 190521ny-Douthat_v5_Game-of-Thrones_fantasy.pdf

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

I am very pleased to announce that on Saturday, July 20, 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.”

On May 18 (the final webinar in the preceding phase), we began discussing section 8 of Paper 195, a section entitled, “Secular Totalitarianism.” Therefore we will return to that on July 20 — the final set of ideas linked to our discussion of “Doctrines and creeds,” paragraph (c) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*.

Those of you who viewed our webinar on May 18 may remember that I concluded it with a rather surprising question about the implications and overtones of “The Game of Thrones” and “The Lord of the Rings.” In effect, I asked the panelists whether these two fantasy adventures that had proven to be immensely popular demonstrated quite convincingly that Western society and culture have become overwhelmingly secular. (The final episode of “The Game of Thrones” was scheduled to be broadcast the next day.)

A few days thereafter (i.e., on May 21), *The New York Times* published a relevant opinion article by one of the newspaper’s regular columnists (Ross Douthat): “How ‘Game of Thrones’ Failed Fantasy.” I am now circulating that article as the second attachment to this message, but please permit me to assure you that my reasons for doing that do not pertain to his general remarks about the nature of fantasy adventures. To the contrary, I am particularly interested in the two paragraphs that I have highlighted in the PDF file. For your convenience, those two paragraphs read as follows:

As Alan Jacobs suggested in an essay for *The New Atlantis* several years ago, fantasy stories are concerned with the transition that the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor described in his immense and daunting tome, “A Secular Age”: the movement from a premodern world in which human lives and societies are understood to be permeable to supernatural forces (dark and light, divine and demonic) to a modern world in which both civilization and the individual psyche are “buffered” against angels and devils and fairies and the like. ...

This reality prompted Jacobs to conclude that the success of fantasy “may best be taken as an acknowledgment that the great problem of the pagan world — how to navigate as safely as possible

through an ever-shifting landscape of independent and unpredictable powers who are indifferent to human needs — is our problem once more.”

In a procedural sense, this material may be a bit confusing because the cast of characters consists of three persons: (1) the journalist Ross Douthat, who wrote the article for *The New York Times*; (2) the journalist Alan Jacobs, who apparently wrote an essay that appeared in *The New Atlantis* several years ago; and (3) the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, who previously wrote the book *A Secular Age*. For the purposes of our discussion on July 20, I will mainly ask panelists:

(a) To appraise the net conclusion about the situation of contemporary human beings that is attributed to Alan Jacobs in the second paragraph of the excerpt.

(b) To identify aspects of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* that, if properly understood, would enable contemporary human beings to overcome and transcend these apparent concerns.

After all this, we really will discuss section 8 of Paper 195!

“Special status for the clergy”

Paragraph (d) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed* starts with this heading. The paragraph includes the statement that “the clergy’s prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.” Given these realities, the factors cited below (and therefore the factors that we will discuss during our forthcoming webinars) are characteristic of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity. They are much weaker, or even nonexistent, in relation to the traditional views and practices of Protestant Christians.

— Dividing believers into two fundamental categories, clergy vs. laity, whereby the latter are distinctly subordinate and are treated as second-class citizens.

— Four conscious, considered strategies of the organized, institutional church, methods that are clearly intended to enhance ecclesiastical authority and justify insistence that believers obey the clergy in regard to all aspects of Christian belief and practice:

(1) Seizing upon and exploiting the psychological and theological implications of the word “father.”

(2) Describing the initiation ceremony called ordination as a sacrament that imparts an indelible mark on the soul of the man who has just become a priest.

(3) Asserting that ordination as a priest enables that man to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of “transubstantiation”) by means of prescribed statements that he makes during a stereotyped religious service called “the mass.” Here, for comparison, is a relevant quotation from Paper 87:

The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets. The Christian cult has been devitalized by the loss of many fundamental ideas. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4]

(4) Claiming the authority to declare that a deceased former human being has found particular favor with God and can now be called a “saint” (canonization), or that he or she is entitled to the lesser honor of being called “blessed” or “venerable.” An integral part of this assertion is the authorization for believers to pray to anyone whom the Roman Catholic Church has declared to be a saint.

Civil authority of the popes

Jesus stated quite clearly that his kingdom is not of this world, whereas the popes — who have traditionally claimed to be “the vicar of Christ” — established a kingdom that definitely was of this world, and they exerted intensive political and diplomatic efforts to maintain that kingdom for far more than one thousand years (until 1870).

REFERENCES

Jesus’ statement that his kingdom is not of this world appears in chapter 18 of the gospel according to John:

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world ...” (John 18:36 / King James Version).

This is the beginning of Jesus’ reply to a question from Pilate; the revelators report their complete discussion in section 3 of Paper 185 [the Midwayer Commission, 1991:3 / 185:3.3]. To put those remarks in a broader context, I also found 14 other paragraphs in which the Midwayer Commission reports or calls attention to Jesus’ statement that his kingdom was not of this world. Here is the full list:

- (1) 137:8.7
- (2) 138:7.1
- (3) 152:3.2
- (4) 153:2.4
- (5) 157:6.12
- (6) 158:6.2
- (7) 162:5.3
- (8) 171:2.5
- (9) 171:8.3
- (10) 172:3.6

- (11) 176:2.3
- (12) 181:2.9
- (13) 182:2.3
- (14) 185:3.3
- (15) 190:5.4

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, July 20:

- 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
[July 17, 2019 at 8:50 am]

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Thursday, July 25, 2019 9:08 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on July 20, plans for July 27
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 190521ny-Douthat_v5_Game-of-Thrones_fantasy.pdf; UB_2081-2082_P195s08.pdf; 2005-07-26_note-added_Uses-of-history_App-B.pdf; 2018-10-05_Cantor_076-079_Donation-of-Constantine.pdf; 2019-06-09_Papal-States_EncyBrit-2015.pdf

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

On Saturday, July 20, we conducted our sixteenth 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.”

Secularism and chronic concerns

Those of you who viewed our webinar on May 18 may remember that I concluded it with a rather surprising question about the implications and overtones of “The Game of Thrones” and “The Lord of the Rings.” In effect, I asked the panelists whether these two fantasy adventures that had proven to be immensely popular demonstrated quite convincingly that Western society and culture have become overwhelmingly secular. (The final episode of “The Game of Thrones” was scheduled to be broadcast the next day.)

A few days thereafter (i.e., on May 21), *The New York Times* published a relevant opinion article by one of the newspaper’s regular columnists (Ross Douthat): “How ‘Game of Thrones’ Failed Fantasy.” I am circulating that article as the second attachment, but not because of the author’s comments on the nature of fantasy adventures. To the contrary, I am particularly interested in the two paragraphs that I have highlighted in the PDF file. For your convenience, those two paragraphs read as follows:

As Alan Jacobs suggested in an essay for *The New Atlantis* several years ago, fantasy stories are concerned with the transition that the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor described in his immense and daunting tome, “A Secular Age”: the movement from a premodern world in which human lives and societies are understood to be permeable to supernatural forces (dark and light, divine and demonic) to a modern world in which both civilization and the individual psyche are “buffered” against angels and devils and fairies and the like. ...

This reality prompted Jacobs to conclude that the success of fantasy “may best be taken as an acknowledgment that the great problem of the pagan world — how to navigate as safely as possible through an ever-shifting landscape of independent and unpredictable powers who are indifferent to human needs — is our problem once more.”

In a procedural sense, this material may be a bit confusing because the cast of characters consists of three persons: (1) the journalist Ross Douthat, who wrote the article for *The New York Times* (May 21); (2) the journalist Alan Jacobs, who wrote an essay that appeared in the winter 2014 issue of *The New Atlantis*; and (3) the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, who wrote the book *A Secular Age* (published in 2007). During our discussion on July 20, I asked panelists the following questions:

(a) To appraise the net conclusion about the situation of contemporary human beings that is attributed to Alan Jacobs in the second paragraph of the excerpt.

(b) To identify aspects of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* that, if properly understood, would enable contemporary human beings to overcome and transcend these apparent concerns.

In response, the panelists' remarks were varied, diverse, and complex. Here are a number of highlights:

— One participant declared that during the last 300 years, the world has been buffeted by forces that have surfaced suddenly, while sparking surprises and disruptions. For example: enlightenment, democracy, capitalism, socialism, internationalism, militarism. In his view, there needs to be a rediscovery of God in our lives in terms of humanity as a whole and as individuals.

— Another participant commented that humanity has always had to deal with independent and unpredictable powers, such as the invading horsemen of Genghis Khan. There are teachings in *The Urantia Book* that can be of use, but they will remain theoretical and inaccessible unless they are converted into some kind of religious reality for people in general, some set of activities.

— Yet another participant agreed with the statement in the newspaper article that humanity is now struggling with the question of **“how to navigate as safely as possible through an ever-shifting landscape of independent and unpredictable powers who are indifferent to human needs.”** He added, however, that in pagan times, the threat came from nature and from the supernatural forces that humanity imagined. Now, in contrast, the value structure has been set adrift. Further, crucial concepts are relativistic, unpredictable, and threatening, especially in view of the unprecedented rapidity of the information flows that are inundating humanity. All this, in his view, heightens the importance of evolving some new symbolism, some new technique for cultural manifestation, as a Brilliant Evening Star emphasizes in section 7 of Paper 87:

Every inspiring ideal grasps for some perpetuating symbolism — seeks some technique for cultural manifestation which will insure survival and augment realization — and the cult achieves this end by fostering and gratifying emotion. ...

Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps, every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism. Modern man must find some adequate symbolism for his new and expanding ideas, ideals, and loyalties. This enhanced symbol must arise out of religious living, spiritual experience. And this higher

symbolism of a higher civilization must be predicated on the concept of the Fatherhood of God and be pregnant with the mighty ideal of the brotherhood of man. ...

No cult can endure and contribute to the progress of social civilization and individual spiritual attainment unless it is based on the biologic, sociologic, and religious significance of the *home*. A surviving cult must symbolize that which is permanent in the presence of unceasing change; it must glorify that which unifies the stream of ever-changing social metamorphosis. It must recognize true meanings, exalt beautiful relations, and glorify the good values of real nobility. [*A Brilliant Evening Star*, 965:5, 966:1,3 / 87:7.1,6,8]

This new symbolism, in his view, will provide an axis in life, in order to unify the stream of ever-changing reality.

One participant called attention to the role of science in dissipating superstition and helping to create an appropriate balance among the realities of matter, mind, and spirit. He cited aspects of the newspaper article evoking the concern that the old, disruptive, destructive powers might return to inflict pain on human beings, either individually or collectively. By implication, this is a survival of the ghost fear that pervaded humanity during primitive times, “an appalling and powerful terror” and a “senseless superstition, some of which still persists” [*a Melchizedek*, 766:4 / 68:3.3].

He interpreted the term “pre-modern” to mean prior to 1600, the approximate moment when science began to dissipate quite a few superstitious ideas, including those previously associated with Christian culture and tradition (e.g., belief in miracles whereby God or various saints were thought to intervene directly in the practical circumstances of human life, especially in order to heal diseases). From these perspectives, he believed it helpful to consider the remarks in which a Universal Censor discusses the cosmic mind and identifies causation, duty, and worship as “responses [that] are self-evident to clear-reasoning and deep-thinking minds” [*a Universal Censor*, 192:1 / 16:6.5]. Further, the Universal Censor states:

These scientific, moral, and spiritual insights, these cosmic responses, are innate in the cosmic mind, which endows all will creatures. The experience of living never fails to develop these three cosmic intuitions; they are constitutive in the self-consciousness of reflective thinking. But it is sad to record that so few persons on Urantia take delight in cultivating these qualities of courageous and independent cosmic thinking.

In the local universe mind bestowals, these three insights of the cosmic mind constitute the a priori assumptions which make it possible for man to function as a rational and self-conscious personality in the realms of science, philosophy, and religion. Stated otherwise, the recognition of the *reality* of these three manifestations of the Infinite is by a cosmic technique of self-revelation. Matter-energy is recognized by the mathematical logic of the senses; mind-reason intuitively knows its moral duty; spirit-faith (worship) is the religion of the reality of spiritual experience. These three basic factors in reflective thinking may be unified and co-ordinated in personality development, or they may become

disproportionate and virtually unrelated in their respective functions. But when they become unified, they produce a strong character consisting in the correlation of a factual science, a moral philosophy, and a genuine religious experience. And it is these three cosmic intuitions that give objective validity, reality, to man's experience in and with things, meanings, and values. *[A Universal Censor, 192:5-6 / 16:6.9-10]*

From similar perspectives, he pointed out that after extended discussion with two apostles of Jesus (Nathaniel and Thomas), the Greek philosopher Rodan accepted their view that God “*must be a personality since he is the Creator of all personality and the destiny of all personality*” *[the Midwayer Commission, 1784:7 / 161:1.10]*. In parallel, he also called attention to remarks in which a Melchizedek explains that science, although able to posit a First Cause, must be associated with religious faith and revelation in order to portray the situation of human beings in ways that are balanced and accurate:

Reason, through the study of science, may lead back through nature to a First Cause, but it requires religious faith to transform the First Cause of science into a God of salvation; and revelation is further required for the validation of such a faith, such spiritual insight. *[A Melchizedek, 1106:2 / 101:2.3]*

Another participant commented that the newspaper article by Ross Douthat had been helpful in contrasting secular and pre-secular eras of human life, partly by distinguishing an apparently enchanted world from circumstances that we can describe as “disenchanted.” From these perspectives, he emphasized the need for us to integrate our inner and outer lives, so as to develop a spiritual harmony that will unify them. As a Melchizedek states in section 6 of Paper 103, this task requires a partnership whereby science and religion harmonize and cooperate with philosophy and revelation:

A logical and consistent philosophic concept of the universe cannot be built up on the postulations of either materialism or spiritism, for both of these systems of thinking, when universally applied, are compelled to view the cosmos in distortion, the former contacting with a universe turned inside out, the latter realizing the nature of a universe turned outside in. Never, then, can either science or religion, in and of themselves, standing alone, hope to gain an adequate understanding of universal truths and relationships without the guidance of human philosophy and the illumination of divine revelation. *[A Melchizedek, 1135:7 / 103:6.5]*

Paper 195, section 8: “Secular Totalitarianism”

When I asked the panelists to shift to considering section 8 of Paper 195, “*Secular Totalitarianism*,” I noted that on May 18, we began discussing it. During that prior webinar, I called attention to the following excerpt from the section's second paragraph:

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]*

In addition, I asked the panelists to analyze and comment on the final sentence in the third paragraph:

The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists. *[The Midwayer Commission, 2081:3 / 195:8.3]*

Therefore on July 20 I mentioned these aspects of our prior discussion, then asked the panelists to continue analyzing this part of Paper 195. (For your convenience, the full text is attached.)

— “The tyrannical and dictatorial political state”

In paragraph 4, the Midwayer Commission describes the tyrannical and dictatorial political state as “the direct offspring of scientific materialism and philosophic secularism.” I called attention to the fact that the revelators did not declare that the tyrannical and dictatorial political state is the only possible outcome of materialism and secularism. These appalling results certainly occurred in Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and Communist China, but the United States and a wide range of other Western countries remain democratic and free.

One participant replied that we do not have a dictatorial state in the United States because we brought God into the equation. The Declaration of Independence, he pointed out, refers to God several times.

COMMENT. Nonetheless, Amendment 1 to the U.S. Constitution make it clear that in the United States, there is no official religion, no religion established by law:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”

Another participant remarked that if we do not have some serious spiritual and religious renaissance in the United States, we may be threatened with a tyrannical and dictatorial political state in decades or generations to come.

Yet another participant advocated that we avoid an entirely intellectual and philosophic discussion of these questions, for that would be superficial. In his view, we need to focus on living experience, how people move through their lives and what are their daily experiences. He declared that humans need two crucial resources: (1) a foundation that provides coherence and order; and (2) a compass that gives them a sense of where they are and where they are going.

The medieval church was one form of tyranny, for it diminished the role of the individual's free will in determining where to go and how to proceed. The modern tyrannical state achieves the same outcome by using different methods. In addition, contemporary human beings face a less obvious form of tyranny that flows from flagrant hedonism, unprincipled capitalism, and intensive pursuit of pleasure centered on me-me-me. Many professed Christians are leading secular lives because their attention and actions reflect these priorities. Although the teachings of *The Urantia Book* provide a roadmap, in themselves they are impotent.

I paraphrased his concluding thought by stating that *The Urantia Book*, as a book, is just a collection of words on paper. It will be valuable to humanity only insofar as we put the ideals into practice. I then pointed out that the Midwayer Commission is not criticizing the secular revolt as such, for the revelators commend "many liberties and satisfactions ... unprecedented material progress ... tolerance, social service, democratic government, and civil liberties" [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:6,7,8 / 195:8.6,7,8*]. The essential challenge for us is to find the path that will lead humanity to an appropriate balance.

— "True religion"

Another participant called attention to two statements of the revelators: (1) "the secularists went on to institute a revolt against God himself, sometimes tacitly and sometimes openly"; and (2) "the secularistic revolt went too far and lost sight of God and true religion" [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:6,7 / 195:8.6,7*]. He paraphrased the idea of true religion as conformity to the cosmos, then cited the final paragraph of Rodan's analysis:

The consciousness of the impulse to be like God is not true religion. The feelings of the emotion to worship God are not true religion. The knowledge of the conviction to forsake self and serve God is not true religion. The wisdom of the reasoning that this religion is the best of all is not religion as a personal and spiritual experience. True religion has reference to destiny and reality of attainment as well as to the reality and idealism of that which is wholeheartedly faith-accepted. And all of this must be made personal to us by the revelation of the Spirit of Truth. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1782:4 / 160:5.13*]

Another panelist declared that the outcome we need is not just individuals living the fruits of the spirit. That is necessary, but not sufficient. As a Brilliant Evening Star states, "The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets" [*a Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4*]. In his view, we need a new religion that is equally effective, but not a religion of authority. He believed that many values were preserved during the Middle Ages that eventually gave rise to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. He agreed that the revelators' account of the transition is true to a great degree, but maintained that it does not provide the full picture.

— Nationalism, disintegration, and world peace

I remarked that the ideas that the revelators present in paragraphs 8 through 10 of Paper 195, section 8 remind me of a ping-pong match, for they seem to intermingle positive values with negative consequences. The essential question is how we can create harmony and balance from all these divergent strands. I particularly called attention to the remarks whereby the Midwayer Commission declares:

This secularistic human society, notwithstanding its unparalleled material achievement, is slowly disintegrating. The chief cohesive force resisting this disintegration of antagonism is nationalism. And nationalism is the chief barrier to world peace. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2082:2 / 195:8.10*]

Therefore I asked the panelists whether humanity needs nationalism, at least temporarily, in order to prevent the disintegration of society, or whether we should seek to set nationalism aside, in order to pursue world peace. In contrast, I said, peace could be maintained if nations are willing to settle disputes peacefully, by means of negotiations and compromises.

There appeared to be a consensus that humanity still needs nationalism, at least for another few generations. One panelist commented that competition at the Olympics is built on nations. Another participant remarked that humanity will continue to need nationalism until we have a worldwide religion, a religion that he assumed will emerge from the fifth epochal revelation. Yet another participant noted that we are stuck in a dilemma that is also exceedingly dangerous, given the weapons of mass destruction that, if used in a massive exchange, could conceivably threaten the continued existence of human beings on our planet Urantia. In his view, the only resolution to this dilemma is a spiritual resolution: The world needs a new spiritual culture.

— “Still more terrible destruction is yet to come”

I called attention to the fact that the Midwayer Commission concluded section 8 with exceedingly ominous remarks. After the revelators referred to the fact that “[d]uring the first third of the twentieth century Urantians killed more human beings than were killed during the whole of the Christian dispensation up to that time,” they went on to warn that “still more terrible destruction is yet to come” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2082:5 / 195:8.13*]. In stating this, were they commenting on World War II (which they obviously foresaw) and perhaps on other episodes of mass slaughter that occurred in the remaining two-thirds of the twentieth century, or do their remarks portend yet other cataclysms that may yet beset mankind in the years to come?

One panelist commented that if the fatherhood of God is subtracted from humanity, we will not get the brotherhood of man. The world is shrinking dramatically because of the effects of science, industry, and technology. At the same time, there is no effective moral code whereby human beings can master their emotions.

Another panelist focused on the revelators’ prior remark, “The inherent weakness of secularism is that it discards ethics and religion for politics and power” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2082:3 / 195:8.11*]. In his view, ethics is relatively impotent when separated from religion. Nonetheless,

economic interdependence is now a stabilizing factor, one that distinguishes our current situation from the circumstances of the 1930s. In effect, nationalism and economic interdependence are now holding in check some of the dire possibilities that would correspond to the revelators' warning in the final paragraph of the section. This is not a complete answer, for he wondered whether at some point there may be terrifying events that scare humanity so badly as to make us understand that we must band together and have no other choice. He hoped and believed that our spiritual superiors have sufficient resources to prevent disaster.

COMMENT. It is reasonable to believe that several of the twelve corps of master seraphim (Paper 114, section 6) are exerting intense efforts aimed at influencing humanity toward positive and productive outcomes, partly by making effective use of their human assets in the reserve corps of destiny (Paper 114, section 7).

Previewing our webinar on July 27

Analyzing section 8 of Paper 195 was our final step associated with paragraph (c) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed* ("Doctrines and creeds"). During our webinar on July 27, we will begin discussing the implications of paragraph (d) on the same page:

(d) Special status for the clergy. Institutional Christianity distinguishes quite sharply between professional religionists (the clergy) and ordinary believers (the laity). Here we must note, however, that the clergy's prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.

As this paragraph implies, the aspects that we will discuss are particularly characteristic of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity. Although the Protestant tradition does distinguish between clergy and laity, the distinctions are less acute and less emphatic. Further, the five strategies identified in the second tick have nothing to do with the belief or observance of Protestant Christians.

— Dividing believers into two fundamental categories, clergy vs. laity, whereby the latter are distinctly subordinate and are treated as second-class citizens.

— Five conscious, considered strategies of the organized, institutional church, methods that are clearly intended to enhance ecclesiastical authority and justify insistence that believers obey the clergy in regard to all aspects of Christian belief and practice:

(1) Seizing upon and exploiting the psychological and theological implications of the word "father."

(2) Describing the initiation ceremony called ordination as a sacrament that imparts an indelible mark on the soul of the man who has just become a priest.

(3) Asserting that ordination as a priest enables that man to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of “transubstantiation”) by means of prescribed statements that he makes during a stereotyped religious service called “the mass.” Here, for comparison, is a relevant quotation from Paper 87:

The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets. The Christian cult has been devitalized by the loss of many fundamental ideas. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4]

(4) Declaring that believers receive God’s forgiveness for errors and misconduct if and only if they confess their sins to a priest by means of a prescribed ceremony that is commonly called the sacrament of penance, confession, or reconciliation.

(5) Claiming the authority to declare that a deceased former human being has found particular favor with God and can now be called a “saint” (canonization), or that he or she is entitled to the lesser honor of being called “blessed” or “venerable.” An integral part of this assertion is the authorization for believers to pray to anyone whom the Roman Catholic Church has declared to be a saint.

Civil authority of the popes

As a keynote that will serve to unify this part of the discussion, I will call attention to a statement by a Divine Counselor that we read in section 1 of Paper 19:

The true perspective of any reality problem — human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic — can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, **history**, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. [A Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6 — *emphasis added: the word in bold type*]

If we launch our analysis by examining the years during which Christ Michael of Nebadon bequeathed his bestowal life in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, it is important to point out that Jesus stated quite emphatically that his kingdom is not of this world. Nonetheless, the popes — who have traditionally claimed to be “the vicar of Christ” — proceeded to establish a kingdom that definitely was of this world; and in order to promote this cause, they exerted intense political and diplomatic effort aimed at maintaining and exerting civil authority in central Italy for far more than one thousand years (until 1870).

REFERENCES. Chapter 18 of the gospel according to John records Jesus’ statement that his kingdom is not of this world:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world ..." (*John 18:36 / King James Version*).

This is the beginning of Jesus' reply to a question from Pilate, whereas the revelators report the complete discussion [*the Midwayer Commission, 1991:3 / 185:3.3*]. To put Jesus' reply in a broader context, I also found 14 other passages in the fifth epochal revelation in which the Midwayer Commission reports or calls attention to Jesus' statement that his kingdom was not of this world. Here is the list of all 15 paragraphs:

- (1) 137:8.7
- (2) 138:7.1
- (3) 152:3.2
- (4) 153:2.4
- (5) 157:6.12
- (6) 158:6.2
- (7) 162:5.3
- (8) 171:2.5
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- (11) 176:2.3
- (12) 181:2.9
- (13) 182:2.3
- (14) 185:3.3
- (15) 190:5.4

Attachments pertaining to the kingdom that the popes established

— "Appendix B: The Donation of Constantine." (This is an appendix to a memorandum dated July 26, 2005 in which I maintained quite strenuously that Urantia Foundation — the sponsor and chief publisher of *The Urantia Book* — should not use images or symbols drawn from the traditions of Christianity, for in my view this would leave an inaccurate and misleading impression.)

— "Civil authority from the chair of Peter: Papal ideology rooted in 'the Donation of Constantine'" (excerpted from pages 176-179 of *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* by Norman F. Cantor, a book published in 1993).

— "Papal States" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2015).

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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Regards, Neal Waldrop.
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[July 25, 2019 at 9:07 pm]

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Saturday, August 3, 2019 1:26 AM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on July 27, plans for August 3
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2005-07-26_note-added_Uses-of-history_App-B.pdf; 2018-10-05_Cantor_076-079_Donation-of-Constantine.pdf; 2019-06-09_Papal-States_EncyBrit-2015.pdf; 2019-06-25_Pius-IX_EncyBrit-2015.pdf; 2019-06-25_Syllabus-of-Errors_Wikipedia.pdf; 2019-06-25_1864-12-08_v2_Syllabus-of-Errors_Pope-Piux-IX_text.pdf; 2019-06-25_Hasler-book_dust-jacket.pdf; 2019-06-26_Hasler-book_introduction.pdf; 2019-06-15_Küng-Hans_Britannica-2015.pdf; 2019-06-18_Küng-Hans_Wikipedia.pdf; 2019-06-29_Hasler-book_excerpts.pdf

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

On Saturday, July 27, we conducted our seventeenth 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.”

Special status for the clergy

During our webinar, we began discussing the implications of paragraph (d) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*:

(d) Special status for the clergy. Institutional Christianity distinguishes quite sharply between professional religionists (the clergy) and ordinary believers (the laity). Here we must note, however, that the clergy’s prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.

As this paragraph implies, the aspects that we began to discuss are particularly characteristic of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity. Although the Protestant tradition does distinguish between clergy and laity, the distinctions are less acute and less emphatic. Further, the five strategies identified in the second tick have nothing to do with the belief or observance of Protestant Christians.

— **Dividing believers into two fundamental categories, clergy vs. laity, whereby the latter are distinctly subordinate and are treated as second-class citizens.**

Participants who commented on the functions of Protestant ministers identified a range of responsibilities, especially the four that follow below:

(1) teach;

- (2) inspire;
- (3) administer; and
- (4) lead group prayer and worship.

This includes the responsibility for interpreting the Bible. One participant remarked that in regard to interpreting traditional teachings, the authority of a Protestant minister exceeds the authority of a priest of the Roman Catholic faith. The authority of a Protestant minister is *personal*, whereas the authority of a Roman Catholic priest comes from his position and function.

Panelists called attention to the long period of study and training that ministers and priests must complete before they are considered qualified to carry out the responsibilities of clergy in their respective branches of the Christian faith. On the other hand, there seemed to be agreement that the distinction between clergy and laity is more intense and more emphatic in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity than in Protestant denominations. One participant commented that a Protestant minister is not set apart from the congregation to the degree that applies to a Roman Catholic priest; in his view, a Protestant minister is more like the first among equals.

Panelists called attention to crucial differences in regard to how priests and pastors are selected for or appointed to their respective functions. A Roman Catholic bishop or archbishop appoints a pastor or priest to serve in a particular parish (hierarchical authority). Although the practices of Protestant denominations differ, in many cases a pastor is selected by a committee of believers who belong to a particular congregation, perhaps called a board of governors. In these cases, a minister who aspires to become a pastor has to apply to a congregation in which the position is available or will soon become open. This leads to a process that is likely to involve interviews and/or a meeting with the board of governors or its equivalent.

In part, I pointed out that Protestant ministers do not have an explicit role or function in bequeathing grace or God's mercy via certain ceremonies called sacraments, whereas Roman Catholic priests carry out such duties. One participant commented that in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, a priest is seen as a mediator between celestial agencies and human beings. In contrast, however, another participant disagreed, commenting that the Protestant ministry is just as much a mediator between the divine and human levels as the Roman Catholic priesthood. He then stated that in the case of Protestant ministers, the mediation is achieved verbally, by interpreting the word of God (the Bible), not by means of rituals.

Another panelist applied some of these concepts to our own situation as readers of *The Urantia Book*, commenting on the question of certified teachers. How shall we move forward if we do not have some way of awarding and recognizing credentials? He stated that in 1956, at the beginning of the work of the Education Committee of the original Urantia Brotherhood, a brotherhood school had been established. Although Dr. William S. Sadler wrote a complete curriculum, the school fell apart after about a decade. One of the key issues was recognizing the authority of the organization to endow individuals with the authority to teach.

I replied that the question of leadership and the question of authority are not the same. In part, association with some organization must be separated from the question of the authority to specify belief. My personal sense is that these issues are extremely delicate in regard to the readers of *The Urantia Book*. In effect, they are intensely entangled with the four tendencies of Roman culture that became fused into the Christian faith, tendencies that we discussed in connection with my document “Romanità”: (1) authority; (2) hierarchy; (3) uniformity; and (4) explicitly defined responsibilities and roles.

— Five conscious, considered strategies of the organized, institutional church, methods that are clearly intended to enhance ecclesiastical authority and justify insistence that believers obey the clergy in regard to all aspects of Christian belief and practice:

(1) Seizing upon and exploiting the psychological and theological implications of the word “father.”

As I launched discussion of this factor, I asked two of the participants to read the following paragraphs from *The Urantia Book*:

Jesus employed the word God to designate the *idea* of Deity and the word Father to designate the *experience* of knowing God. When the word Father is employed to denote God, it should be understood in its largest possible meaning. The word God cannot be defined and therefore stands for the infinite concept of the Father, while the term Father, being capable of partial definition, may be employed to represent the human concept of the divine Father as he is associated with man during the course of mortal existence. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1856:5 / 169:4.7*]

And God-consciousness is equivalent to the integration of the self with the universe, and on its highest levels of spiritual reality. Only the spirit content of any value is imperishable. Even that which is true, beautiful, and good may not perish in human experience. If man does not choose to survive, then does the surviving Adjuster conserve those realities born of love and nurtured in service. And all these things are a part of the Universal Father. The Father is living love, and this life of the Father is in his Sons. And the spirit of the Father is in his Sons’ sons — mortal men. When all is said and done, the Father idea is still the highest human concept of God. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2097:3 / 196:3.35 — the last paragraph in the final Paper of The Urantia Book*]

During the discussion, one of the participants supplemented these ideas by calling attention to the following excerpt from Paper 1:

The Universal Father is the God of all creation, the First Source and Center of all things and beings. First think of God as a creator, then as a controller, and lastly as an infinite upholder. ... Only the concept of the Universal Father — one God in the place of many gods — enabled mortal man to comprehend the Father as divine creator and infinite controller. [*A Divine Counselor, 21:1 / 1:0.1*]

One participant criticized the wording that I had used as the title of the sub-element, stating that in his view, the phrase “seizing upon and exploiting” is negative, biased, and tendentious. From his perspective, a priest is a father because he is a brother, along the lines of the ideas expressed near the end of the second passage that had previously been read: “[T]he spirit of the Father is in his Sons’ sons — mortal men.” It is not necessary to take the common title “father” as implying hierarchy and authority.

After various remarks by other participants, I explained that in these webinars, we are not striving for uniformity, we are striving for pluralism and diversity. I have personal opinions of my own, and these personal opinions are definitely a factor in the text of *Revelation Revealed* and in the outline of ideas that I put forward for discussion. Others, however, are amply entitled to criticize these perspectives of mine, as had occurred in this instance.

In this case, I said, the wording of the sub-element was a way of expressing my concern that use of the word “father” as the common form of address for a priest, and use of the phrase “Holy Father,” as frequently applied to the pope, seem to be techniques for associating the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox clergy with the spiritual realities that pertain to God the Father. In addition, I wondered whether use of the term “father” to refer to a priest also implicitly amounted to an effort to assume a correspondence to the role of a father in a family.

Another participant declared that applying the idea of a father to a priest clearly amounts to clericalism. This is a huge leap and a usurpation that has a great psychological impact on the individual. Clericalism, he said, involves authority over believers and divisions that distinguish the top of the hierarchy from the rest. He conceded, however, that the Roman idea of hierarchy is evident in many organizations that we associate with everyday life, including private enterprises. He wondered whether recent organizational concepts such as “holarchy” and a different “ontology” for how activities are organized and pursued may eventually lead human beings to patterns that make substantially less use of hierarchical authority.

Yet another participant commented that the word “father” can imply a loving attitude, or it can be taken to represent authority. He understood the concern that I had expressed, but said he could make an argument from both perspectives.

In addition, a different participant commented on the metaphors that Jesus used for leadership. First, he called attention to the idea of the shepherd and the flock — leadership reflecting profound respect for and tremendous devotion to the welfare of the flock. Second, he cited Jesus’ view that the greatest leaders should be the servants of all.

Another participant reacted to these ideas by declaring that the wording Jesus used could be taken to be even more hierarchical, even more condescending. In his view, few contemporary believers would welcome references implicitly depicting them as “sheep.”

(2) Describing the initiation ceremony called ordination as a sacrament that imparts an indelible mark on the soul of the man who has just become a priest.

During extended discussion, I pointed out that the traditional Christian concept of the soul differs quite substantially from the teachings whereby the revelators explain it as the Thought Adjuster's transcript of a human being's choices and decisions. There seemed to be general agreement that the spiritual significance of being ordained should be associated with the individual's freewill choice to carry out religious responsibilities; the results should not be considered to be a mark on the soul imparted by the person who conducted the ordination ceremony (usually a bishop).

One participant called attention to the role of the spirit in this process. Another participant described the ordination ceremony as a sacrament, an outward, symbolic representation of the candidate's choice to do the Father's will. Yet another participant referred to a book written by a former Roman Catholic priest who now advocates that the clergy be desacralized. This change, he declared, would not only require that the clergy disavow its ideological myth about its identity, but also a change of attitudes among the laity who had contributed to that myth and accepted it for many centuries.

(3) Asserting that ordination as a priest enables that man to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of "transubstantiation") by means of prescribed statements that he makes during a stereotyped religious service called "the mass." Here, for comparison, is a relevant quotation from Paper 87:

The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets. The Christian cult has been devitalized by the loss of many fundamental ideas. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4]

One participant voiced strong objections to the wording of this sub-element, calling it fundamentally inaccurate and declaring that it does not portray any doctrine or teaching of the Roman Catholic faith. Quite simply, he said, the priest does not have that power, and Roman Catholics do not believe that he does. To the contrary, Roman Catholic doctrine states that only God or Christ possesses the power to work the miracle of transubstantiation.

COMMENT. Since the panelist in question did not elaborate during the webinar, I followed up by sending him an inquiry by E-mail. In reply, he accepted the following three sentences as a brief paraphrase of Roman Catholic doctrine on the subject:

Roman Catholics believe that during the religious service called "the mass," the creative spiritual power of God transforms bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (i.e., the doctrine of "transubstantiation"). The priest conducting the service informs the congregation that this spiritual transformation has occurred, announcing it by means of the prescribed phrases "This is my body" and "This is my blood." In effect, he "administers" the sacrament involving the transformation of bread and wine.

Another participant commented on the idea of “transubstantiation” from a scientific perspective. In his view, the idea that a sacramental ceremony, the mass, can have a metaphysical effect on a piece of bread is just not credible. We live in a scientific age. As the Midwayer Commission states in Paper 195, “The modern age will refuse to accept a religion which is inconsistent with facts and out of harmony with its highest conceptions of truth, beauty, and goodness” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2083:1 / 95:9.5*].

I commented that there has been a substantial division among Protestants in interpreting the idea of a communion service or remembrance supper. Martin Luther appears to have emphasized the real presence of Jesus and was not comfortable with the ideas of the Swiss reformers (to the effect that the communion service was essentially a symbolic evocation of the Last Supper and, by implication, the teachings of Jesus). If we combine these divergences with the uninterrupted arguments between Protestants and Roman Catholics, it seems reasonable to conclude that over the last 500 years, more ink has been spilled on these matters than on any other topic of Christian theology.

One participant commented that the details are the purview of professional theologians and that he was happy to leave all this to them. The most important search, in his view, is aimed at contact with the deity within. In his view, the bread should symbolize the spiritual essence of Jesus’ teachings, whereas the wine symbolizes the essence of his spiritual presence. In addition, he said, the ceremony or commemoration serves as an example or illustration of the believer’s intimate parent-child relationship with God.

As the discussion approached its conclusion, I asked whether interpreting the meaning of this particular service or ceremony or commemoration ought to be left implicit, inexplicit, and not fully defined — as a matter for each individual believer to find for himself or herself. In other words, I said, we are looking at a question of the inappropriateness of uniformity of belief, as opposed to a more creative interpretation of spiritual realities that is left to the individual.

One participant agreed with that approach, associating it with personal (individual) religion. On the other hand, he qualified this by declaring that rituals are important for our culture. Symbols can convey the presence of divinity to the mortal mind. A symbol, in his view, can be sacred without being a sacrament or requiring the clergy.

Another participant called attention to the following paragraph in section 5 of Paper 91:

But the minds of greater spiritual illumination should be patient with, and tolerant of, those less endowed intellects that crave symbolism for the mobilization of their feeble spiritual insight. The strong must not look with disdain upon the weak. Those who are God-conscious without symbolism must not deny the grace-ministry of the symbol to those who find it difficult to worship Deity and to revere truth, beauty, and goodness without form and ritual. In prayerful worship, most mortals

envision some symbol of the object-goal of their devotions. *[The Chief of the Urantia Midwayers, 999:3 / 91:5.7]*

Yet another participant concluded the webinar by commenting that personal interpretation is important, but most people crave some guidance, some teaching. In his view, there will always be some hierarchy, and there will always be teachers and students.

Previewing our webinar on August 3

On August 3, we will continue discussing the same tick that I introduced in the program for July 27, but will of course proceed directly to sub-element (4):

— Five conscious, considered strategies of the organized, institutional church, methods that are clearly intended to enhance ecclesiastical authority and justify insistence that believers obey the clergy in regard to all aspects of Christian belief and practice: ...

(4) Declaring that believers receive God’s forgiveness for errors and misconduct if and only if they confess their sins to a priest by means of a prescribed ceremony that is commonly called the sacrament of penance, confession, or reconciliation.

(5) Claiming the authority to declare that a deceased former human being has found particular favor with God and can now be called a “saint” (canonization), or that he or she is entitled to the lesser honor of being called “blessed” or “venerable.” An integral part of this assertion is the authorization for believers to pray to anyone whom the Roman Catholic Church has declared to be a saint.

Civil authority of the popes

As a keynote that will serve to unify this part of the discussion, I will call attention to a statement by a Divine Counselor that we read in section 1 of Paper 19:

The true perspective of any reality problem — human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic — can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, **history**, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. *[A Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6 — emphasis added: the word in bold type]*

If we launch our analysis by examining the years during which Christ Michael of Nebadon bequeathed his bestowal life in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, it is important to point out that Jesus stated quite emphatically that his kingdom is not of this world. Nonetheless, the popes — who have traditionally claimed to be “the vicar of Christ” — proceeded to establish a kingdom that definitely was of this world; and in order to promote this cause, they exerted intense political and diplomatic

effort aimed at maintaining and exerting civil authority in central Italy for far more than one thousand years (until 1870).

REFERENCES. Chapter 18 of the gospel according to John records Jesus' statement that his kingdom is not of this world:

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world ..." (*John 18:36 / King James Version*).

This is the beginning of Jesus' reply to a question from Pilate, whereas the revelators report the complete discussion [*the Midwayer Commission, 1991:3 / 185:3.3*]. To put Jesus' reply in a broader context, I also found 14 other passages in the fifth epochal revelation in which the Midwayer Commission reports or calls attention to Jesus' statement that his kingdom was not of this world. Here is the list of all 15 paragraphs:

- (1) 137:8.7
- (2) 138:7.1
- (3) 152:3.2
- (4) 153:2.4
- (5) 157:6.12
- (6) 158:6.2
- (7) 162:5.3
- (8) 171:2.5
- (9) 171:8.3
- (10) 172:3.6
- (11) 176:2.3
- (12) 181:2.9
- (13) 182:2.3
- (14) 185:3.3
- (15) 190:5.4

Yet another statement that Jesus made repeatedly is also highly relevant for our current purposes: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things which are God's." The Midwayer Commission reports this statement in four different passages: (a) 1474:3 / 133:4.3; (b) 1580:4 / 140:8.9; (c) 1899:2 / 174:2.2; and (d) 1929:4 / 178:1.3. In addition, this statement appears in two verses of the Christian New Testament: **Matthew 22:21** and **Mark 12:17**.

By implication, the two halves of this sentence establish that religion and government constitute realms that should be separate, and that a religious leader who claims to speak for God (in this case, the pope) should not *also* seek to assert political authority (i.e., "the things which are Caesar's"). Further, a Melchizedek warns us that "Union of church and state" is one of the grave dangers that human beings must avoid if we wish to maintain our freedom [*a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17*].

Since subsequent discussion will draw on the twelve documents that I have attached, it seems appropriate to list them here.

Complete list of attachments

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

Attachments pertaining to the kingdom that the popes established

2. "Appendix B: The Donation of Constantine." (This is an appendix to a memorandum dated July 26, 2005 in which I maintained quite strenuously that Urantia Foundation — the sponsor and chief publisher of *The Urantia Book* — should not use images or symbols drawn from the traditions of Christianity, for in my view this would leave an inaccurate and misleading impression.)

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4. "Papal States" (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015).

— Pope Pius IX

5. "Pius IX" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

6. "Syllabus of Errors" (Wikipedia).

7. "The Syllabus: Pope Pius IX" (the text, downloaded from an Internet website).

— Infallibility / First Vatican Council 1870

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

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

9. Introduction by the German theologian Hans Küng.

10. "Küng, Hans" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

11. "Hans Küng" (Wikipedia).

12. Excerpts from the book.

Questions for discussion

X1. The fact that the popes exerted civil authority by establishing and maintaining a kingdom in central Italy for over 1,000 years has nothing to do with the true teachings of Jesus and appears to be an obvious and palpable contradiction. Do you agree? In any case, please provide your net appraisal of these political arrangements that finally ended in 1870.

X2. The historian Norman Cantor refers to the so-called “Donation of Constantine” as “the best-known forgery in history.” How does this misrepresentation of historical events for the sake of one’s own personal, organizational, or institutional advantage compare with the practices of historical revisionism, deception, and deliberate falsehoods that were standard techniques of the totalitarian regimes that operated in the 20th century (i.e., Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and Communist China)? Does there seem to be a broad parallel to the deceptive practices that George Orwell caricatured in his celebrated novel *1984*?

X3. Although there is little reason to infer that Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was impressed when Pope Leo IX mentioned the so-called Donation of Constantine in an official document that he sent to Cerularius in the year 1054, Christians living in Western Europe appear to have accepted the validity of the so-called Donation for quite a few centuries (until the Renaissance). Why did the popes of those centuries get away with these palpable falsehoods?

X4. In effect, the Syllabus of Errors (December 8, 1864) consists of a series of analytical statements and opinions that Pope Pius IX formally condemned (attachments 6 and 7). On the understanding that the church’s assertion of authority over marriage (and the enactment of many ecclesiastical laws and regulations constraining marriage and regulating it) did not occur until after the year 1000, please comment on the following paragraph and its implications.

65. The doctrine that Christ has raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament cannot be at all tolerated. — Apostolic Letter “Ad Apostolicae,” Aug. 22, 1851.

X5. In the introduction that the German theologian Hans Küng wrote for the book by August Bernard Hasler, Küng repeatedly cites the Roman Catholic teaching called “the magisterium.” In brief, the word *magisterium* comes from the Latin word for “master,” the same concept that is the basis for a master’s degree. From a theological perspective, the idea of “the magisterium” amounts to asserting that the Roman Catholic Church is the master of all Christian doctrine and has the authority to insist on conformity, uniformity, and obedience. Please comment.

X6. If we combine the introduction by Hans Küng (attachment 9) with the excerpts from the book by August Bernhard Hasler (attachment 12), we find repeated references to the Vatican’s tendency to release information about the First Vatican Council (1870) slowly and selectively, as well as tactics that deserve to be considered high-handed or even tyrannical (e.g., censorship, punishment of dissenting bishops). If you find these accounts convincing, who bears the primary responsibility? Can the events of that Council be considered valid and fair? Please explain your conclusions.

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

X8. In December 1979, Pope John Paul II disciplined the German theologian Hans Küng by stripping him of his ecclesiastical teaching privileges, so that he could “neither be considered a Catholic teacher nor engage in teaching as such” (page 3 of attachment 12). Further, in the year 2000, the same pope beatified Pope Pius IX (i.e., by presiding over a formal ceremony in which Pius IX was given the title “blessed”). How do these two official actions of John Paul II compare with his carefully cultivated public image as a kindly and congenial grandfather?

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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, August 3:

- 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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Regards, Neal Waldrop.
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[August 3, 2019 at 1:25 am]

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Friday, August 9, 2019 11:47 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on August 3, plans for August 17
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2005-07-26_note-added_Uses-of-history_App-B.pdf; 2018-10-05_Cantor_076-079_Donation-of-Constantine.pdf; 2019-06-09_Papal-States_EncyBrit-2015.pdf; 2019-06-25_Pius-IX_EncyBrit-2015.pdf; 2019-06-25_Syllabus-of-Errors_Wikipedia.pdf; 2019-06-25_1864-12-08_v2_Syllabus-of-Errors_Pope-Piux-IX_text.pdf; 2019-06-25_Hasler-book_dust-jacket.pdf; 2019-06-26_Hasler-book_introduction.pdf; 2019-06-15_Küng-Hans_Britannica-2015.pdf; 2019-06-18_Küng-Hans_Wikipedia.pdf; 2019-06-29_Hasler-book_excerpts.pdf; 2019-06-24_v2_Living-the-real-religion-of-Jesus.pdf

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

On Saturday, August 3, we conducted our eighteenth 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:

We originally planned to continue our series of webinars on Saturday, August 10, but highly unfavorable circumstances compelled me to cancel that webinar. This was because sudden, unforeseen family obligations made it impossible for two panelists to participate, thereby depriving us of anyone whose extensive experience with Zoom would have enabled him to manage the program. Therefore we will conduct our next webinar in this series on Saturday, August 17.

Special status for the clergy: previous discussion (July 27)

During the preceding webinar (July 27), we began discussing the implications of paragraph (d) on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*:

(d) Special status for the clergy. Institutional Christianity distinguishes quite sharply between professional religionists (the clergy) and ordinary believers (the laity). Here we must note, however, that the clergy’s prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.

At that time, participants exchanged detailed views on the following first tick:

— **Dividing believers into two fundamental categories, clergy vs. laity, whereby the latter are distinctly subordinate and are treated as second-class citizens.**

I made it clear that the points identified under the second tick are particularly characteristic of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas they have nothing to do with the belief or observance of Protestant Christians. Here is the heading of this second tick:

— Five conscious, considered strategies of the organized, institutional church, methods that are clearly intended to enhance ecclesiastical authority and justify insistence that believers obey the clergy in regard to all aspects of Christian belief and practice:

The rest of the webinar on July 27 was devoted to intensive discussion of the first three sub-elements under that tick:

(1) Seizing upon and exploiting the psychological and theological implications of the word “father.”

(2) Describing the initiation ceremony called ordination as a sacrament that imparts an indelible mark on the soul of the man who has just become a priest.

(3) Asserting that ordination as a priest enables that man to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of “transubstantiation”) by means of prescribed statements that he makes during a stereotyped religious service called “the mass.” Here, for comparison, is a relevant quotation from Paper 87:

The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets. The Christian cult has been devitalized by the loss of many fundamental ideas. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 965:8 / 87:7.4]

Special status for the clergy: discussion on August 3

On August 3, panelists continued discussing ideas associated with special status for the clergy. We resumed where we had left off on July 27, thereby proceeding directly to sub-element (4):

(4) Declaring that believers receive God’s forgiveness for errors and misconduct if and only if they confess their sins to a priest by means of a prescribed ceremony that is commonly called the sacrament of penance, confession, or reconciliation.

One participant commented that in a psychological sense, the idea of penance or confession is associated with regret at failing to live up to one’s ideals. From this perspective, that is how some believers deal with their feelings of failure and inadequacy. He compared it with how difficult it was for people living during the third epochal revelation — the mission of Machiventa Melchizedek in Palestine, which occurred approximately 2,000 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth — to accept that salvation was available simply by their faith. As a Melchizedek informs us in section 4 of Paper 93:

[S]uch a short and simple declaration of faith was altogether too much and too advanced for the men of those days. They simply could not grasp the idea of getting divine favor for nothing — by faith. They were too deeply confirmed in the belief that man was born under forfeit to the gods. Too long and too earnestly had they sacrificed and made gifts to the priests to be able to comprehend the good news that salvation, divine favor, was a free gift to all who would believe in the Melchizedek covenant. [A Melchizedek, 1017:7 / 93:4.5]

On the other hand, the same participant commented that from the perspective of the organized, institutional church, the ceremony called penance or confession could betoken a desire to maintain spiritual superiority and authority over believers.

Another panelist commented on his experiences as a Roman Catholic believer during his childhood and adolescence in New York City in the late 1940s and 1950s. He had been taught that the ceremony of confession was not essential to salvation and that he could confess to God personally, especially in an emergency situation. (He mentioned that the Korean War was going on at the time, thereby implying that a soldier in combat could benefit from the concept of confessing personally without a priest present.) In relation to his own recourse to the actual ceremony of confession, the penances he had received had mainly consisted of prayers he was instructed to say.

In contrast, however, he discussed spontaneous, voluntary behavior associated with the Spanish cultural tradition in the southwest part of the United States on the part of certain persons who called themselves “*penitentes*.” The underlying idea was to inflict deliberate bodily pain on themselves, perhaps by carrying a heavy cross or even by whipping themselves on the back. This, in their view, enabled them to identify with Jesus by sharing his pain.

I followed up by inferring that these were voluntary observances on the part of those particular believers, not penances that the church hierarchy had inflicted. The panelist confirmed this, stating that these practices had arisen in circumstances when there were few clergy available, or none at all.

Another participant explained the ceremony of confession from the perspective of Roman Catholic theology. The priest, he said, is not acting out of personal authority of his own, but *in persona Christi* (in the person of Christ). Therefore the believer is actually confessing his sins to Christ, and the priest is representing Christ’s power to forgive. This means that the priest is acting as a passive channel for forgiveness. In the Eastern Orthodox tradition, he said, the priest does not even have to listen to or hear the confession, which could occur during a group gathering; the priest is present more as a witness.

Yet another participant called attention to remarks by a Brilliant Evening Star in the section of Paper 89 entitled, “Sacrifices and Sacraments”:

The human sacrifice, throughout the course of the evolution of Urantian rituals, has advanced from the bloody business of man-eating to higher and more symbolic levels. The early rituals of sacrifice bred the later ceremonies of sacrament. ...

Thus are the sacraments of modern religions the legitimate successors of those shocking early ceremonies of human sacrifice and the still earlier cannibalistic rituals. Many still depend upon blood for salvation, but it has at least become figurative, symbolic, and mystic. [A Brilliant Evening Star, 983:7, 984:3 / 89:9.1,4]

On the other hand, he said, the ceremony or sacrament of confession still amounts to a slippery slope, for it continues to entail the view that some specific practice or procedure is required in order to obtain God's favor.

Like a previous speaker who had described his experiences as a Roman Catholic believer growing up in New York City, I indicated that I attended a Roman Catholic high school administered by priests and scholastics of the Jesuit order. At the time, however, what struck me most of all was the psychology of classmates who declared that they could do whatever they wanted and then go to a priest, confess, and be absolved for their sins. That, in their view, would return them to good standing with God.

(5) Claiming the authority to declare that a deceased former human being has found particular favor with God and can now be called a "saint" (canonization), or that he or she is entitled to the lesser honor of being called "blessed" or "venerable." An integral part of this assertion is the authorization for believers to pray to anyone whom the Roman Catholic Church has declared to be a saint.

One participant stated that from his experiences as a person raised in the Roman Catholic faith, reverence for saints was completely routine. The yearly calendar of observances was marked with celebrations pertaining to various saints, in some cases their birthdays. Many persons ended up picking a particular saint as his or her channel to salvation, while believing that the saint in question would exert spiritual influence on the believer's behalf.

The same panelist commented that during the bulk of the Middle Ages, from 500 to at least 1300 CE, saints and reverence for them were very important aspects of Christian belief and practice. The church established formal procedures for recognizing a deceased human being as a saint, a process requiring formal acceptance of the supposedly miraculous character of three separate events wherein a believer had been cured of some disease. If the believer (or other persons concerned about his or her situation) had prayed to the deceased human being, and if the believer had subsequently been cured, these events could be considered one of the three miracles that would justify the church in recognizing the deceased human being as a saint.

I remarked that even if these events had occurred as described, the conclusion involves a gap in logic, a fallacy expressed by the traditional phrase in Latin "*post hoc ergo propter hoc*" (after something,

therefore because of it). Another participant remarked that although he would not wish to impugn the spiritual beliefs of others, as a matter of logic one cannot argue from effects to causes.

Another participant called attention to a paragraph in which the members of the Midwayer Commission express their own views on what really is miraculous:

Urantia mortals have varying concepts of the miraculous, but to us who live as citizens of the local universe there are few miracles, and of these by far the most intriguing are the incarnational bestowals of the Paradise Sons. The appearance in and on your world, by apparently natural processes, of a divine Son, we regard as a miracle — the operation of universal laws beyond our understanding. Jesus of Nazareth was a miraculous person. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1331:5 / 120:4.5*]

Yet another participant stated that while preparing for the webinar, he had researched the topic of Christian saints and had found no evidence of a relationship with previous worship of anthropomorphic pagan deities in the Greek or Roman world. On the other hand, he said, there appears to be a strong connection with venerating ancestors and venerating the dead in general. In his view, there is a strong human need to remember the dead, celebrate the dead, even venerate the dead. It was not until the 5th century that the organized, institutional church acquired any control over the spontaneous tendencies of Christian believers to venerate the dead, especially Christian martyrs. Augustine and Ambrose both complained about these practices.

CONCLUDING COMMENT. The traditional Roman Catholic view that prayer to some deceased individual can cause the miraculous cure of disease implicitly involves the belief that spiritual energies (supernatural power) are available to effect practical results in the physical realm. This is one aspect of the ideology whereby spirit is thought to control all aspects of finite reality, so as to exert dominance over matter as well as mind. That ideology made a profound contribution to ecclesiastical totalitarianism in the Middle Ages, whereas the opposite philosophy is a key ingredient of secular totalitarianism — the illusion that matter dominates the other two realms of reality, mind as well as spirit.

Civil authority of the popes

When I asked the panelists to turn to the next topic listed in the discussion program that I had circulated in advance, I requested that one of them read a statement by a Divine Counselor that appears in section 1 of Paper 19:

The true perspective of any reality problem — human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic — can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, **history**, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. [*A Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6 — emphasis added: the word in bold type*]

I explained that a key reason of mine for calling attention to these remarks by a Divine Counselor relates to the character and inclinations of my fellow countrymen, citizens of the United States. I said I was rather concerned about a tendency to focus intently on current circumstances, emphasizing the present moment. In contrast, I believe that we cannot understand the reality of institutions associated with Christianity (in this case, the papacy) unless we understand what came before.

One participant replied that its is extremely helpful to expand the immediate moment so that our discussion will include previous events. On the other hand, he emphasized that the Christian church also had an origin that is worthy of consideration; neither should we neglect its destiny.

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

Introduction

If we launch our analysis by examining the years during which Christ Michael of Nebadon bequeathed his bestowal life in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, it is important to point out that Jesus stated quite emphatically that his kingdom is not of this world. Nonetheless, the popes — who have traditionally claimed to be “the vicar of Christ” — proceeded to establish a kingdom that definitely was of this world; and in order to promote this cause, they exerted intense political and diplomatic effort aimed at maintaining and exerting civil authority in central Italy for far more than one thousand years (until 1870).

REFERENCES. Chapter 18 of the gospel according to John records Jesus' statement that his kingdom is not of this world:

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world ...” (*John 18:36 / King James Version*).

This is the beginning of Jesus' reply to a question from Pilate, whereas the revelators report the complete discussion [*the Midwayer Commission, 1991:3 / 185:3.3*]. To put Jesus' reply in a broader context, I also found 14 other passages in the fifth epochal revelation in which the Midwayer Commission reports or calls attention to Jesus' statement that his kingdom was not of this world. Here is the list of all 15 paragraphs:

- (1) 137:8.7
- (2) 138:7.1

- (3) 152:3.2
- (4) 153:2.4
- (5) 157:6.12
- (6) 158:6.2
- (7) 162:5.3
- (8) 171:2.5
- (9) 171:8.3
- (10) 172:3.6
- (11) 176:2.3
- (12) 181:2.9
- (13) 182:2.3
- (14) 185:3.3
- (15) 190:5.4

Yet another statement that Jesus made repeatedly is also highly relevant for our current purposes: [“Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s and unto God the things which are God’s.”](#) The Midwayer Commission reports this statement in four different passages: (a) 1474:3 / 133:4.3; (b) 1580:4 / 140:8.9; (c) 1899:2 / 174:2.2; and (d) 1929:4 / 178:1.3. In addition, this statement appears in two verses of the Christian New Testament: [Matthew 22:21](#) and [Mark 12:17](#).

By implication, the two halves of this sentence establish that religion and government constitute realms that should be entirely separate, and that a religious leader who claims to speak for God (in this case, the pope) should not *also* seek to assert political authority (i.e., [“the things which are Caesar’s”](#)). Further, a Melchizedek warns us that [“Union of church and state”](#) is one of the grave dangers that human beings must avoid if we wish to maintain our freedom [[a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17](#)].

(NOTE: Since subsequent discussion drew on the documents that I have attached to this message, it seems appropriate to list them here.)

[Complete list of attachments](#)

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

[Attachments pertaining to the kingdom that the popes established](#)

2. [“Appendix B: The Donation of Constantine.”](#) (This is an appendix to a memorandum dated July 26, 2005 in which I maintained quite strenuously that Urantia Foundation — the sponsor and chief publisher of *The Urantia Book* — should not use images or symbols drawn from the traditions of Christianity, for in my view this would leave an inaccurate and misleading impression.)
3. [“Civil authority from the chair of Peter: Papal ideology rooted in ‘the Donation of Constantine’”](#) (excerpted from pages 176-179 of *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* by Norman F. Cantor, a book published in 1993).
4. [“Papal States”](#) (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015).

— Pope Pius IX

5. “Pius IX” (Encyclopaedia Britannica).
6. “Syllabus of Errors” (Wikipedia).
7. “The Syllabus: Pope Pius IX” (the text, downloaded from an Internet website).

— Infallibility / First Vatican Council 1870

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

8. Biographic information about the author appearing on the dust jacket, along with excerpts from a review.
9. Introduction by the German theologian Hans Küng.
10. “Küng, Hans” (Encyclopaedia Britannica).
11. “Hans Küng” (Wikipedia).
12. Excerpts from the book.

Additional attachment, a new essay of mine that was not available to the panelists who participated in the webinar on August 3

13. “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” (June 24, 2019).

Questions that we began discussing on August 3

X1. The fact that the popes exerted civil authority by establishing and maintaining a kingdom in central Italy for over 1,000 years has nothing to do with the true teachings of Jesus and appears to be an obvious and palpable contradiction. Do you agree? In any case, please provide your net appraisal of these political arrangements that finally ended in 1870.

One participant stated that he would begin his response with what he called “counterfactual history,” history that did not happen but might have. He wondered what the path of the Christian church would have been if the western half of the Roman Empire had not collapsed in the 5th century. It is possible that church leaders believed that the church was the only institution still existing that could fill the power vacuum. He conceded, however, that church authority operated through the actions of human beings who may have taken advantage of the opportunity to enhance their own power.

Another participant commented in much the same vein, calling the church’s authority over civil matters a necessary evil that, in his view, had its origins in the power vacuum that began in the 5th century. On the other hand, the organized, institutional church eventually became a victim of its own success, turning totalitarian. Individuals were tempted to exercise power. This is nothing new in the

history of humanity, and it does not mean that believers did not benefit from the church's activities. He knew many Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant Christians who have acquired a real sense of peace as a result of their active association with the organized, institutional church.

I pursued these issues by stating that I do not know enough about the circumstances of the 5th and 6th centuries, the idea of the relative disorder prevailing then, in order to be able to comment on the apparent view of other participants that the pope had to exert authority at that time. In contrast, however, I asked whether these factors required the papacy to continue to exercise political authority for the rest of the one thousand years, doing so in eras when other civil rulers in Europe had established relatively stable authority. I also asked how this exercise of political authority on the part of the popes of that entire period fulfilled their duties and obligations to promote the real teachings of Jesus.

One participant replied that these actions of the popes were certainly a distraction and also a contradiction. On the other hand, they may have been necessary in order to provide the possibility of maintaining and promoting the teachings of Jesus.

Another participant remarked that some church leaders may have thought they were doing the best they could. Some were motivated by power, and some had a mixture of motivations. The Most Highs rule in the kingdoms of men, and the higher celestial beings have their own plans, plans they are pursuing. It seems entirely possible that they will take a leader who is selfishly motivated and try to move him toward the goals they have in mind.

Yet another participant said he was not sure it was necessary for the church to take over the government of a country for Christian religious teachings to survive. He cited the following comments by the Midwayer Commission that appear in section 10 of Paper 195:

But there is no excuse for the involvement of the church in commerce and politics; such unholy alliances are a flagrant betrayal of the Master. And the genuine lovers of truth will be slow to forget that this powerful institutionalized church has often dared to smother newborn faith and persecute truth bearers who chanced to appear in unorthodox raiment. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2085:5 / 195:10.13*]

Plans for our webinar on August 17

On August 17, panelists will proceed to consider and answer the following additional questions about the kingdom that the popes established.

X2. The historian Norman Cantor refers to the so-called "Donation of Constantine" as "the best-known forgery in history." How does this misrepresentation of historical events for the sake of one's own personal, organizational, or institutional advantage compare with the practices of historical revisionism, deception, and deliberate falsehoods that were standard techniques of the totalitarian

regimes that operated in the 20th century (i.e., Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and Communist China)? Does there seem to be a broad parallel to the deceptive practices that George Orwell caricatured in his celebrated novel *1984*?

X3. Although there is little reason to infer that Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was impressed when Pope Leo IX mentioned the so-called Donation of Constantine in an official document that he sent to Cerularius in the year 1054, Christians living in Western Europe appear to have accepted the validity of the so-called Donation for quite a few centuries (until the Renaissance). Why did the popes of those centuries get away with these palpable falsehoods?

X4. In effect, the Syllabus of Errors (December 8, 1864) consists of a series of analytical statements and opinions that Pope Pius IX formally condemned (attachments 6 and 7). On the understanding that the church's assertion of authority over marriage — and the enactment of many ecclesiastical laws and regulations constraining marriage and regulating it — did not occur until after the year 1000, please comment on the following paragraph and its implications.

65. The doctrine that Christ has raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament cannot be at all tolerated. — Apostolic Letter "Ad Apostolicae," Aug. 22, 1851.

X5. In the introduction to the book by August Bernard Hasler written by the German theologian Hans Küng, he repeatedly mentions the Roman Catholic teaching called "the magisterium." In brief, the word *magisterium* comes from the Latin word for "master," the same concept that is the basis for a master's degree. From a theological perspective, the idea of "the magisterium" amounts to asserting that the Roman Catholic Church is the master of all Christian doctrine and has the authority to insist on conformity, uniformity, and obedience. Please comment.

X6. If we combine the introduction by Hans Küng (attachment 9) with the excerpts from the book by August Bernhard Hasler (attachment 12), we find repeated references to the Vatican's tendency to release information about the First Vatican Council (1870) slowly and selectively, as well as tactics that deserve to be considered high-handed or even tyrannical (e.g., censorship, punishment of dissenting bishops). If you find these accounts convincing, who bears the primary responsibility? Can the events of that Council be considered valid and fair? Please explain your conclusions.

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

X8. In December 1979, Pope John Paul II disciplined the German theologian Hans Küng by stripping him of his ecclesiastical teaching privileges, so that he could "neither be considered a Catholic teacher nor engage in teaching as such" (page 3 of attachment 12). Further, in the year 2000, the same pope beatified Pope Pius IX (i.e., by presiding over a formal ceremony in which Pius IX was given the title

“blessed”). How do these two official actions of John Paul II compare with his carefully cultivated public image as a kindly and congenial grandfather?

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

Living the Real Religion of Jesus

If panelists finish discussing my nine questions about the kingdom that the popes established, I will request that they turn in a very different direction, so as to discontinue discussion of the characteristics of Christianity that are identified on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*, at least for the time being. In other words, I will ask participants to begin discussing a new essay of mine, “Living the Real Religion of Jesus,” one that I completed on June 24. Please permit me to explain.

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

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

In close consultation with the two members of the Committee for the Global Endeavor who provided cogent comments and recommendations while I was drafting *Revelation Revealed* in the first place, I decided to write new material that will eventually be inserted immediately after formal question 59 on page 89.

(Note: The actual insertion will occur when we issue an updated version of the long document that will include my essay “Romanità.” On the other hand, it will not make sense to issue this update until participants in our webinars finish discussing topic 8 as it stands, an achievement that seems rather distant since the existing text extends through page 146.)

I began drafting the new material shortly after phase 3 ended on May 18, and did not finish the task until June 24. The effort was arduous, for my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” embodies several shifts of focus. From time to time, I had to pause to gather my thoughts and work out a strategy for the next few pages. (When phrases or even complete sentences start running through my mind spontaneously, I know I am ready to sit down at my keyboard and begin applying my fingers.)

The new essay consists of 18 pages and is subdivided into four major segments:

- Finding God for oneself (*pages 1-2*).
- The religion of personal spiritual experience (*pages 2-6*).
- The presence of God (*pages 7-11*).
- The mission and the time line (*pages 11-18*).

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, August 17:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.

Please be aware that the starting time is only approximate, for it usually takes us a few minutes to make the adjustments to the rather complicated software that cause all the participants to be viewed and heard correctly. In relation to our preceding webinars associated with topic 8, live streaming in YouTube began at about ten minutes past the time stated.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[August 9, 2019 at 11:47 pm]

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2019 10:15 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on August 17, plans for August 24
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2005-07-26_note-added_Uses-of-history_App-B.pdf; 2018-10-05_Cantor_076-079_Donation-of-Constantine.pdf; 2019-06-09_Papal-States_EncyBrit-2015.pdf; 2019-06-25_Pius-IX_EncyBrit-2015.pdf; 2019-06-25_Syllabus-of-Errors_Wikipedia.pdf; 2019-06-25_1864-12-08_v2_Syllabus-of-Errors_Pope-Piux-IX_text.pdf; 2019-06-25_Hasler-book_dust-jacket.pdf; 2019-06-26_Hasler-book_introduction.pdf; 2019-06-15_Küng-Hans_Britannica-2015.pdf; 2019-06-18_Küng-Hans_Wikipedia.pdf; 2019-06-29_Hasler-book_excerpts.pdf; 2019-06-24_v2_Living-the-real-religion-of-Jesus.pdf

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

On Saturday, August 17, we conducted our nineteenth 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.”

Special status for the clergy

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

(d) Special status for the clergy. Institutional Christianity distinguishes quite sharply between professional religionists (the clergy) and ordinary believers (the laity). Here we must note, however, that the clergy’s prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.

On August 17, we had turned to a specific application of this general set of issues, **the civil authority of the popes** and, in particular, **the kingdom that the popes established** — a kingdom whereby the popes ruled the middle one-third of Italy for over one thousand years (until 1870). To put this discussion in context, I read a statement by a Divine Counselor that appears in section 1 of Paper 19:

The true perspective of any reality problem — human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic — can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, **history**, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. [*A Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6 — emphasis added: the word in bold type*]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific questions on the kingdom that the popes established

(Note: These questions draw on ideas expressed in the many documents that I circulated in advance and have also attached to this message. For a complete list, see the end of this message.)

X1. The fact that the popes exerted civil authority by establishing and maintaining a kingdom in central Italy for over 1,000 years has nothing to do with the true teachings of Jesus and appears to be an obvious and palpable contradiction. Do you agree? In any case, please provide your net appraisal of these political arrangements that finally ended in 1870.

(Note: This question was discussed during our webinar on August 3; I summarized that discussion in the wrap-up that I circulated on August 9.)

X2. The historian Norman Cantor refers to the so-called “Donation of Constantine” as “the best-known forgery in history.” How does this misrepresentation of historical events for the sake of one's own personal, organizational, or institutional advantage compare with the practices of historical revisionism, deception, and deliberate falsehoods that were standard techniques of the totalitarian regimes that operated in the 20th century (i.e., Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and

Communist China)? Does there seem to be a broad parallel to the deceptive practices that George Orwell caricatured in his celebrated novel *1984*?

Discussion of this question was quite vigorous and certainly did not betoken any agreed conclusions. (As I have previously emphasized, pluralism and diversity are hallmarks of our entire series of webinars, and this is most assuredly not an accident.)

— Several participants commented that in their view, the wording of this question of mine was anachronistic, exaggerated, and/or overdrawn. In part, these participants believed that the references to Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and Communist China were inappropriate and unfair, pointing out that the massacres of millions that these totalitarian regimes conducted during the 20th century did not correspond to any events associated with the Roman Catholic Church in general, nor with the pope in particular. Two participants referred to a passage that appeared in one of the documents I had circulated, a document consisting of excerpts from an historical work by Norman F. Cantor:

(from pages 1 and 2 of the PDF file, corresponding to pages 176 and 177 of the book)

The papacy was furthermore not concerned about the introduction of theocratic monarchy into western Europe because it had formulated its own ideology of the papal suzerainty over the kings of western Europe, and it obtained from Pepin the apparent recognition of the validity of this doctrine. The idea of papal authority in the western world was formulated in the famous medieval document, the Donation of Constantine, the best-known forgery in history. There is some doubt about the date of the authorship of the Donation of Constantine in the form in which it has come down to us. It is probable that the surviving version was drafted in the middle of the ninth century, but there is ample evidence that the original Donation of Constantine, substantially the same document that has come down to us, was drawn up in the papal chancery in the 750s, personally presented by the pope to Pepin at Paris in 754, and accepted by the Frankish king as a true statement of the valid powers of the papacy.

The papacy thought it necessary to express its ideology through the medium of a forged document attributed to the emperor Constantine because of the nature of legal concepts in the early Middle Ages. The good law was the old law; law was virtually equivalent to custom, and new claims had to have some customary or historical basis. Given also the respect that men in a largely illiterate society accorded written documents, it is easy to understand the propensity of churchmen in the early Middle Ages to forge documents to establish a legal basis for their claims. The forged character of the Donation of Constantine does not convict the eighth-century popes of moral turpitude; the document was merely a legal way of expressing papal ideology. It is furthermore probable that the papacy actually regarded as true the peculiar interpretation of the history of Constantine's reign upon which the Donation was predicated and that is summarized in the prologue to the document. The papal court in Rome was not able to find a copy of the document that they really believed Constantine had issued, so they forged their own version in much the same way as many medieval monasteries forged new copies of genuine charters that had been lost.

— One of these participants called attention to the stabilizing role of Pope Gregory the Great (who reigned from 590 to 604 CE) and his contributions to the development of Western culture and civilization, including aspects associated with Benedict of Nursia and the role of monasteries (e.g., Benedict’s rule and the monastery that he established at Monte Cassino). In his view, the popes of that general era lent order and stability in the context of the troubled circumstances that followed the fall of the western half of the Roman Empire in 476 CE.

— I replied that the intent of my question centered on deceit, falsehood, and disinformation for political advantage, techniques that had certainly been practiced by the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. The massacres of many millions of human beings that they also carried out were certainly not the point, and I had not meant to refer to any of that. The concept that the popes functioned as a force for order and stability during the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries seemed to me to have a plausible basis, whereas there did not seem to be any logical reason for asserting that this assumption of political authority on the part of the popes needed to last for more than one thousand years, thereby extending through many centuries when the civil rulers of other parts of western Europe had established stable regimes.

— In regard to this latter issue, two participants cited the justly famous remarks of the 19th century British statesman Lord Acton (1834-1902): “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” (COMMENT: By citing this statement of Lord Acton’s, these two participants effectively conceded that the political rule of the popes during the subsequent centuries leading to 1870 stemmed from their desire to maintain and exercise political power — motivations that certainly had nothing to do with the true teachings of Jesus, nor with their spiritual responsibility to promote and advance them.)

— In another part of this vigorous discussion, I pointed out that in 1440 CE, a Renaissance humanist (Lorenzo Valla) had used linguistic analysis of the text of the so-called Donation of Constantine, demonstrating that it was clearly a forgery because the vocabulary and literary style in Latin were inconsistent with the wording of imperial edicts that actually were issued in Constantine’s era. Nonetheless, in 1520, the pope commissioned the celebrated artist Raphael to paint a mural in the Vatican showing the Emperor Constantine on his knees before the pope of that time, an event that was entirely imaginary and that never happened. (**Note:** Raphael designed the entire Hall of Constantine in the Vatican, but his sudden death enabled him to escape the ignominy of actually painting the fresco. After Raphael died on April 6, 1520, his 37th birthday, his assistants completed the work on his behalf.)

— Another participant cited insightful remarks by the late historian Howard Zinn: “He who controls the past controls the future.” He had not been shocked by the wording of the question, for we were indeed talking about revisionism, deception, and falsehood. In addition, he believed that the reference to the novel *1984* by George Orwell was a profound part of the question. Until Gutenberg began operating his printing press in around 1430, the practice of ecclesiastical totalitarianism made it easy for the leaders and theologians of the Roman Catholic Church to advance and promote any ideas that they chose to focus on. As the revelators tell us in section 8 of Paper 195, “It required a

great power, a mighty influence, to free the thinking and living of the Western peoples from the withering grasp of a totalitarian ecclesiastical domination” [*the Midway Commission, 2081:4 / 195:8.4*]. This mighty influence was secularism, but it eventually entailed other consequences that were far less favorable.

— Yet another participant remarked that during the first three centuries of the Christian faith, it had been essentially a spiritual movement focused on brotherhood, love, and mercy. Thereafter, however, motivations that related to power became very prominent. (COMMENT: This transition was closely linked to the decision of the Emperor Constantine in the early years of the 4th century to patronize and subsidize the Christian faith. As we previously discussed in relation to my essay “Romanità,” the net result was to cause four aspects of Roman society and culture to become fused with the Christian faith: (1) authority; (2) hierarchy; (3) uniformity; and (4) explicitly defined responsibilities and roles.)

X3. Although there is little reason to infer that Michael Cerularius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was impressed when Pope Leo IX mentioned the so-called Donation of Constantine in an official document that he sent to Cerularius in the year 1054, Christians living in Western Europe appear to have accepted the validity of the so-called Donation for quite a few centuries (until the Renaissance). Why did the popes of those centuries get away with these palpable falsehoods?

— One participant replied that it is human nature to be sheep-like and to follow blindly those who are wealthy and politically powerful. The vast majority of people living in western Europe during the Middle Ages could not read.

— Another participant responded that the question has to do with power and the general lack of education. It is not difficult to pull the wool over people’s eyes when they did not have any way to look into the question. In early medieval Europe, the monasteries were the main source of education, and the papacy did not have direct authority over them. On the other hand, he said, the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church eventually helped establish major universities, institutions that supported serious and intensive study.

— Yet another participant also commented on the importance of monasteries, especially those of the Benedictine order. She stated that monastic schools taught about 90 percent of the people who were literate.

I then explained that in order to consider the next question, we would be obliged to zoom forward into the middle of the 19th century, so as to evaluate one aspect of a document whereby Pope Pius IX resolutely attacked many opinions and theories that represented independent views of society and culture, views that no longer centered on the traditional teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

X4. In effect, the Syllabus of Errors (December 8, 1864) consists of a series of analytical statements and opinions that Pope Pius IX formally condemned (attachments 6 and 7). On the understanding that the church’s assertion of authority over marriage — and the enactment of many ecclesiastical laws

and regulations constraining marriage and regulating it — did not occur until after the year 1000, please comment on the following paragraph and its implications.

65. The doctrine that Christ has raised marriage to the dignity of a sacrament cannot be at all tolerated. — Apostolic Letter “Ad Apostolicae,” Aug. 22, 1851.

— One participant responded that there was nothing unusual in the assertion of the Roman Catholic Church of complete authority over marriage. This is an example of what totalitarian organizations do; they always overreach because they cannot stand the fact that there are important aspects of human life that they do not control.

— Another participant declared that he is not comfortable with the church inserting itself into aspects of human life that he believes to be the rights of citizens. On the other hand, he noted that the New Testament does include statements ascribed to Jesus whereby he prohibits divorce. In reply, I paraphrased what the revelators tell us: Jesus never actually made these statements, whereas various followers did not hesitate to attribute their own views to him. (Reference: [The Midwayer Commission, 1581:1 / 140:8.14.](#))

— Yet another panelist commented on documents she had found containing very detailed and extremely intrusive restrictions on sexual relations between husband and wife, restrictions issued by certain Roman Catholic officials that related not only to the timing of sexual relations, but also the manner and positions. Their underlying view was that sex was solely for producing children, and they enacted rules that reflected these attitudes. I replied that all these rules were created by males who ostensibly practiced celibacy, although that was not perfect. In any event, women were not consulted.

— In addition, a different participant called attention to unfortunate effects of the prohibition of all forms of artificial birth control, a prohibition that Pope Paul VI identified and reinforced in his encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25, 1968). In part, this panelist cited remarks by the German theologian Hans Küng appearing in the introduction he wrote (i.e., attachment 9) to the book by August Bernhard Hasler:

(excerpt appearing on pages 17 and 18 of the PDF file, corresponding to pages 25 and 26 of the book)
Pope Paul’s rejection of every form of contraception was based on the Roman concept of the authority, continuity, universality, and therefore de facto infallibility and irreversibility of traditional doctrine. ... This teaching, which forms the basis of *Humanae vitae*, has laid a heavy burden on the conscience of innumerable people, even in industrially developed countries with declining birthrates. But for the people in many underdeveloped countries, especially in Latin America, it constitutes a source of incalculable harm, a crime in which the Church has implicated itself. High birthrates are linked in a cause-effect relationship with poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, malnutrition, and disease.

X5. In the introduction to the book by August Bernard Hasler written by the German theologian Hans Küng, he repeatedly mentions the Roman Catholic teaching called “the magisterium.” In brief, the word *magisterium* comes from the Latin word for “master,” the same concept that is the basis for a master’s degree. From a theological perspective, the idea of “the magisterium” amounts to asserting that the Roman Catholic Church is the master of all Christian doctrine and has the authority to insist on conformity, uniformity, and obedience. Please comment.

Before offering the panelists an opportunity to answer, I explained that my remarks about the word *magisterium* were intended as a broad and general description of the underlying idea, not as a technical definition.

— One participant stated that he is not a fan of the idea and practice of the magisterium, but compared it with the ideas and principles that might constitute the rules of a club. He conceded that the Roman Catholic magisterium is more dictatorial than the rules of most clubs, while stating that this is certainly not a club that he would wish to join, especially with the idea of infallibility thrown in for good measure. He thought, however, that in the middle of the 19th century, traditional Roman Catholics felt the need to define themselves.

— Another participant stated that the collection of doctrines and the authority to insist on belief amounted to an integrated whole; one principle goes with the other. Authority, hierarchy, and obedience are meant to be used, and it would still be possible for the Roman Catholic Church to excommunicate someone, or to chastise him or her publicly or privately. Galileo, he said, was put on house arrest, but the Church no longer has the authority to impose any penalty along these lines.

— Yet another participant explained the Roman Catholic magisterium as what one has to believe in order to be a member of that Church. In contrast, he said, the reformers who led the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century overthrew all that, enshrining the right to form a personal view of the ideas and concepts expressed in the Christian scriptures.

— I asked a different participant whether the Roman Catholic idea of the magisterium may implicitly amount to a one-word paraphrase of the four aspects of Roman society and culture that we had discussed in connection with my essay “Romanità”: (1) authority; (2) hierarchy; (3) uniformity; and (4) explicitly defined responsibilities and roles. He said he had not previously considered this question, but believed that there is a close connection. From his perspective, there are three legs to the stool that supports the tenets and practices of the Roman Catholic Church:

- (a) The authority structure;
- (b) Traditional teachings and interpretations; and
- (c) The magisterium, an expression of the pope and bishops operating in unity, a sacred codification of all aspects.

Therefore, he said, one ends up with conformity, uniformity, and obedience, and the game is over.

X6. If we combine the introduction by Hans Küng (attachment 9) with the excerpts from the book by August Bernhard Hasler (attachment 12), we find repeated references to the Vatican’s tendency to release information about the First Vatican Council (1870) slowly and selectively, as well as tactics that deserve to be considered high-handed or even tyrannical (e.g., censorship, punishment of dissenting bishops). If you find these accounts convincing, who bears the primary responsibility? Can the events of that Council be considered valid and fair? Please explain your conclusions.

Before giving the participants an opportunity to answer this question, I read the following biographic information about the author of the book:

(biographic information appearing on the rear flap of the book’s dust jacket)

August Bernhard Hasler, before his untimely death in July 1980, served for five years in the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, concentrating on work with Lutheran, Reform, and Old Catholic churches. It was during this time that he was given access to the Vatican Archives and discovered diaries, letters, and official documents relating to the first Vatican Council that had never been studied before.

In addition, I asked participants to take turns in reading five excerpts from the book, those that follow below.

(Excerpt 1 taken from page 1 of the PDF file, corresponding to page 27 of the book)

Paul VI laid aside his tiara. Both his successors, John Paul I and John Paul II, dispensed with the throne and crown. But the popes’ claim to infallibility has remained, and hence so has their position of power. For power was the issue in 1870, when the First Vatican Council ascribed to the pope inerrancy in matters of faith and morals, together with direct sovereignty over the entire Church.

(Excerpt 2 taken from page 3 of the PDF file, corresponding to page 29 of the book)

Hardly anyone thought it could still happen, but it has: Papal Rome is once again branding as heretics those unwilling to believe in its infallibility. Of late, events have been following each other in rapid succession. On December 18, 1979, Professor Hans Küng was stripped of his ecclesiastical teaching privileges. In the future he can “neither be considered a Catholic teacher nor engage in teaching as such.” A final “attempt at reconciliation” between Küng and the bishop of Rottenburg, Georg Moser, on December 30, 1979, proved to be a failure. The Congregation of the Faith justified its action on the express grounds that in the introduction to this book and in another piece Küng had disputed the pope’s infallible magisterium.

(Excerpt 3 taken from pages 10 and 11 of the PDF file, corresponding to pages 237-239 of the book)

At first the Infallibilists complacently entertained the hope that their goal was achieved. Bishop Claude Plantier said they had succeeded in bringing about the apotheosis of authority. This was for him the most important result of the Council. The Roman pontiff's new authority, it was hoped, would also benefit the Papal States. But only two months after the definition of infallibility such expectations were cruelly disappointed. The day after the Council ended the Franco-Prussian War broke out. Shortly thereafter the last French troops left the papal harbor of Civitavecchia and the Italian Government in Florence was finally free to settle the problem of Rome. On September 20, 1870, the forces of a newly united Italy, under General Raffaele Cadorna, stormed the Porta Pia. To the very end Pius IX had thought it impossible that the Piedmontese would ever tread upon Roman soil. As in other matters, here, too, the pope believed, in his mystical extravagance, that he had been granted a special divine illumination: There is no other way of explaining the imperturbable confidence of his statements during those last days. Full of inner contentment, he could even find the time to work out a rebus which was quite popular then. But finally he ordered his general, Hermann Kanzler, to put up a token resistance — which nevertheless caused seventy human lives to be sacrificed to *raison d'état*. (During fighting at the city walls, forty-nine soldiers were killed on the Italian side, while twenty died on the papal side.) But this symbolic protest against violent and unjustified Italian aggression could not prevent the loss of Rome once and for all. The situation was not without a certain irony: The dogma of infallibility, which was supposed to prop up the secular power of the pope, only hastened the process of its disintegration. The new doctrine irritated the governments of Europe and made them apprehensive of church interference in their affairs. Neither France nor Austria nor Germany displayed any willingness to lift a finger to win back his lost territories for the pope. The whole episode reveals how completely the Infallibilists had lost their sense of political reality.

(Excerpt 4 taken from page 13 of the PDF file, corresponding to pages 244-245 of the book)

The Council's disregard for history was pregnant with consequences. The Church not only missed its chance for a rapprochement with the scientific scholarship of the day but began more and more to look like an obstacle to cultural evolution and an enemy of the unprejudiced search for truth.

It is hard to deny the justice of such complaints — the way the dogma came to be defined would be proof enough. But the anti-Infallibilists had a still more pointed objection: The dogma of infallibility was not just one more doctrine among others. It took a comprehensive position on the issue of truth. It involved a very broad claim, namely, that the pope could pronounce on questions of faith and morals with guaranteed certainty. The faith was no longer to be brought to light by laborious research and investigation but by the determination of an infallible authority.

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

The new dogma taught that the pope was infallible in matters of faith and morals — a uniquely ideological thesis. This claim extends not to one doctrinal statement but to all of them; it covers every single one. It shields the entire doctrinal structure of the Catholic Church from criticism. Papal infallibility — the formal principle, as it were, of Catholicism — becomes the crowning conclusion of

the system. The insurance policy is flawless: There can be no appeal from the pope to any other authority. Infallibility in this context functions as a meta-ideology, the ideologizing of an ideology. The many ideological elements in the system are protected by a single, constitutive, all-encompassing ideology. The aim of all this is stabilization and integration. Presupposing the fundamental principle of infallibility, the Church's entire operation can run smoothly.

— One participant chose to interpret the First Vatican Council of 1870 from the perspective of origin, history, and destiny, as embodied in the Divine Counselor's remarks that I had cited at the outset [*a Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6*]. In his view, the whole process traces back to the Middle Ages when the Roman Catholic Church had a totalitarian grip on society and all believers. The history of its incremental but progressive loss of control is part of this inexplicable foray into infallibility. The Roman Catholic Church felt tremendously threatened by the secular turn of civilization, considering it an even larger threat to Catholicism than the Protestant Reformation had been. There is some legitimacy to the idea that they were afraid of being overwhelmed and thought that the doctrine of infallibility was the only way to address this crisis of faith and belief.

— Another panelist commented that when he attended Roman Catholic schools from 1949 to 1956, the doctrine of papal infallibility was taught by the nuns and priests as a given, a natural reality that was unassailable and that left no room for criticism. The First Vatican Council of 1870, in his view, had occurred in the very thicket of the emergence of the modern world, amidst the forces that created the 20th century. Pope Pius IX was completely opposed to modernity, although he did not anticipate secular totalitarianism or even parliamentary democracy. His views, however, do not speak for all of Christianity.

— Yet another panelist commented on Pope Pius IX by reading the second last paragraph of the Encyclopedia Britannica biography that I had circulated (attachment 5):

The exact responsibility of Pius for the events of his pontificate is still a matter of controversy, but it may be said that Pius IX took the first steps toward the modern papacy. Church and state were increasingly separated, authority in the church was centralized in Rome, and the church was ranged in opposition to some of the dominant movements of the modern age, including liberal capitalism, communism, extreme nationalism, and the racism that culminated in Nazism. Under the direction of Pius IX the papacy abandoned the political preoccupations and responsibilities imposed by the temporal power it once possessed and concentrated on spiritual and religious issues.

I replied that Pope Pius IX had accepted the separation of church and state because he was defeated militarily by the forces of the Kingdom of Italy. In the process, quite a few people died unnecessarily, for there was no prospect of any other outcome.

CONCLUDING COMMENT. Italian patriots were intent on unifying their country, and the pope was no longer able to prevent this. In political and military terms, his position was hopeless as soon as the Emperor Napoleon III withdrew the French army that had been protecting the Papal States.

In effect, Pius IX failed to take heed of a principle that had become second nature to the military and political leaders of European countries for at least the preceding 200 years: Since walls composed of stone and brick cannot withstand heavy cannon, the arrival of a superior military force on the periphery of some city was conclusive evidence of the need to surrender peacefully, especially when there was every prospect of negotiating humane or even generous treatment for everyone who lived there.

Pius IX did not do this, and the account by August Bernhard Hasler hints that the pope may have been operating under the illusion that supernatural forces would protect him. (See excerpt 3 above.)

Plans for our webinar on August 24

On August 24, panelists will proceed to consider and answer three additional questions about the kingdom that the popes established, questions that likewise draw on ideas explained in the many documents that I had circulated to the participants. *(A complete list appears at the end of this message.)*

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

X8. In December 1979, Pope John Paul II disciplined the German theologian Hans Küng by stripping him of his ecclesiastical teaching privileges, so that he could “neither be considered a Catholic teacher nor engage in teaching as such” (page 3 of attachment 12). Further, in the year 2000, the same pope beatified Pope Pius IX (i.e., by presiding over a formal ceremony in which Pius IX was given the title “blessed”). How do these two official actions of John Paul II compare with his carefully cultivated public image as a kindly and congenial grandfather?

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

Living the Real Religion of Jesus

After the panelists have responded to these three questions, I will ask them to turn in a very different direction, so as to discontinue discussion of the characteristics of Christianity that are identified on page 109 of *Revelation Revealed*, at least for the time being. In other words, I will ask the participants to begin discussing a new essay of mine, “Living the Real Religion of Jesus,” one that I completed on June 24. Please permit me to explain.

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

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

In close consultation with the two members of the Committee for the Global Endeavor who provided cogent comments and recommendations while I was drafting *Revelation Revealed* in the first place, I decided to write new material that will eventually be inserted immediately after formal question 59 on page 89.

(Note: The actual insertion will occur when we issue an updated version of the long document that will include my essay “Romanità.” On the other hand, it will not make sense to issue this update until participants in our webinars finish discussing topic 8 as it stands, an achievement that seems rather distant since the existing text extends through page 146.)

I began drafting the new material shortly after phase 3 ended on May 18, and did not finish the task until June 24. The effort was arduous, for my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” embodies several shifts of focus. From time to time, I had to pause to gather my thoughts and work out a strategy for the next few pages. (When phrases or even complete sentences start running through my mind spontaneously, I know I am ready to sit down at my keyboard and begin applying my fingers.)

As you will see, the new essay consists of 18 pages and is subdivided into four major segments:

- Finding God for oneself (*pages 1-2*).
- The religion of personal spiritual experience (*pages 2-6*).
- The presence of God (*pages 7-11*).
- The mission and the time line (*pages 11-18*).

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, August 24:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.

Please be aware that the starting time is only approximate, for it usually takes us a few minutes to make the adjustments to the rather complicated software that cause all the participants to be viewed and heard correctly. In relation to our preceding webinars associated with topic 8, live streaming in YouTube began at about ten minutes past the time stated.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[August 22, 2019 at 10:15 pm]

Complete list of attachments

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

Attachments pertaining to the kingdom that the popes established

2. “Appendix B: The Donation of Constantine.” (This is an appendix to a memorandum dated July 26, 2005 in which I maintained quite strenuously that Urantia Foundation — the sponsor and chief publisher of *The Urantia Book* — should not use images or symbols drawn from the traditions of Christianity, for in my view this would leave an inaccurate and misleading impression.)
3. “Civil authority from the chair of Peter: Papal ideology rooted in ‘the Donation of Constantine’” (excerpted from pages 176-179 of *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* by Norman F. Cantor, a book published in 1993).
4. “Papal States” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2015).

— **Pope Pius IX**

5. "Pius IX" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).
6. "Syllabus of Errors" (Wikipedia).
7. "The Syllabus: Pope Pius IX" (the text, downloaded from an Internet website).

— **Infallibility / First Vatican Council 1870**

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

8. Biographic information about the author appearing on the dust jacket, along with excerpts from a review.
9. Introduction by the German theologian Hans Küng.
10. "Küng, Hans" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).
11. "Hans Küng" (Wikipedia).
12. Excerpts from the book.

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

13. "Living the Real Religion of Jesus."
-

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Thursday, August 29, 2019 8:50 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on August 24, plans for August 31
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-06-25_Hasler-book_dust-jacket.pdf; 2019-06-26_Hasler-book_introduction.pdf; 2019-06-29_Hasler-book_excerpts.pdf; 2019-06-24_v2_Living-the-real-religion-of-Jesus.pdf

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

On Saturday, August 24, we conducted our twentieth webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.”

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

Special status for the clergy

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

(d) Special status for the clergy. Institutional Christianity distinguishes quite sharply between professional religionists (the clergy) and ordinary believers (the laity). Here we must note, however, that the clergy’s prestige, privileges, and authority are crucial in the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox branches of Christianity, whereas Protestant denominations are substantially less hierarchical, and some of them come close to being democratic.

On August 24, we continued discussing a specific application of this general set of issues, **the civil authority of the popes** and, in particular, **the kingdom that the popes established** — a kingdom whereby the popes ruled the middle one-third of Italy for over one thousand years (until 1870). To put this discussion in context, I read a statement by a Divine Counselor that appears in section 1 of Paper 19:

The true perspective of any reality problem — human or divine, terrestrial or cosmic — can be had only by the full and unprejudiced study and correlation of three phases of universe reality: origin, **history**, and destiny. The proper understanding of these three experiential realities affords the basis for a wise estimate of the current status. [*A Divine Counselor, 215:3 / 19:1.6 — emphasis added: the word in bold type*]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Specific questions on the kingdom that the popes established

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My personal introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reactions and comments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OF MINE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Plans for our webinar on August 31

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

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, August 31:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 1:30 to 3:30 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 2:30 to 4:30 pm.

Please be aware that the starting time is only approximate, for it usually takes us a few minutes to make the adjustments to the rather complicated software that cause all the participants to be viewed and heard correctly. In relation to our preceding webinars associated with topic 8, live streaming in YouTube began at about ten minutes past the time stated.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[August 29, 2019 at 8:50 pm]

Complete list of attachments

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

Attachments pertaining to Infallibility and the First Vatican Council of 1870

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

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

3. Introduction by the German theologian Hans Küng.

4. Excerpts from the book.

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

5. “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.”

From: nealwaldrop@earthlink.net
Sent: Saturday, September 7, 2019 11:15 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on August 31
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, August 31, we conducted our twenty-first 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.”

This session was the final webinar in phase 4. We are now taking a break for approximately one month and plan to resume on some suitable Saturday in October (a date not yet chosen).

“Living the Real Religion of Jesus” (June 24, 2019)

During the entire webinar, panelists analyzed and commented on ideas expressed on the first two pages of my new essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus.” I began by asking another participant to read the excerpt from Jesus’ second discourse on religion (section 6 of Paper 155) that appears near the bottom of the first page of the essay:

I have called upon you to be born again, to be born of the spirit. 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. And so may you pass from death to life, from the authority of tradition to the experience of knowing God; thus will you pass from darkness to light, from a racial faith inherited to a personal faith achieved by actual experience; and thereby will you progress from a theology of mind handed down by your ancestors to a true religion of spirit which shall be built up in your souls as an eternal endowment.

Your religion shall change from the mere intellectual belief in traditional authority to the actual experience of that living faith which is able to grasp the reality of God and all that relates to the divine spirit of the Father. The religion of the mind ties you hopelessly to the past; the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation and ever beckons you on toward higher and holier achievements in spiritual ideals and eternal realities. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1731:1-2 / 155:6.3-4*]

I then asked the panelists whether Jesus’ remarks were exclusively directed to the apostles, or whether they are also directed to us approximately 2,000 years later. Everyone who responded stated

that these remarks are also addressed to us, without any doubt. One participant called attention to the fact that although Jesus' bestowal occurred on Urantia, it was for all the worlds in his local universe of Nebadon. Another participant agreed that what Jesus said was addressed to every person in the entire universe; he was calling for us to move into a live relationship with God and as sisters and brothers in a spiritual family.

Next I called for reactions to certain phrases contained in the first paragraph of the excerpt: ["the darkness of authority and the lethargy of tradition ... and so may you pass from death to life, from the authority of tradition to the experience of knowing God."](#)

One participant said that there is no doubt that tradition can be a drag on spiritual progress for the human race, but the revelators also tell us that tradition can be supportive of the religious life of individuals and religious groups. Jesus has called us out of ["the darkness of authority,"](#) but he has not condemned authority in itself or tradition as a general matter. He called attention to the angels of the churches, the third corps of master seraphim [[the Chief of Seraphim, 1255:6 / 114:6.7](#)], pointing out that they seek to preserve the best of tradition as we go forward, whereas the angels of progress [[the Chief of Seraphim, 1255:5 / 114:6.6](#)] focus on moving into the future. In his view, tradition and progress are complementary, not contradictory.

I replied that on a personal level, I am inclined to interpret these remarks in the early part of the first paragraph as a paraphrase of ideas that Jesus expresses in the paragraph's final lines, ["... thereby will you progress from a theology of mind handed down by your ancestors to a true religion of spirit which shall be built up in your souls as an eternal endowment."](#)

Another participant commented that Jesus' remarks in the first paragraph are quite strong, including ideas whereby he calls for us to "pass from death to life." He noted that the great majority of the corps of master seraphim are progressive, perhaps ten out of the twelve.

I focused on wording that appears in the fourth and fifth lines of the first paragraph of the excerpt, ["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."](#) I asked whether this meant that we would separate ourselves from all other human beings, or whether the other panelists would look on this statement about finding God for oneself as implicitly including one's relationships with other human beings.

One participant responded that the revelators tell us that everything that relates to religion has to be socialized; otherwise it becomes fanaticism. Another panelist called attention to two areas of focus that relate to moving into a more dynamic relationship with God and our interactions with other human beings:

(1) The actual decision to be engaged in personal spiritual experience is always the decision of the individual religionist, by individual choice, versus the dead level of religious authority or cognitive traditions.

(2) Religious tradition and the leadership of religious tradition can be attempting to establish and maintain their own authority or to teach doctrine that is simply intellectual, or they can actively be engaged in the effort to encourage people to move into a living relationship and involvement with God. This can be part of the tradition.

I reacted to these remarks by stating that the other participant seemed to be interpreting the phrases “the darkness of authority” and “the lethargy of tradition” so as to emphasize an insistence on particular teachings as a matter of compulsory doctrine, as opposed to group associations that could be understood as a kind of fellowship or cooperation for mutual edification, mutual encouragement, and inspiration. In this context, I compared the underlying ideas that he seemed to have expressed with remarks by a Melchizedek that appear in section 5 of Paper 103:

When a member of a social religious group has complied with the requirements of such a group, he should be encouraged to enjoy religious liberty in the full expression of his own personal interpretation of the truths of religious belief and the facts of religious experience. ... There is great hope for any church that worships the living God, validates the brotherhood of man, and dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members. [A Melchizedek, 1135:2 / 103:5.12]

A different participant commented that he is in great sympathy with this, but declared that in his view, there is a difference, at least in principle, between creedal pressure and creedal guidance. He then stated that most people need some sort of guidance, intellectually and spiritually, and that they will be the first to admit this. On the other hand, there are some people, such as many readers of *The Urantia Book*, who feel that they can figure out all these matters by themselves, so that they do not want anyone to tell them what to think; they, however, tend to be the exception. Therefore he believed it conceivable that there can be a group practice of religion where there are a body of shared beliefs and certain people who are better trained and better able to explain these beliefs, without necessarily establishing institutional authority to force people to believe one way or another. Most people will not explicitly take issue with ideas or doctrines put forward by a priest or minister; they are more likely to say, “You know much more than I do, and I do not want to take the time and energy to investigate it thoroughly; therefore I will accept your interpretation for the time being, since I do not know any better.” This approach, in his view, is not necessarily evil, for it allows such a person to function with some sense of security in his or religious and philosophic beliefs.

Another participant returned to the concept of leadership, one that he had previously mentioned. The revelators tell us that substantially less than one percent of the human population are gifted leaders, and he believed that this is true of spiritual leadership as well as leadership in other contexts. He believed that there are people who are called to provide spiritual leadership; he thought that any group of people would be wise to discover that leadership talent and motivation, and then to equip it, so as to hone the person’s abilities and give him or her a sanctioned role and responsibility. He pointed out that Jesus had people who moved through a training process to become apostles and to become teachers, after which they went out and preached. Therefore, in his view, Jesus had ways to develop and establish leadership, thereafter giving it a sanctioned role within which it functioned. In

his view, any group function must include these features in order to operate effectively, so as to resolve the issues around good leadership and eliminate bad leadership. In his view, nothing that Jesus said in this excerpt should be understood to speak against the evolution of spiritual leadership in groups of people.

In contrast, the participant who had distinguished between creedal pressure and creedal guidance pointed out that when you talk about leadership, you also talk about authority. Leadership, in his view, can be wielded in ways that are spiritually fragrant, or in ways that are not. In any case, he said, leadership implies authority.

A different panelist referred to the revelators' assurance that Jesus' true teachings will eventually prevail. There must be some kind of cosmic balancing act that relates to conserving positive values and meanings, while also stimulating progressive advances. He called attention to a sentence in section 2 of Paper 195 in which the Midwayer Commission explains the role of the Spirit of Truth:

And now that he [Jesus] has personally left the world, he sends in his place his Spirit of Truth, who is designed to live in man and, for each new generation, to restate the Jesus message so that every new group of mortals to appear upon the face of the earth shall have a new and up-to-date version of the gospel, just such personal enlightenment and group guidance as will prove to be an effective solvent for man's ever-new and varied spiritual difficulties. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2060:6 / 194:2.1*]

COMMENT. I agree that aspects of group functioning and leadership deserve to be considered independently, on their own merits. On the other hand, I find it difficult to understand any of these remarks about leadership as an interpretation of what Jesus actually said in the passage that the panelists were analyzing [*the Midwayer Commission, 1731:1-2 / 155:6.3-4*]. If we use the statement by a Melchizedek as a criterion, I am not aware of any branch or denomination of Christianity that "dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members" [*a Melchizedek, 1135:2 / 103:5.12*] — unless one were willing to cite the Quakers as an example of that approach. To the best of my understanding, however, many traditional Christians are inclined to deny that the Quakers are a Christian denomination.

Another panelist declared that she did not see how distinguishing between leadership and creedal pressure would help her to learn about God, to find him and love him, and to cause her soul to grow toward God consciousness. She could not do that through leadership or through any other person. After you find God and grow in that understanding, you socialize these achievements and share your inner life with others because that relationship with God is so vast and so extraordinary. In her experience with organizations, she did not remember people sharing their spiritual lives and really talking about finding God and how that had transformed them. Tradition is tradition; it is just rote and what you are accustomed to, and it is also habit-forming. If tradition actually helps someone move forward, that is wonderful; but she said she had met many people who, sadly enough, are stuck and are waiting for the message of a personal relationship with God that would enliven them and enable them to be born again.

[The final sentence in the second paragraph of the excerpt]

“The religion of the mind ties you hopelessly to the past; the religion of the spirit consists in progressive revelation and ever beckons you on toward higher and holier achievements in spiritual ideals and eternal realities” [the *Midway Commission*, 1731:2 / 155:6.4].

In relation to this sentence, I asked participants to focus on the contrast between the religion of the mind and the religion of the spirit.

One panelist responded by identifying three levels of mind: (1) the superconscious mind where the Thought Adjuster spiritizes our thoughts and builds the threads of the soul; (2) the conscious mind, the part that human beings have to deal with on a day-to-day basis; and (3) the sub-conscious mind, the level that he saw no reason to discuss. In his view, the religion of the mind operates on the conscious level and is essentially stuck in current time frames, whereas the religion of the spirit needs to operate in the superconscious mind where the soul is being built, the only framework within which the Thought Adjuster can act.

Another panelist remarked that the religion of the mind seems to be defined in the first sentence of the second paragraph as “the mere intellectual belief in traditional authority.” In his view, the essential problem is not tradition, but mere intellectual belief. One can have mere intellectual belief in anything, including non-traditional authority, revelation in general, or authentic revelation such as the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. In response to a specific question of mine, he confirmed that he was distinguishing between intellectual belief and spiritual experience, stating that this distinction can pertain to any context, whether traditional or non-traditional.

Yet another participant declared that the final sentence in the second paragraph of the excerpt refers to something that is past, static, and not growing, in contrast with new, evolving realities that are active and growing because they constitute living relationships. During the 1980s he had learned about the role of leadership in relation to institutions by studying the writings of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), who is considered the father of modern sociology. Durkheim coined the term “charisma” and associated it with “charismatic leadership.” According to this understanding, a charismatic leader is someone who gives voice or expression to the needs of a group of people, thereby creating a partnership or implicit contract that links a charismatic leader and the people who will follow him or her. He then directed personal remarks to me, saying that in this endeavor, I am the leader, and in this sense a charismatic leader. That, in his view, is because I have an idea and a sense of moving the discussion forward, whereas all of the other panelists have an idea of participating actively. This, he said, is natural and happens all the time in group functions. From the perspective of spiritual growth, legitimate and effective leadership gives expression to a pathway that helps persons move from the past into the future, in terms of their spiritual desires. From these perspectives, Jesus was a profoundly charismatic leader for his people and for us.

I responded that this was the first time in my life that anyone had called me charismatic. I supposed that I should welcome this, for I believed that the other participant intended it as a favorable reference to my role as the leader of these webinars. I agreed that this role is a fact, but identified an

aspect of that role that contrasts with the leadership roles that others assume in other contexts. This difference centers on the fact that there is no principle of authority: I am not telling the participants what to say or what to believe, and I am welcoming logical comments from time to time that criticize me, my views, or something I have written. All this is part of the context of the webinar wherein my function, if you wish, is essentially to facilitate broad discussion. Therefore we have separated the function of leadership from the authority to insist upon or foster conformity. Well, that authority to foster or insist upon conformity is unfortunately part of the religious tradition that the Christian movement inherited from the Roman Empire, a reality that we previously discussed. In sum, I agreed that leadership can function without authority aimed at or pursuing conformity, but cited that as an important difference.

COMMENT. After the webinar, I looked up the word *charismatic* in several dictionaries and found significant aspects that I cannot agree with or welcome. For simplicity and brevity, here are key excerpts from what I found in the *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology* (1988):

charisma *n.* 1875, grace, talent bestowed by God, gift ... Later a specific sense developed, “gift of leadership or power of authority” (1947) and was extended to “strong personal appeal or magnetism,” especially in reference to political figures (in the early 1960’s).

charismatic ... *adj.* 1882-83 ... *n.* Christian who believes in divine gifts, such as the power to heal by the laying on of hands. 1970, from the adjective.

The panelist who had spoken immediately before declared that the underlying authority always flows from the group. He stated that the reason that I can function in the leadership role that I described is because he and the other panelists wish to participate with me in that kind of endeavor, and because they give me the authority to operate in these ways. In his view, the same is true for any religious group; its members sanction leadership to take them where they would like to go because that leadership can do this effectively. This, in his opinion, was what happened with the followers of Jesus: They yearned for spiritual growth and development; they trusted him to provide that leadership; and they sanctioned his leadership and followed him. In sociological terms, he said, that is just the nature of leadership and group authorization of that leadership, in whatever form it takes. This principle applies to the form of leadership that I have been exercising or to the papal form of leadership; authorization always flows from the desire of a group of people who will follow.

I then replied that there is a functional difference between authority that is basically consensual, which is what the other panelist had just described, and authority that, at least, claims to have a mandatory character. This mandatory character is, in effect, the idea of compelling someone to do something or to follow certain instructions, to accept certain teachings. That, I said, is fundamentally different. When people have joined together voluntarily and are participating in some group activity as a matter of their own views, that contrasts quite substantially from a situation in which authority is imposed from above and seeks to ensure or promote conformity of views. So our recent remarks

pertained to talking about leadership, but we were talking about different *patterns* of leadership and also different patterns of authority.

A different panelist said he agreed that I am not inducing any kind of conformity among the participants, but declared that I am nonetheless exercising authority, of which the root is the word *author*. He went on to declare that his personal view of this document (my essay “Living the Real Religion of Jesus”) is that it is very tendentious and certainly embodies an agenda, so that he and the other participants need to respond to that agenda, or at least that he felt he did. He stated that even though I do not impose conformity of response, I do impose some form of structure and tendency based on the contents of my document.

In addition, he went on to disagree with a previous speaker who had appeared to go along with the idea that anything from the past is dead and amounts to a constriction, whereas anything going forward into the future is freeing and more spiritual. He reiterated his view that the reason that the angels of the churches exist is to preserve everything from the past that is spiritually fragrant and alive. This, he said, is why symbols and slogans and any kind of symbolic activity have their roots in the past. If these aspects did not have their roots in the past, they would not have any relevance or validity for the present or the future. So to construct a dichotomy declaring that the past is bad and the future is good, or that the past is regression and the future is progression, is inaccurate and a dangerous way to think.

COMMENT. The participant whose remarks I have summarized immediately above called my essay “very tendentious.” Since this is not the first time in our series of webinars that the adjective *tendentious* has arisen, here is the definition that I found in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (copyright 2002 and 2007):

tendentious *adjective*

Having an underlying purpose; (of writing etc.) composed with the intention of promoting a particular cause or viewpoint.

I respond that we are all well aware that Jesus’ true teachings have not been implemented in the world; that is intuitively obvious. Therefore it is my intention to do everything I can to identify and promote the true teachings of Jesus, so as to contribute to and facilitate our task of comparing and contrasting his true teachings with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity. This is my cause, this is my viewpoint. Further, I intend to persist.

I then asked another participant to examine two words that appear in the final sentence of the excerpt, “[progressive revelation](#).” In that short phrase, does the word “[revelation](#)” refer to words, or to some form of inner personal experience?

The panelist replied that “[revelation](#)” refers to both aspects. When the apostle Peter declared, “[You are the Deliverer, the Son of the living God](#)” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1746:2 / 157:3.5*], Jesus

treated that as an individual revelation of the type that all of us can have. When we gain spiritual insight, the Thought Adjuster reveals to us psychic truths that we need in order to move forward through the cosmic circles and understand more and more of the Father-Infinite. On the other hand, he believed that the word “progressive” in the phrase “progressive revelation” causes the concept to operate both ways. For example, the efforts of Adam and Eve and Melchizedek, as well as the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and the work of the Spirit of Truth, are inherent in causing revelation to progress in terms of current understanding and paradigms. In addition, he had been interested in previous comments to the effect that a leader moves the group from the past into the future. From this perspective, the paradigm is moving forward, and leadership is the structure enabling the group to achieve that.

At this point, I said I would finally yield to an impulse that had affected me for the preceding half-hour, one involving an association with contemporary science fiction. In such stories that involve an alien landing on earth, the first thing that he is usually reported to say is, “Take me to your leader.” By implication, the alien believes that the leader has the authority to do something that will benefit him. I realized that this was not the idea of leadership that the other participant had been advocating, but I believed that it is part of the popular conception of leadership. Therefore we can relate to the fact that leadership has been entangled with authority and an insistence on conformity of belief, at least in the history of religion in the Western world. I said I did not advance the idea that we can do away with leadership, but was convinced that we have to purify it, so that leadership is not entangled with the authority to insist on particular views. In my opinion, it is essential for us to bear in mind what a Melchizedek states: “There is great hope for any church that worships the living God, validates the brotherhood of man, and dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members” [*a Melchizedek, 1135:2 / 103:5.12*].

A different participant declared that she was not interested in leadership; from her perspective, leadership has nothing to do with personal religion, the topic that we were discussing. While she may have been in her twenties, the superconscious level of reality had helped her transform the animal self so as to eradicate selfishness and the mark of the beast, while acquiring humility. This led her step by step to the personal experience of a relationship with God. There was growth and growth and growth, a gradual process that did not happen suddenly. Little by little, the spirit led her forward. In other words, she said, she had the spiritual insight first, the experience first, before she acquired an understanding of what she was experiencing. When she found *The Urantia Book*, she began to understand.

[The first sentence in the first paragraph on page 2 of the essay]

“The supernal experience of finding God cannot be compressed, condensed, or confined so as to fit within the covers of a book, nor be delimited by the intellectual adaptations required to read and understand it.”

One participant commented that the thrust of this sentence is to declare that God is infinite and eternal, and knows no boundaries; the experience of finding God cannot be confined in any way. The revelators declare that all of us must function within some frame of reference in which we think and experience, but that this frame of reference is constantly being remade in higher ways. The dilemma

is that we have to have an understanding of what Jesus is suggesting that is simple enough to keep in our consciousness all the time, and also simple enough to convey to others when we share spiritual truths with them. In section 7 of Paper 87, a Brilliant Evening Star points out that a cult or spiritual culture “will not function if it is too complex” [*a Brilliant Evening Star, 966:5 / 87:7.10*]. From his perspective, his understanding that we are living in the family of God permits him to do what the sentence envisions.

I then said that instead of just asking participants to comment on the sentence, I would have to be more direct: How does reading *The Urantia Book* compare with “the supernal experience of finding God”?

A different panelist responded that for him, *The Urantia Book* was a scaffold, or part of a scaffold. His experience was learning about Christ in *The Urantia Book* and in Christianity, a dual influence. In the summer of 1971, he had just finished reading *The Urantia Book* and was in the process of reading the *Confessions* of Augustine of Hippo. While riding on the subway, he had had a spiritual experience that seemed to have come from outside himself. Reading *The Urantia Book* had had an effect, but reading the *Confessions* had also had an effect. He was influenced by the tremendously powerful connection that one can have with God, as had occurred in the case of Augustine of Hippo.

I expressed appreciation for that reply and then refined my question once again: What is the relationship between reading *The Urantia Book* and the supernal experience of finding God? Does finding God depend on reading *The Urantia Book*?

One participant responded to the last part of my question by saying, “Of course not.” He believed that finding God is a process and that the desire to find God means that God has already found you. The process cannot be confined, and spiritual insight must take over.

This led me to ask another participant whether someone who does not read *The Urantia Book* can have the supernal experience of finding God. She replied, “Of course, for God is available.” If we have a sincere desire to know and love God, the other side of the equation is that he has an insatiable appetite to love us and wants all of us to find him. In her view, a relationship with God is there for the taking.

She said she could always feel the presence of God, an experience that was powerful during some of her meditations. This security helped her grow as a human being, for she knew that she was not alone and that God would not let her fail. Little by little, there was a lower level of defensiveness, and the animal side of her slowly disappeared. During decades of growth, she learned new spiritual habits that God waited all her life to convey to her.

On the other hand, she said, she did not understand these experiences until she found *The Urantia Book*. From that point, it took her almost one year to find the harmony, to get mind, body, and spirit to synchronize, to be receptive to the spirit. Associating with other readers of *The Urantia Book* has helped her to grow in intellectual ways, and this was why she is participating in our webinars.

In response to a leading question of mine, this panelist confirmed that her supernal experience of finding God had begun well before she found *The Urantia Book*, but that doing so helped her continue that experience, while expanding and enhancing her relationship with God.

Another participant said that he would like to reverse the question, so as to ask whether someone can have *The Urantia Book* but not have discovered a living relationship with God. In his experience, he said, there are many people who actually fall in that category, readers of *The Urantia Book* who sometimes have a very sophisticated intellectual understanding of the teachings and who pursue their involvement with the material, but will themselves concede that they do not have much of a connection with God and that this is a mystery to them. In his view, this was almost a variation on the theme of possibly having a religion of authority or a religion of the mind in relation to the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, and not much more beyond that.

I said I had been inclined to ask him about the phrase “intellectual adaptations” but now believed he had already commented on that by stating, in effect, that intellectual adaptations to understand the teachings of *The Urantia Book* are not, in themselves, the supernal experience of finding God.

In reply, the panelist described his own yearning and search before he found *The Urantia Book*, a search for understanding that he would not call the search for God. Instead, he said, he was asking what is going on here, what is the bigger picture, what is happening in the universe, what is the purpose of existence. He searched in Eastern religions, in yoga, and in various other teachings, but found only bits and pieces. When he encountered *The Urantia Book*, he had a profound sense that this material would answer all his questions, followed by three to four months of steady reading that led him to understand that the venture human beings are engaged in is a huge cosmic reality and that the text he had encountered is a major revelation. One key realization was that he had an opportunity for a personal, intimate connection with Deity. He then faced the question of how he could create a living relationship with another person, the living presence of God inside him — followed by the question of what he was supposed to be doing in return, how he should live his life in accordance with these ideals. In the end, this became a never-ending process, an eternal unfolding of new ideas, new realizations, and new ideals.

I agreed that the experience of each person is diverse in terms of the range of possibilities that are available; there is no single pattern that is obligatory for every single human being. To the contrary, I said, the possibilities of adaptation are open to all of us, and intellectual adaptations are not the whole answer. This was part of my reason for asking participants to interpret the sentence.

[The second sentence in the first paragraph on page 2 of the essay]

“Our experience of finding God can and must be personal, mindal, and spiritual, and we should remain intensely aware that God is not just an infinite being who resides on distant Paradise, but also an active presence who pervades and animates all reality, whether material, mindal, or spiritual, as well as all intelligent beings who inhabit our planet Urantia and every other living environment dispersed throughout the grand universe.”

One participant interpreted this sentence by stating that God cannot be appreciated or related to as an intellectual exercise. The relationship must be experiential as well as intellectual. God can be realized through experience without being realized intellectually; there are many spiritually fragrant people who have little or no understanding of who God is. If the reality of God is expressed in their lives, that lack of understanding does not matter. God is real, and that is first; God is also an idea, but that may be 25th. He commented that to an extent, religion in the Western world has tended to focus on mindal matters, at the expense of the spiritual dimensions. He believed that spirituality is experiential in nature.

Another participant understood the phrase “an active presence who pervades and animates all reality” by associating it with the seven absolutes of infinity that a Melchizedek of Nebadon explains in section 3 of Paper 105, although God the Supreme pervades all aspects of the finite level.

Yet another panelist called attention to the spiritual circuits, commenting that spirit gravity literally pulls the soul of man toward Paradise. God’s presence comes in many forms, material, mindal, and spiritual, and these realities enable us to function on a higher level.

[The first sentence in the second paragraph on page 2 of the essay]

“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.”

One participant declared that the questions that burned within him really related to the Supreme: What contribution could he make, what could he give back as his contribution to the accomplishment of destinies and the unfolding of the Supreme? He believed that a major part of his duty pertained to his responsibilities to his sisters and brothers, how he could help them to find some sense of solace and meaning in their lives. He believed that he and they are all in the midst of living a life in a spiritual family.

I then asked another participant whether we should refrain from looking at salvation (survival) and spiritual engagement solely for our own purposes, so that we will also immerse ourselves in the welfare of other human beings, and for that matter in God’s plans for our planet, to the degree that we can.

The other participant agreed that we should do this, commenting that the reality of our spiritual gift and our spiritual relationship with God exists only in the ways we express it. Our love for God, in his view, exists only in our expression of that love to others.

Yet another participant commented that the seraphim have always guided her and have guided people to her through sharing God with others. These profound realities open up a course to salvation (survival).

A different participant declared that this sentence resonated in him because it evokes the work of the Thought Adjusters as the revelators have described it. In his view, the sentence also suggests the

cosmic intuitions of discovering, recognizing, interpreting, and choosing. Just as Jesus sought to console and encourage the young man who was fearful and downcast, urging that he live his life in the flesh “as a son of God, a mortal dedicated to the ennobling service of man on earth and destined to the superb and eternal service of God in eternity” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1438:1 / 130:6.4*], so also should we do our best to help other human beings develop and ultimately become altruistic themselves.

Plans for phase 5

As previously stated, we are currently taking a break. We are likely to resume our series of webinars on some Saturday in October, a date that we have not yet chosen.

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg

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

Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor
[September 7, 2019 at 11:15 pm]

P.S.: At the very end of the webinar, I quipped, “I am now heading toward the supernal experience of writing the report” (rather than the supernal experience of finding God). Having completed the task, I cannot lay claim to the word “supernal” but would settle for “successful,” if that indeed is the verdict that my readers reach.

List of attachments

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.
 2. “Living the Real Religion of Jesus” (a new essay of mine that I completed on June 24, 2019).
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