

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 24, 2019 10:47 PM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on January 26  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-01-17\_Romanità.pdf; 2018-11-16\_romanità\_OED\_CIE.pdf

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

I am very pleased to announce that on Saturday, January 26, 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.”

Panelists will start where we left off on December 15, so as to discuss an excerpt from *The Urantia Book* appearing on the bottom half of page 93 of *Revelation Revealed* — a quotation from section 3 of Paper 89 in which a Brilliant Evening Star describes highly unfortunate opinions of the Apostle Paul whereby he praised continence, undervalued marriage and the home, and implicitly looked down on women (i.e., 977:1 / 89:3.6).

After subsequent text on page 95 pointing out, in part, that Jesus explicitly warned his apostles against using doctrines, creeds, and traditions to guide and control believers, we will discuss the paragraph on page 96 mentioning that in the year 313 CE, the Emperor Constantine decided to sponsor and patronize institutional Christianity.

### **A short preview**

Although I doubt that participants will get that far during our webinar this Saturday (January 26), I believe I should preview the discussion that is more likely to occur during the next webinar (February 2). Before I do this, however, I should explain that over the holidays, I began thinking very seriously about the organizational and structural changes to the Christian faith that occurred because of the decisions of Constantine and his immediate successors.

The essential point here is that the social, cultural, and political systems of the Roman Empire inflicted certain birthmarks on the organized, institutional church — birthmarks that still exert substantial influence on Christianity as it is currently practiced in the Western world. In effect, these organizational and structural changes became so closely associated with the Christian tradition as to be almost indistinguishable from it.

Therefore I decided to write “*Romanità*,” the second attachment. Panelists will discuss this new material immediately before we continue with the final paragraph of text on page 96 (i.e., “Since Christianity had unquestionably morphed into a religion *about* Jesus ...”). I believe that these six pages will interest you, and I am confident that the ideas contained in them will stimulate vigorous discussion among the panelists.

## Vocabulary

At the bottom of page 1 of my essay *Romanità*, the following remarks appear:

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The Italian word *romanità* is often understood as a reference to the Mediterranean and European domains that Rome conquered and ruled. On the other hand, *romanità* can also be interpreted as a symbol standing for the patterns and practices that pervaded Roman society and civilization. This second possibility is what the word means here.  
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I believe that this interpretation is quite persuasive, especially in context. From a lexical perspective, it may be useful to note that the interpretation correlates reasonably well with the definition for *romanitas* (the predecessor word in Latin) that appears in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “The spirit or ideals of ancient Rome; Romanism.” In addition, it resembles the figurative definition for *romanità* provided in the *Collins Italian-English Dictionary*: “the Roman spirit.” (See the third attachment, which consists of dictionary excerpts.)

### LINGUISTIC FOOTNOTES

— An Italian word that is conceptual or abstract often ends with the syllable *-tà*. For example, *libertà*, the polar opposite of *romanità*, contains the same final syllable. (*Libertà* is the Italian word for liberty.)

— The dictionary excerpts for the Italian word *romanità* include entries on pronunciation sufficing to establish that it is accented on the final syllable. On the other hand, conversations with several colleagues have convinced me that these entries on pronunciation are not fully clear. Therefore I offer you the following home-made approximation that I hope will help:

roe – mah – nee – TAH

### PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

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

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, January 26:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 3:00 to 5:00 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 the four webinars that we conducted in November and December, live streaming in YouTube began at about ten minutes past the hour indicated above.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.  
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor  
[January 24, 2019 at 10:47 pm]

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 31, 2019 11:52 PM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on January 26, plans for February 2  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-01-17\_Romanità.pdf; 2018-11-16\_romanità\_OED\_CIE.pdf

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

On Saturday, January 26, we conducted our fifth webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.”

We began in the middle of page 93 of the document, thereby enabling participants to discuss and comment on a detailed passage in which a Brilliant Evening Star analyzes the views of the Apostle Paul on the status and role of women, while highlighting remarks and recommendations that tend to discourage marriage and family life (i.e., [977:1 / 89:3.6](#)). This topic stimulated so many interesting and insightful reactions that I am obliged to select just a few highlights:

— One participant commended the Apostle Paul’s honesty and frankness in declaring, “I speak this by permission and not by commandment” — thereby admitting that he was speaking personally and not relaying teachings of Jesus. Unfortunately, however, Paul did not foresee how influential his views would be for many generations and centuries.

— Another participant called attention to the apparent lack of understanding that cooperation of men and women, by harmonizing diverse viewpoints, tends to produce favorable results, a loop of positive feedback. In contrast, exclusively focusing on methods and approaches favored by males can have adverse results, a negative loop.

— Yet another participant criticized the analysis that the Brilliant Evening Star provides, partly by stating that quite a few of the quotations ascribed to the Apostle Paul come from writings that scholars working in recent generations have concluded were actually written by followers of Paul’s who lived in subsequent generations. On the other hand, this panelist agreed that all these writings had entered the accepted canon of the Christian New Testament and therefore had been identified as the work of Paul for almost all of the intervening centuries. As a result, these impressions of Paul’s teachings had been very influential, even though not all of the words actually came from Paul himself.

We then proceeded to discuss the passage appearing at the top of page 94 of *Revelation Revealed* in which the Midwayer Commission explains that Jesus treated men and women as spiritual equals (i.e., [1678:5, 1679:2 / 150:1.1,3](#)). After all, Jesus had repeatedly told the apostles that “[in the kingdom of heaven there is neither rich nor poor, free nor bond, male nor female, all are equally the sons and daughters of God.](#)” Nonetheless, “[they were literally stunned](#)” when Jesus commissioned ten women as religious teachers and permitted them to travel about with them.

In general, participants believed that the apostles had such great difficulty adjusting to this approach because it departed so markedly from their social and cultural assumptions, and from the general practices that prevailed in society as a whole. In the end, organized, institutional Christianity did not live up to Jesus' teachings in these regards, even though the Midwayer Commission tells us that women teachers and ministers were called *deaconesses* in the early days of the Christian church. After a few generations, however, Christianity fell back on olden customs that effectively excluded women from leadership positions.

Participants then devoted considerable attention to formal question 62 appearing on page 95 of *Revelation Revealed*:

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62. Contrary to Jesus' approach and at least partly because of the influence of the Apostle Paul, traditional, institutional Christianity adopted a range of practices that discriminate against women. Although this pattern of discrimination appears to have diminished in some contexts, there seems little reason to believe that full equality will prevail in all segments of institutional Christianity. Do you agree with this conclusion? In any case, how do you analyze the situation?  
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Most participants expressed the hope that full equality will prevail at some point, but no one was willing to identify a specific date. In addition, there were various views about how full equality would be achieved and the context in which it would be practiced. Some panelists believed that the favorable circumstances of women inside the Christian tradition as it exists then will predominantly result from comparably favorable trends in society as a whole. Others, however, hoped that spiritual understanding would propel these adjustments, at least in part. One participant called attention to the reality of the Thought Adjusters and the inspiring teachings about them that the revelators have provided. He was inclined to believe that understanding and acceptance of these teachings about the Thought Adjusters will be an important factor leading toward acceptance of full equality on a spiritual level.

### **Previewing our webinar on February 2**

— Initial discussion on February 2 will pertain to doctrines and creeds, techniques that Christian leaders and theologians ended up imposing on believers — even though Jesus warned against [“the formulation of creeds and the establishment of traditions as a means of guiding and controlling believers in the gospel of the kingdom” \[the Midwayer Commission, 1592:2 / 141:5.4\]](#).

— Immediately before the final paragraph on page 96 of *Revelation Revealed* (“Since Christianity had unquestionably morphed into a religion about Jesus ...”), we will shift to new material contained in my document “Romanità” (the second attachment). The essential point will be to explore the fact that the social, cultural, and political systems of the Roman Empire inflicted certain birthmarks on the organized, institutional church — birthmarks that still exert substantial influence on Christianity as it is currently practiced in the Western world. In effect, these organizational and structural changes became so closely associated with the Christian tradition as to be almost indistinguishable from it.

## Vocabulary

At the bottom of page 1 of my essay *Romanità*, the following remarks appear:

-----  
The Italian word *romanità* is often understood as a reference to the Mediterranean and European domains that Rome conquered and ruled. On the other hand, *romanità* can also be interpreted as a symbol standing for the patterns and practices that pervaded Roman society and civilization. This second possibility is what the word means here.  
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### LINGUISTIC FOOTNOTES

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

- Pacific Time Zone: from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
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- Eastern Time Zone: from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.

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Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[January 31, 2019 at 11:52 pm]

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 08, 2019 12:53 AM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on February 2, plans for February 9  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-01-17\_Romanità.pdf

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

On Saturday, February 2, we conducted our sixth webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.”

We began in the middle of page 95, in order to examine practices associated with doctrines and creeds, techniques that Christian leaders and theologians ended up imposing on believers — even though Jesus warned against “[the formulation of creeds and the establishment of traditions as a means of guiding and controlling believers in the gospel of the kingdom](#)” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1592:2 / 141:5.4*].

One participant highlighted the phrase appearing at the end of this warning, namely “[as a means of guiding and controlling believers.](#)” In his view, formulating creeds and establishing traditions are not contrary to Jesus’ instructions unless these techniques are aimed at guiding and controlling believers.

Another participant, however, pointed out that the development of creeds is closely linked with standardization and dogmatization, thereby stifling spiritual development in the individual. From a similar perspective, another panelist commented that any group that is well established tends to want to bend the will of the individual toward it. He did not see how dogmatizing and standardizing is compatible with seeking to do the will of the Father.

Yet another participant cited the Midwayer Commission’s comments at the end of Paper 170 whereby “[the so-called Christian church](#)” has become “[the cocoon in which the kingdom of Jesus’ concept now slumbers. The kingdom of the divine brotherhood is still alive and will eventually and certainly come forth from this long submergence, just as surely as the butterfly eventually emerges as the beautiful unfolding of its less attractive creature of metamorphic development](#)” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1866:4 / 170:5.21*].

One panelist called attention to the passage in section 7 of Paper 98 whereby a Melchizedek calls attention to the fact that “[The Christian religion, as a Urantian system of belief, arose through the compounding of](#)” [seven groups of] “[teachings, influences, beliefs, cults, and personal individual attitudes](#)” [*a Melchizedek, 1084:2 / 98:7.3*]. Since the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth are only one of these seven sets of very broad elements, it is clear that Christianity contains a great deal that Jesus did not teach. This, in turn, provides considerable insight into why it is necessary for the butterfly to emerge from the cocoon.



Another panelist pointed out that it is our task as readers of the fifth epochal revelation to absorb and act on the entire text, from the Foreword all the way to page 2097. The revelators' inspiring teachings and insights certainly include the narrative about the life and teachings of Jesus that appears in Part IV, but we must also focus quite intently on the facts, meanings, and values that the revelators have explained elsewhere, and on the origins, history, and destiny that we should associate with the grand universe and with God's overarching plans for us as individuals and as humanity as a whole.

After the panelists had contributed many other insightful remarks to which I cannot do justice in this rather brief summary, we began talking about the complex political, cultural, and social stresses that afflicted the Roman Empire in the early decades of the 4th century. At this time, the Emperor Constantine acted on his apparent desire for "One Empire, One Emperor, One God, One Faith," and in the process he decided to patronize and sponsor the Christian church.

Therefore we began discussing the new material contained in my document "Romanità" (the second attachment). In part, this document explains that the social, cultural, and political systems of the Roman Empire ended up inflicting certain birthmarks on the organized, institutional church — birthmarks that still exert substantial influence on Christianity as it is currently practiced in the Western world.

In effect, these organizational and structural changes became so closely associated with the Christian tradition as to be almost indistinguishable from it. Further, the resulting entanglement of church and state exerted very substantial influence for well over one thousand years. Even though the vestiges of this entanglement are now considerably weaker in countries whose social and cultural background is predominantly Christian, they still afflict humanity, in some locations more acutely than elsewhere.

Participants will devote considerable attention to these matters during our webinar on February 9, in part by taking careful note of comments in section 12 of Paper 70 whereby a Melchizedek warns that if human beings wish to maintain our freedom, we must avoid "Union of church and state" [*a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17*].

## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, February 9:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
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Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[February 8, 2019 at 12:53 am]

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 15, 2019 10:00 PM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on February 9, plans for February 16  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-01-17\_Romanità.pdf; 2019-02-09\_Christianity bar chart.jpg; 2019-02-09\_Christianity pie chart.jpg; 2019-02-09\_Institutional religions on Urantia.jpg

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

On Saturday, February 9, we conducted our seventh webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.”

### **Data on Christianity and other institutional religions**

We began by considering data that Bob Debold had assembled at my request: bar and pie charts depicting the various denominations of Christianity, plus a pie chart portraying institutional religions on Urantia (i.e., the final three attachments to this message). Bob introduced the data, stipulating that the numbers shown are probably inexact but seem approximately valid in general. In the charts depicting Christian denominations, persons affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church were clearly the most numerous, recorded as 1.285 billion (1,285 million). The next largest group is Protestant Christians, recorded at 920 million, on the understanding that the term “Protestant” encompasses many denominations that differ quite substantially among themselves. The third largest group, Bob said, corresponds to members of the various Eastern Orthodox Churches (a total of 270 million people).

Bob then proceeded to introduce the pie chart summarizing persons affiliated with institutional religions on Urantia, which contains three large segments: Christians (33 percent), persons affiliated with other religions (51 percent), and “no religion” (16 percent).

In part, I commented that when we make statements about Christianity in general, we should do our best to encompass the full range of possibilities, not just describe views and practices associated with a particular denomination that we tend to identify with or favor. In relation to the pie chart for the world as a whole, I noted that the heading “no religion” should really be understood to mean “no affiliation with any institutional religion,” for it implicitly includes persons who consider themselves as religious in general and is certainly not limited to those who are atheists.

### **Instructions from Immanuel to Michael**

Bob’s next step was to post a slide consisting of the following paragraph from the instructions that Immanuel gave to Michael shortly before he left Salvington:

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“5. As you may see fit, you are to identify yourself with existing religious and spiritual movements as they may be found on Urantia but in every possible manner seek to avoid the formal establishment of an organized cult, a crystallized religion, or a segregated ethical grouping of mortal beings. Your life and teachings are to become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples.” [Mantutia Melchizedek, 1330:1 / 120:3.6 — excerpted from Paper 120, section 3, a section that is entitled, “Further Counsel and Advice”]

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The excerpt appearing immediately below was not discussed during the webinar on February 9. While I was drafting this report, however, I came upon this excerpt and concluded that it supplies additional insights that are quite useful. Therefore I am now citing it.

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“6. On the planet of your bestowal, set rebellion-segregated man spiritually free. On Urantia, make a further contribution to the sovereignty of the Supreme, thus extending the establishment of this sovereignty throughout the broad domains of your personal creation.” [Mantutia Melchizedek, 1328:3 / 120:2.6 — excerpted from Paper 120, section 2, a section that is entitled, “The Bestowal Limitations”]

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During the webinar, I stated that another reader and I had previously discussed Immanuel’s instructions that Michael should “in every possible manner seek to avoid the formal establishment of an organized cult, a crystallized religion, or a segregated ethical grouping of mortal beings.” The other reader, I said, had pointed out that these instructions were those that Immanuel had given to Michael, whereas Michael (while bestowed on Urantia in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth) had not passed them on to his followers. Since this distinction is valid and important, I preferred to focus attention on the final sentence of the same excerpt: “Your life and teachings are to become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples” [Mantutia Melchizedek, 1330:1 / 120:3.6]. We should bear in mind that Immanuel was speaking for the Universal Father, so it is reasonable to consider this sentence decisive and definitive, not just an opinion. Therefore I asked the panelists how these results will actually be achieved on our planet Urantia.

One participant remarked that Jesusonian standards should apply to all religions. At a later stage, he called attention to eloquent remarks in section 7 of Paper 87 whereby a Brilliant Evening Star declared: “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” [a Brilliant Evening Star, 966:1 / 87:7.6]. In reply, I pointed out that we will indeed ponder and analyze this important challenge when we reach the concluding pages of topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed* (i.e., pages 142-146).

Another panelist gave a quite different answer to my question about how the life and teachings of Jesus will become the common heritage of all religions and all peoples. In his view, one should begin with the true teachings of Jesus. He thought that faith is the place to start.

Yet another panelist commented that the phrase “common heritage” can be understood as a legacy or tradition. This understanding does not tell us how the people of Urantia will eventually reach the degree of spiritual unity that Immanuel described to Michael, but it helps to clarify the question.

### **My personal views on a different topic**

I began this segment of our webinar by stating that as the moderator, I mainly strive to direct traffic, while ensuring that each panelist has appropriate opportunities to express his views and opinions, in a context of respect for pluralism and diversity. On the other hand, I said, circumstances occasionally arise that cause me to conclude that for the sake of clarity, I must state my own views. This occasion, I said, pertained to the group’s previous consideration of a quotation from *The Urantia Book* that appears on page 95 of *Revelation Revealed*:

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Many times during the training of the twelve Jesus reverted to this theme. Repeatedly he told them it was not his desire that those who believed in him should become dogmatized and standardized in accordance with the religious interpretations of even good men. Again and again he warned his apostles against the formulation of creeds and the establishment of traditions as a means of guiding and controlling believers in the gospel of the kingdom. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1592:2 / 141:5.4*]  
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During our webinar on February 2, one participant highlighted the phrase appearing at the end of this warning, namely “as a means of guiding and controlling believers.” In his view, formulating creeds and establishing traditions are not contrary to Jesus’ instructions unless these techniques are aimed at guiding and controlling believers. This was the viewpoint to which I found it necessary to reply.

- In abstract terms, I said, it is true that Jesus’ warning applies if and only if the effort to formulate creeds and establish traditions is intended to guide and control believers.
- On the other hand, if we turn from grammar and logic to the reality of the entire previous history of the Christian tradition, I could not identify any occasion in which a creed was formulated without seeking to guide and control believers. Therefore the linkage is extremely strong. Further, many strands of the Christian tradition continue to violate Jesus’ instructions in exactly this way right now.
- If we talk about traditions, however, the question of intentions is not as clear, especially in relation to the present and the future. For example, a Christmas tree can be considered a custom or a tradition, and I agree that it is essentially harmless. No one will say, “Thou shalt put up a Christmas tree,” just as no one will say, “Thou shalt not put up a Christmas tree.” I realize, however, that the only aspect of a Christmas tree that is truly Christian is the word “Christmas.” After all, a Christmas tree has nothing to do with the teachings of Jesus, nor with the tenets and practices of Christianity as a religion.

In response, several participants thought that current trends within the various strands of Christianity attest to or imply greater flexibility and tolerance in regard to creeds and how they are used.

One panelist thought that in the future, even the most fundamentalist denominations will not be able to impose belief in a particular creed as a condition for active membership. He believed that the young persons who often called “millennials” will continue to influence the established denominations toward more flexible attitudes and approaches.

Another participant commented that based on current trends in the United States, there seems to be good reason to believe that the nature and function of creeds will be redefined, and then redefined again. In his view, egalitarian impulses are very strong.

### **Resuming discussion of Romanità**

After this we returned to my essay “Romanità” (the second attachment). As previously stated, this document explains that the social, cultural, and political systems of the Roman Empire ended up inflicting certain birthmarks on the organized, institutional church — birthmarks that still exert substantial influence on Christianity as it is currently practiced in the Western world. In effect, these organizational and structural changes became so closely associated with the Christian tradition as to be almost indistinguishable from it. Further, the resulting entanglement of church and state exerted very substantial influence for well over one thousand years.

At my request, one panelist read the first two paragraphs on page 2 of “Romanità,” which, in part, call attention to an important statement that Jesus made during the crisis at Capernaum: “I have come to proclaim spiritual liberty, teach eternal truth, and foster living faith” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1710:4 / 153:2.6*]. I then explained that I had chosen the two quotations from *The Urantia Book* that appear at the bottom of page 2 because they are balanced and can be interpreted from many different perspectives. Therefore I asked two participants to read these quotations, on the understanding that the group would then discuss them.

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*[First quotation excerpted on page 2 of “Romanità”]*

The world is filled with lost souls, not lost in the theologic sense but lost in the directional meaning, wandering about in confusion among the isms and cults of a frustrated philosophic era. Too few have learned how to install a philosophy of living in the place of religious authority. (The symbols of socialized religion are not to be despised as channels of growth, albeit the river bed is not the river.)  
*[A Melchizedek, 1098:4 / 100:5.1]*

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*[Second quotation excerpted on page 2 of “Romanità”]*

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. The security of a religious group depends on spiritual unity, not on theological uniformity. A religious group should be able to enjoy the liberty of freethinking without having to become “freethinkers.” 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]*

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Although participants expressed a wide range of reactions and interpretations on a general level, I prefer to focus on the remarks of one panelist who called attention to a particular paragraph located in section 7 of Paper 101. (**Editing note:** For clarity and ease of understanding, I have inserted the numbers shown within brackets and in bold. In other words, these editorial insertions of mine are not part of the paragraph as it appears in The Urantia Book.)

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The great difference between a religious and a nonreligious philosophy of living consists in the nature and level of recognized values and in the object of loyalties. There are four phases in the evolution of religious philosophy: **[1]** Such an experience may become merely conformative, resigned to submission to tradition and authority. **[2]** Or it may be satisfied with slight attainments, just enough to stabilize the daily living, and therefore becomes early arrested on such an adventitious level. Such mortals believe in letting well enough alone. **[3]** A third group progress to the level of logical intellectuality but there stagnate in consequence of cultural slavery. It is indeed pitiful to behold giant intellects held so securely within the cruel grasp of cultural bondage. It is equally pathetic to observe those who trade their cultural bondage for the materialistic fetters of a science, falsely so called. **[4]** The fourth level of philosophy attains freedom from all conventional and traditional handicaps and dares to think, act, and live honestly, loyally, fearlessly, and truthfully. [*A Melchizedek of Nebadon, 1114:2 / 101:7.4*]

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One participant analyzed this paragraph by commenting that in his view, the progression whereby most human beings living on Urantia reach level 4 will take tens of thousands of years. He believed that the majority of human beings living today fall in levels 1 or 2, and that most intelligent people are stuck in level 3. He thought that it is important to make provisions for the vast majority of human beings, perhaps as high as 90 to 95 percent, who do not attain level 4. The progression to that level is not supported by our contemporary culture, and in some ways our social and cultural circumstances actively interfere with it. As compared with the situation on a normal planet, our difficulties on Urantia are multiplied by a factor of ten.

Another panelist was surprised at the prediction that this evolution of human beings will take thousands of years. Circumstances have changed and are changing now, as illustrated by previous comments about “millennials.”

Yet another participant stated that time is accelerating and that cultural change is accelerating too. In his view, the changes in human beings during the next one thousand years will greatly exceed those that occurred in the last thousand.

Readers, I regret that at this stage of the report, it does not seem appropriate for me to try to summarize other general comments pertaining to the excerpts from *The Urantia Book* that are reproduced near the bottom of page 2 of “Romanità.” Instead I shall move on by indicating that I proceeded to ask the panelists to comment on the evocative and intriguing phrase “**albeit the river bed is not the river**” that concludes the first of these two quotations.

One panelist responded by interpreting the idea of “the river bed” as a reference to symbols, while commenting that he personally had collected hundreds of images of angels. Although he did not NEED these symbols, he appreciated the fact that he has them. He interpreted the phrase “the river” as a metaphor for the fruits of the spirit.

Next I asked participants to focus on the final sentence of the second quotation, commenting on whether, in their view, the “great hope” highlighted there is a present reality or, on the contrary, amounts to a future aspiration. Everyone who responded described this sentence of the Melchizedek’s as a hope for the future, not a current reality.

## **Our agenda for February 16**

During our webinar on February 16, panelists will focus on the final three pages of my essay “Romanità.” These pages pertain to the entanglement of church and state that ensued when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, an entanglement that is now considerably weaker in countries whose social and cultural background is predominantly Christian but that still afflicts humanity, in some locations more acutely than elsewhere. In addition, participants will take careful note of comments in section 12 of Paper 70 whereby a Melchizedek warns that if human beings wish to maintain our freedom, we must avoid “Union of church and state” [*a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17*].

## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, February 16:

- Pacific Time Zone: from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 3:00 to 5:00 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 the webinars on topic 8 that we have conducted up to now, live streaming in YouTube has usually begun at about ten minutes past the hour indicated above.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[February 15, 2019 at 10:00 pm]

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 21, 2019 10:48 AM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on February 16, plans for February 23  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf; 2019-01-17\_Romanità.pdf

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

On Saturday, February 16, we conducted our eighth 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.”

### My essay “Romanità”

During this webinar, we focused on pages 3 through 6 of my essay “Romanità” (the second attachment). As previously stated, this document explains that the social, cultural, and political systems of the Roman Empire ended up inflicting certain birthmarks on the organized, institutional church — birthmarks that still exert substantial influence on Christianity as it is currently practiced in the Western world. In effect, these organizational and structural changes became so closely associated with the Christian tradition as to be almost indistinguishable from it. Further, the resulting entanglement of church and state exerted very substantial influence for well over one thousand years.

After a participant read the first paragraph on page 3, I stated that when I subsequently prepare the final version of “Romanità,” in order to insert it in an updated version of *Revelation Revealed*, I plan to revise the first sentence to read as follows: “A regional subdivision of the Roman Empire was called a *diocese*, and a senior administrator exercised authority over church affairs within each one, perhaps ranking as an archbishop or metropolitan bishop, or even as a Patriarch.”

The changes pertain to the second half of the sentence, making the ideas more precise and more in keeping with the principle of hierarchy. I explained that in the Roman Empire, a *diocese* was a fairly large area, whereas the authority of the great majority of ordinary bishops was confined to believers living in a town or small city. In any case, the main point of the paragraph is that the church continued to use Roman vocabulary and methods long after the Goths overran the western half of the Roman Empire.

From a much broader perspective, two participants commented that the overlap between the ecclesiastical realm and the political realm is entirely natural, for both of them wield power over individuals. One of these participants went on to declare that the resulting entanglement of church and state is predictable and normal, whether in the context of Christianity or in other circumstances. Both panelists agreed that this entanglement involves a contest for moral territory, what is right and what is wrong, as exemplified by the sentence in “Romanità” that mentions current political agitation in the United States with regard to abortion.

Another participant called attention to the passage in Paper 68 in which a Melchizedek tells us that “the mores were man’s first social institution” [*a Melchizedek, 767:2 / 68:4.2*]. This led him to conclude that there could be no human society without some mores. Therefore, in his view, an overlap between religious concerns and social and political factors is inevitable and unavoidable.

One panelist reminded us that Jesus endeavored to steer away from political matters, in part by giving the following answer to a person who questioned him: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and render to God the things that are God’s” [*the Midwayer Commission, 1899:2 / 174:2.2 — also quoted in the gospel according to Matthew, 22:21*]. Another panelist, however, agreed that this formula is important, but commented that the distinction is sometimes difficult or even problematic because of the interlinkages that exist on moral levels.

I explained that my essay “Romanità” specifically pertains to the entanglement of church and state that occurred in the Christian tradition, largely because the successors of the Emperor Constantine eventually made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire, but also because in the year 800, the pope saw fit to crown the Emperor Charlemagne — a step that created an implicit contest for authority and power that endured through most of the Middle Ages.

Part of this struggle could be interpreted as attempts by various rulers to seize authority over certain ecclesiastical matters, especially the appointment of bishops. On the other hand, there was also an encroachment on civil power on the part of the church, for until 1860 the pope exerted civil authority over a swath of central Italy (approximately one-third of the Italian peninsula), asserting that he had the right to do so because of the so-called “Donation of Constantine” — a supposed imperial edict that contemporary scholars appraise as a forgery.

I agreed that similar struggles for power and authority have occurred in the context of a number of other cultures, but not in all. For example, the various rulers of China have never been confronted with a religious leader who had sufficient personal stature and popular support to pose a real challenge, neither in imperial times nor in any subsequent era. In part, this is because China’s three long-standing traditions associated with religion (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) never created the intense loyalties that we identify with the Christian tradition in the Western world.

Another participant called attention to the situation on the advanced continent of a neighboring planet: “Religion is so entirely a family matter among these people that there are no public places devoted exclusively to religious assembly. Politically, church and state, as Urantians are wont to say, are entirely separate, but there is a strange overlapping of religion and philosophy” [*a Melchizedek, 811.5 / 72:3.5*].

From his perspective, the revelators provided us this information as a tool for reflection, not as a pattern that people on Urantia are obliged to emulate. Yet another participant, however, said that she was not comfortable with the accompanying information about “the spiritual teachers (comparable to Urantia pastors), who visit each family periodically to examine the children to ascertain if they have been properly instructed by their parents” [*a Melchizedek, 811.6 / 72:3.6*]. She doubted that any similar procedure would ever be acceptable on Urantia.

One participant called attention to the following sentence appearing on page 4 of “Romanità”:

“In short, the Reformation had little lasting effect on Christianity’s underlying psychology of group authority aimed at uniformity of belief.”

He called this statement “very cogent.” In comparison, other participants emphasized that the Protestant Reformation broke the monopoly of a tyrannical institutional church that had previously dominated Western society and culture, pointing out that this decisive step created a situation that eventually led to tolerance and mutual respect. This, however, was not the immediate result, as I endeavored to note in the following passage on page 4 of “Romanità”:

“The Puritans and Pilgrims who founded the colony of Massachusetts did not traverse the Atlantic in search of tolerance and true religious freedom. No, they sought virgin soil in which they could impose their own brand of Christianity and resolutely cast out dissenters (*e.g.*, Roger Williams).”

Two panelists expressed very favorable views of Roger Williams, partly because he believed that civil authorities did not have power over individual conscience. In order to illustrate the pervasive entanglement of religion with social and cultural matters, I told a story that dates from my short vacation in London in August 1972, while en route back to the United States after having finished an assignment at a small naval base in Morocco that provided communications services to U.S. Navy ships operating in the western half of the Mediterranean.

I was twenty-five at the time, and in the evening my roommate in London and I had the habit of cycling from one pub to another. On one of those days, I was standing at the bar, waiting for the two mugs of beer that I had ordered on behalf of both of us. Based on the accent of the customer standing next to me, I concluded that he was from Northern Ireland. This fellow customer was willing to agree that I could ask him a question, but he did not guarantee that he would answer. So I took a chance, asking him why Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland were still killing each other, whereas in the rest of Western Europe, the wars of religion ended 400 years ago. To which he replied: “Yank, y’don’t understand a’tall, ’tis nothing to do with religion, ’tis a matter of society and culture and tradition! Meself, I’m an atheist, but I’m a *Protestant* atheist!” (in all the years since then, I have never found a Protestant minister who was willing to agree that atheism is a tenet of the Protestant faith.)

During the webinar’s final few minutes, participants took careful note of comments in section 12 of Paper 70 whereby a Melchizedek warns that if human beings wish to maintain our freedom, we must avoid “[Union of church and state](#)” [*a Melchizedek, 798:16 / 70:12.17*]. In effect, the Melchizedek has warned us that personal liberty is intensely threatened whenever the government embraces and sponsors an organized, institutional religion!

This, of course, is exactly what the Emperor Constantine and his successors did. For over one thousand years, the perils remained vivid and obvious. Although the vestiges of the union of church and state are now considerably weaker in countries whose social and cultural background is

predominantly Christian, they still afflict humanity, in some locations more acutely than elsewhere. From this perspective, several participants commented on the great importance of the separation of church and state that is embodied in the Constitution and laws of the United States. One panelist called that step a critical advance in human culture.

Another participant called attention to the extended analysis of secularism and its disparate effects that the Midwayer Commission has shared with us in section 8 of Paper 195. Originally, he noted, “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*]. Further, “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 Midwayer Commission, 2081:4 / 195:8.4*].

He pointed out, however, that in recent generations, secularism has gone much too far: “secularism has assumed a more militant attitude, assuming to take the place of the religion whose totalitarian bondage it onetime resisted” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:5 / 195:8.5*]. “In revolting against the almost total control of life by religious authority, and after attaining the liberation from such ecclesiastical tyranny, the secularists went on to institute a revolt against God himself, sometimes tacitly and sometimes openly” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:6 / 195:8.6*].

This leaves us with a crucial balance that we must redress, for the separation of church and state must not entail the separation of human beings from God. After all, the revelators tell us most emphatically: “Secularism can never bring peace to mankind. Nothing can take the place of God in human society” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:6 / 195:8.6*].

### **Our agenda on February 23**

During our webinar on February 23, we will return to page 96 of *Revelation Revealed*. We will then do our best to grapple with and comment on the tumultuous theological debates that convulsed Roman society for more than a century: From 325 to 451 CE, Christian believers advanced numerous contending theories and doctrines about the nature and identity of Jesus of Nazareth, his relationship to the Father, and key aspects of the Trinity — as embodied in successive creeds that these early Christians adopted in the course of crucial church councils, all of them subject to the approval and consent of various Roman emperors.

### **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[February 21, 2019 at 10:48 am]

## Neal Waldrop

---

**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 01, 2019 12:45 AM  
**To:** 'Neal Waldrop - gmail'  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on February 23, plans for March 2  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf

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

On Saturday, February 23, we conducted our ninth 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.”

### **Tumultuous theological debates among the early Christians**

We began our discussion by returning to page 96 of *Revelation Revealed*, thereby launching our effort to grapple with and comment on the tumultuous theological debates that convulsed Roman society for more than a century. From 325 to 451 CE, Christian believers, theologians, and bishops argued intensively over numerous contending theories and doctrines about the nature and identity of Jesus of Nazareth, his relationship to the Father, and key aspects of the Trinity.

In brief, the Emperor Constantine sought to bring order out of chaos by convening the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, a gathering during which approximately 300 bishops adopted the Nicene Creed that portrayed Jesus of Nazareth as having two natures, both divine and human. During the ensuing 50 years, however, contending views swirled from opposite directions: Some factions emphasized divine attributes almost to the point of obscuring Jesus’ identity as a human being, whereas others concentrated on the human side of Jesus, while denying that he shared the Father’s spiritual nature.

Nonetheless, the principle of two natures was ultimately reaffirmed at the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, an outcome that required the active insistence of the Emperor Theodosius. Seventy years later, during the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE), participants adopted “the Chalcedonian Definition” (see page 98 of *Revelation Revealed*), doing so at the insistence of the Emperor Marcian. In this detailed document adopted at Chalcedon, the nature and identity of Jesus are explained in ways that became authoritative and traditional for most Christians, although the great majority of believers then living in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt never accepted it.

During our discussion, I pointed out that in section 1 of Paper 13, a Perfector of Wisdom describes the incarnation of the Paradise Sons as a secret of Sonarington, a universal mystery that is accessible only to those Paradise Sons who have passed through the process. Therefore it is not at all surprising that the early Christians found it extremely difficult to develop a coherent explanation. Even so, the early Christians were certainly not obliged to argue about these matters so intensely and so vehemently.

When I asked participants to explain what happened, one panelist focused on a sentence near the bottom of page 96 of *Revelation Revealed*: “Since Christianity had unquestionably morphed into a

religion *about* Jesus, Christian believers of that day found it necessary to define his nature and identity clearly and precisely.”

The others panelists agreed, but some of them believed it was also worthwhile to call attention to another sentence that appears earlier on the same page: “To [Constantine’s] chagrin, however, he rapidly discovered that many professional Christians of his day were fractious and bumptious, displaying a disarming tendency to exacerbate disagreements by hurling invective, instead of seeking to develop reasonable and perhaps subtle compromises that might enable them to reach agreement on key features of Christian belief and practice.”

One participant said he did not agree that Christianity is just a religion *about* Jesus. In part, he cited the many miracles and other events that are narrated in the gospels, while particularly emphasizing the parables of Jesus. Another participant agreed with this general point, but then called attention to the following paragraph from section 2 in Paper 149:

-----  
2. The second great blunder of the Master’s early followers, and one which all subsequent generations have persisted in perpetuating, was to organize the Christian teaching so completely about the person of Jesus. This overemphasis of the personality of Jesus in the theology of Christianity has worked to obscure his teachings, and all of this has made it increasingly difficult for Jews, Mohammedans, Hindus, and other Eastern religionists to accept the teachings of Jesus. We would not belittle the place of the person of Jesus in a religion which might bear his name, but we would not permit such consideration to eclipse his inspired life or to supplant his saving message: the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. [*The Midwayer Commission, 1670:5 / 149:2.4*]  
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Yet another panelist commented that Jesus did not teach his followers about his nature and identity because he did not want to foster a religion about himself that would tend to distract from his teachings. In effect, this interpretation corresponded to the explicit instructions of Jesus that the Midwayer Commission records in Paper 138, “Training the Kingdom’s Messengers”:

-----  
Said Jesus: “My kingdom and the gospel related thereto shall be the burden of your message. Be not sidetracked into preaching *about* me and *about* my teachings. Proclaim the gospel of the kingdom and portray my revelation of the Father in heaven but do not be misled into the bypaths of creating legends and building up a cult having to do with beliefs and teachings *about* my beliefs and teachings.” [*The Midwayer Commission, 1543:1 / 138:6.3*]  
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### **What the bishops were voting on**

Quite a few historians have written lengthy works in which they seek to analyze and explain the bitter quarrels that inflamed and consumed many Christians during the 4th and 5th centuries. On page 97 of *Revelation Revealed*, I identified three scholarly works along such lines, including *Voting about God in Early Church Councils* by Ramsay MacMullen (2006). Surely the bishops who attended these councils, I



said, did not actually believe that their votes were going to change God! So what were they actually voting about?

One panelist remarked that the idea of human beings voting about God, the Creator, is preposterous. Another panelist commented that the bishops certainly did not think that their votes could explain or define God; this idea would be totally a heresy that conflicts with traditions of the Christian faith that are central and fundamental. Yet another participant commented that the various Roman Emperors were trying to control the activists and foster an agreed approach to religion.

Since no one seemed willing to answer the specific question that I asked, I finally decided to answer it myself: The assembled bishops were voting on the doctrines and creeds that would serve to create a framework for Christianity as they understood it — doctrines and creeds that they intended to impose on believers and enforce as a matter of ecclesiastical authority aimed at uniformity of belief.

### **The Chalcedonian definition**

One participant praised the detailed definition of the nature and identity of Jesus that was adopted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE. He believed that this document is relatively important, for it makes it clear that Jesus of Nazareth was both divine and human. This reality, in his view, has certain similarities to human beings, for in the ascendant life we too will be a combination of divine and human elements (thereby referring to human ascenders who have fused with their Thought Adjusters).

Another participant commented that the Chalcedonian definition is relatively sophisticated from an evolutionary standpoint. When I asked whether he thought that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and the adjutant mind-spirits had helped the bishops draft this statement, he appeared to take that for granted, responding, “How could it be otherwise?” On the other hand, he took issue with wording in the Chalcedonian definition that refers to “Mary the Virgin, the Godbearer.”

I agreed that the Chalcedonian definition includes many ideas that we consider positive and helpful, but pointed out that the decision to enforce it as a matter of authority and uniformity created a three-way split in the Roman world. The great majority of Christian believers living in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt had other views and considered imperial efforts to enforce this definition tyrannical and oppressive. In the middle of the 7th century, when Islamic armies attacked, these disaffected Christians did little to help imperial forces repel them. As a result, Islamic armies conquered these regions, proceeded across North Africa, and eventually seized almost the entirety of Spain.

### **The quest for uniformity**

I asked whether tolerance and mutual respect simply were not part of the Roman lexicon. One participant responded that the Romans could be flexible in certain political matters if that seemed to be expedient. For example, they allowed subcultures to exist, provided that the groups concerned were obedient and respected Roman authority. On the other hand, he agreed that the Romans definitely did emphasize authority and uniformity, as we previously discussed in connection with my essay “Romanità.”

Another participant commented that it was an anachronism and overly simplistic to impose 21st century ideas about tolerance and mutual respect on the era that we were discussing. These concepts are ours; they had almost nothing to do with people living then.

As an additional resource that helps us understand the period, I cited comments by the Midwayer Commission in section 3 of Paper 195:

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Even a good religion could not save a great empire from the sure results of lack of individual participation in the affairs of government, from overmuch paternalism, overtaxation and gross collection abuses, unbalanced trade with the Levant which drained away the gold, amusement madness, **Roman standardization**, the degradation of woman, slavery and race decadence, physical plagues, and **a state church which became institutionalized nearly to the point of spiritual barrenness**. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2074:4 / 195:3.9 — emphasis added: the phrases in bold type*]

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After the webinar, I looked for additional ways to understand the quest for uniformity by delving into certain portions of historical works that I read in previous years. This led me to one paragraph that seems interesting and relevant. In brief, this paragraph appears to describe a negative concept of Providence, the view that God would punish the Roman Empire and Roman society “if they got it wrong”:

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The vast majority of people at this time, educated and ignorant, believed in providential views of the world. They believed that wrong conduct or heretical belief stirred God to anger, and that such anger would be expressed in highly material terms, in earthquake and fire, invasion and military defeat, famine and pestilence. Unless evildoers or wrong-believers were suppressed, society might perish altogether. In order to destroy those malevolent groups, activists took steps that look worldly, political, and cynical, but we can never truly separate these political acts from their compelling underlying motivation, which was supernatural. However historians may use the term, no “secular world” existed independent of church and religion, and the Roman state, pagan or Christian, never was secular in any recognizable modern sense. Nor was there any such thing as “just politics.”

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[SOURCE: Pages 26-27 of *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years* by Philip Jenkins. New York: HarperOne, 2010.]

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### **Christian concepts of the Trinity**

One participant commented that the idea of the Trinity was a crucial advance; if this concept had not been put forward, that would have been a grave defect. Another participant agreed in principle, while calling attention to the following paragraph from section 2 of Paper 104:

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The conceptual grasp of the Trinity association of Father, Son, and Spirit prepares the human mind for the further presentation of certain other threefold relationships. Theological reason may be fully satisfied by the concept of the Paradise Trinity, but philosophical and cosmological reason demand the recognition of the other triune associations of the First Source and Center, those triunities in which the Infinite functions in various non-Father capacities of universal manifestation — the relationships of the God of force, energy, power, causation, reaction, potentiality, actuality, gravity, tension, pattern, principle, and unity. [A Melchizedek, 1146:2 / 104:2.6]  
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For clarity, I believe it is useful to reproduce an explanatory footnote that appears on page 99 of *Revelation Revealed*:

-----  
Here it is important to bear in mind that in traditional Christian theology, the phrase “the Holy Spirit” refers to the third person of the Trinity as Christians conceive it. In contrast, however, the revelators tell us that the third person of the Paradise Trinity is the Infinite Spirit, and they use the phrase “the Holy Spirit” to refer to the spiritual ministry that the Creative Mother Spirit of Nebadon carries out on her own behalf.  
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## **Our agenda on March 2**

During the webinar on February 23, we began discussing the passage on page 99 of *Revelation Revealed* that describes controversy over how the Holy Spirit relates to the other persons of the Trinity as Christians understand it. Since the views we exchanged were only preliminary, that is where we will begin on March 2.

Subsequent pages of *Revelation Revealed* describe: (a) the split between Western and Eastern Orthodox Christians that occurred in 1054 and that has persisted ever since, because of different views of the Holy Spirit that have never been resolved; and (b) the unfortunate fate of the Spanish theologian and physician Michael Servetus, who was burned at the stake in Geneva in August 1553 because he denied Christian doctrines pertaining to the Trinity.

## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

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

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

- Pacific Time Zone: from 12:00 to 2:00 pm.
- Mountain Time Zone: from 1:00 to 3:00 pm.
- Central Time Zone: from 2:00 to 4:00 pm.
- Eastern Time Zone: from 3:00 to 5:00 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 the webinars on topic 8 that we have conducted up to now, live streaming in YouTube has usually begun at about ten minutes past the hour indicated above.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[March 1, 2019 at 12:45 am]

## Neal Waldrop

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**From:** Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 09, 2019 3:57 PM  
**To:** Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on March 2  
**Attachments:** 2016-07-17\_RR-T08\_P088-146\_Q059-077.pdf

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

On Saturday, March 2, we conducted our tenth webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, "Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity."

*NOTE: Our webinar on March 2 was the final program of the six webinars in phase 2 during which we continued our panel discussion of topic 8. We are now taking a break, but plan to return with another series of six webinars (i.e., phase 3). Although we have not yet chosen a specific date for that to start, we seem likely to resume on some Saturday in the second half of April.*

### **The Great Schism dividing Western and Eastern Orthodox Christians**

When we launched discussion on March 2, we returned to the passage on page 99 of *Revelation Revealed* that describes controversy over how the Holy Spirit relates to the other persons of the Trinity as Christians understand it. As in my preceding report (March 1), I believe it is useful to reproduce the explanatory footnote that appears on page 99 of *Revelation Revealed*:

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Here it is important to bear in mind that in traditional Christian theology, the phrase "the Holy Spirit" refers to the third person of the Trinity as Christians conceive it. In contrast, however, the revelators tell us that the third person of the Paradise Trinity is the Infinite Spirit, and they use the phrase "the Holy Spirit" to refer to the spiritual ministry that the Creative Mother Spirit of Nebadon carries out on her own behalf.  
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As stated in *Revelation Revealed*, the bishops who attended the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE revised the sentence in the Nicene Creed that relates to the Holy Spirit. They added the phrases shown in italics below:

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*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.*  
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Long after the Council of Constantinople adjourned (at least 100 years thereafter), Western Christians decided to add the words "and the Son" to the phrase explaining how the Holy Spirit proceeds, so as to read as follows: "... who proceeds from the Father and the Son ... ." Since Eastern Orthodox

Christians had never agreed to this insertion, in April 1054 the Pope sent a representative to Constantinople to urge them to conform. They refused, and the Pope's representative (Cardinal Humbert) ended up thrusting upon the altar of the great basilica Hagia Sophia a document excommunicating the Patriarch of Constantinople (Michael Cerularius). Naturally he returned the favor by excommunicating the Roman Catholic envoys, and this exchange of mutual regards sufficed to launch the Great Schism, which persists to the present.

One participant commented on the word "proceeds" and the concept of the Holy Spirit, which accords with many passages in the Old and New Testaments. He emphasized that the idea of the Trinity was necessary in order to bring the Holy Spirit into the conceptual framework of Christianity.

Another participant interpreted these events by citing theological and ecclesiastical reasons why the leaders of Eastern Orthodox Christianity did not go along with Western views. In his opinion, Eastern Orthodox churches are much more averse to innovation, and the individuals involved at the time do not appear to have been convinced that the reasons that Cardinal Humbert was offering were strong enough to overcome tradition. Further, Eastern Orthodox Christians had intense views about the primacy of the Father, and there was an underlying conflict over ecclesiastical authority — the implication that the Pope wanted to assert primacy and control over all Christians, not just those in Western countries. Since the background also included controversies over other theological topics such as liturgical matters, he believed that the split would have occurred eventually, even if it had not arisen because of wording in the Nicene Creed pertaining to the Holy Spirit.

I agreed that the question of authority had been a key factor. In addition, I pointed out that in relation to the wording of the Nicene Creed, Eastern Orthodox Christians were being confronted with a fait accompli on which they had not been consulted — even though the Council of Constantinople had been held at the capital of the eastern half of the Roman Empire, had conducted its deliberations in Greek instead of in Latin, and had included very few bishops from areas in the West.

### **A Reformation postscript**

When we turned to the paragraphs in the middle of page 100 referring to events associated with the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, we discussed why the Protestant reformers had not called into question the core doctrines about the nature and identity of Jesus, and about the Trinity, that had emerged in the 4th and 5th centuries, even though no one could identify scriptural passages justifying all the philosophic concepts and subtle distinctions that the bishops assembled at Chalcedon wove into the celebrated definition that they adopted in the year 451 CE.

There seemed to be agreement that the reformers' slogan "*sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia*" ("scripture alone, faith alone, grace alone") was a tool they used to scrape away many of the doctrines and practices that had accumulated during the thousand years that had followed the Council of Chalcedon, on the grounds that they could not find a solid basis in Christian scriptures. In other words, they accepted and maintained the core doctrines that had been developed during the 4th and 5th centuries, perhaps because they believed that the process that led to them had been legitimate and appropriate.

We then discussed the unfortunate fate of the Spanish theologian and physician Michael Servetus, who was arrested in Geneva on August 13, 1553 and subsequently burned at the stake because he had disputed Christian doctrines pertaining to the Trinity, while also taking issue with traditional teachings about original sin and the practice of baptizing infants. I pointed out that his trial and conviction for heresy occurred in a civil court, thereby demonstrating the union of church and state in Calvinist Geneva.

One participant contrasted this with the fate of Joan of Arc, who had been convicted of heresy and burned at the stake approximately 100 years before. She had been tried in an ecclesiastical tribunal but then, by prearrangement, had been handed over to civil authorities for execution. This hand-and-glove cooperation did not amount to as explicit a union of church and state as subsequently occurred in Geneva, but the net results were equally deplorable.

### Formal question 63

Participants next discussed and answered formal question 63 on page 101 of *Revelation Revealed*, which reads as follows:

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63. In your view, why did institutional religion (*i.e.*, the Christian church) ignore Jesus' warnings against creeds and traditions that would serve to guide and control believers? Do you see any prospect that one or more Christian denominations will set aside such practices and will cease to operate along such lines?  
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Before I asked participants to reply, I pointed out that the ideas presented in this question are quite similar to those contained in an excerpt that was included in my essay "Romanità," a quotation that we had discussed during a previous webinar:

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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. The security of a religious group depends on spiritual unity, not on theological uniformity. A religious group should be able to enjoy the liberty of freethinking without having to become "freethinkers." 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]  
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One participant thought that there is some prospect of this change occurring in the future, given relatively recent weakening of the practices of control and guidance. He was inclined to believe that there will be some kind of hybrid that emerges, a new version of Christian practice in an organizational format. While stating this, he cited the following paragraph from Paper 101:

Belief is always limiting and binding; faith is expanding and releasing. Belief fixates, faith liberates. But living religious faith is more than the association of noble beliefs; it is more than an exalted system of philosophy; it is a living experience concerned with spiritual meanings, divine ideals, and supreme values; it is God-knowing and man-serving. Beliefs may become group possessions, but faith must be personal. Theologic beliefs can be suggested to a group, but faith can rise up only in the heart of the individual religionist. [A Melchizedek, 1114:6 / 101:8.2]

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Another participant called attention to the following excerpt from Paper 155, section 5, Jesus' discourse on true religion:

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Until the human race progresses to the level of a higher and more general recognition of the realities of spiritual experience, large numbers of men and women will continue to show a personal preference for those religions of authority which require only intellectual assent, in contrast to the religion of the spirit, which entails active participation of mind and soul in the faith adventure of grappling with the rigorous realities of progressive human experience.

The acceptance of the traditional religions of authority presents the easy way out for man's urge to seek satisfaction for the longings of his spiritual nature. The settled, crystallized, and established religions of authority afford a ready refuge to which the distracted and distraught soul of man may flee when harassed by fear and tormented by uncertainty. Such a religion requires of its devotees, as the price to be paid for its satisfactions and assurances, only a passive and purely intellectual assent.

And for a long time there will live on earth those timid, fearful, and hesitant individuals who will prefer thus to secure their religious consolations, even though, in so casting their lot with the religions of authority, they compromise the sovereignty of personality, debase the dignity of self-respect, and utterly surrender the right to participate in that most thrilling and inspiring of all possible human experiences: the personal quest for truth, the exhilaration of facing the perils of intellectual discovery, the determination to explore the realities of personal religious experience, the supreme satisfaction of experiencing the personal triumph of the actual realization of the victory of spiritual faith over intellectual doubt as it is honestly won in the supreme adventure of all human existence—man seeking God, for himself and as himself, and finding him. [The Midwayer Commission, 1729:3-5 / 155:5.8-10]

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In her view, traditions and creeds just get in the way of direct personal experience with God and spiritual values. She said that in her research, she had found considerable information about the Quakers, and she proceeded to share some of the descriptions. In her view, quite a few aspects of the Quakers' belief system are not far from what the revelators have told us in *The Urantia Book*.

In reply, I pointed out that question 63 pertains to what Christian denominations may do in the future, whereas fundamentalists and other Christians with traditional views have questioned whether the Quakers are Christian or not. During colonial times, they were persecuted in New England. She



understood that point, but commented that the Quakers had Christian roots. I agreed, then noted that similar questions of religious identity also apply to other groups such as the Unitarians and Mormons.

A third panelist remarked that Jesus had left no creeds, but he did leave the “Our Father” and a ritual patterned on the Last Supper. He believed that in the future, Christian denominations will have to entertain different adaptations, side by side, without being enemies. This, in his view, is part of the search for truth, the search for what is real, although the ideal is personal religion, drawing on the religion of the spirit. He hoped that the greater involvement of women in administering and managing various Christian denominations will lead to practices that are less dogmatic.

The fourth participant commented that there is a big difference between guiding and controlling believers; in his view, guidance is a very important part of spiritual life. Further, traditions can be helpful, or unhelpful. As to the idea of controlling believers, that is a different story. In his view, early believers had ignored Jesus’ warning because they needed some kind of organization that would be stable. In an ideal world, one nearing light and life, we will get to the point when personal (individual) religion will prevail; but we are not there now, and institutional religions need to have some framework for religious belief. He did not want to be anachronistic about what believers needed to do about 2,000 years ago, or about what they need to do now. He did not think that a Christian denomination could set aside all practices and beliefs that have defined it. At that point, it would no longer be a denomination and would no longer be Christian. Instead, like the Unitarians, it would be something else.

COMMENT. In part, formal question 63 inquires about the future of organized, institutional churches that are considered Christian. We should bear in mind that Jesus explicitly enjoined his apostles and other followers not to create legends and build up a cult having to do with beliefs and teachings *about* his beliefs and teachings [*the Midwayer Commission, 1543:1 / 138:6.3*]. In addition, Jesus emphasized spiritual unity, while repeatedly warning against creeds and traditions that would serve to guide and control believers [*the Midwayer Commission, 1592:2 / 141:5.4*]. If the underlying point of the preceding answer is that any Christian denomination that ceases to violate these two instructions would thereby cease to be Christian, then perhaps the question we should ask is whether any of them could become Jesusonian instead.

### **Formal questions 64 and 65**

These questions appear on pages 101 and 102 of *Revelation Revealed*. Since the ideas they contain are closely linked, I requested that participants consider both of them at once. Taken together, these two questions read as follows:

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64. The Christian doctrines of the Trinity are fundamentally mistaken in a factual and philosophic sense, for the Eternal Son of Paradise did not bestow himself on Urantia in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, and the Creative Mother Spirit of Nebadon is not the Infinite Spirit. Do these mistakes in any way detract from or otherwise influence the mindal and spiritual ministry that assists, serves, and inspires every Urantian, regardless of an individual’s spiritual convictions or religious beliefs (*i.e.*, the

efforts of the adjutant mind-spirits, of the guardian seraphim, of the Thought Adjusters, of the Holy Spirit, and of the Spirit of Truth)?

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65. On the other hand, we must also consider these factual and philosophic mistakes concerning the nature and significance of the Paradise Trinity from broader perspectives, viewpoints related to cosmic consciousness and more accurate concepts of God. In Paper 4, a Divine Counselor states:

“One of the greatest sources of confusion on Urantia concerning the nature of God grows out of the failure of your sacred books clearly to distinguish between the personalities of the Paradise Trinity and between Paradise Deity and the local universe creators and administrators. During the past dispensations of partial understanding, your priests and prophets failed clearly to differentiate between Planetary Princes, System Sovereigns, Constellation Fathers, Creator Sons, Superuniverse Rulers, the Supreme Being, and the Universal Father. Many of the messages of subordinate personalities, such as Life Carriers and various orders of angels, have been, in your records, presented as coming from God himself. Urantian religious thought still con-fuses the associate personalities of Deity with the Universal Father himself, so that all are included under one appellation.” *[A Divine Counselor, 60:1 / 4:5.2]*

There also seem to be good reasons to wonder whether Christian mistakes about the Trinity implicitly exaggerate how our planet Urantia relates to the grand universe, thereby contributing to a kind of spiritual egotism whereby God’s love for us could be misinterpreted so as to imply that Urantia and its inhabitants are the sole beneficiaries of God’s active concern for human beings.

Please comment on any or all of the factors mentioned above, while seeking to concentrate on aspects that you consider particularly significant.

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One participant stated that the intellectual mistakes do not detract from spiritual growth in a relative, evolutionary sense, nor from the progress of Christianity itself. Truth is not relative, but human perceptions of truth are relative. Spiritual egotism may be a factor, for most human beings tend to be provincial and localistic; few of them study ideas or seek to expand their minds generally. He thought, however, that this may be changing, wondering whether science fiction may be the approximate equivalent of “universe romance” — an apparent reference to certain remarks by a Solitary Messenger that appear near the end of the Paper on personality survival *[a Solitary Messenger, 1239:7 / 112:7.18]*.

Another participant commented that she grew up without any preconceived ideas or teachings, but that her search for answers and spiritual guidance from God led her to personal resources associated with cosmic reality on internal and external levels. If you ask for help and desire to open up a door to know God better, the help and assistance are there. When I commented that her answer seemed to be a paraphrase closely associated with the active ministry and resources identified in the final lines of question 64, she agreed with this interpretation of mine.

Yet another participant began his reply by citing the following paragraph from Paper 104:

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Not since the times of Jesus has the factual identity of the Paradise Trinity been known on Urantia (except by a few individuals to whom it was especially revealed) until its presentation in these revelatory disclosures. But though the Christian concept of the Trinity erred in fact, it was practically true with respect to spiritual relationships. Only in its philosophic implications and cosmological consequences did this concept suffer embarrassment ... [A Melchizedek, 1145:1 / 104:1.13]  
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In his view, these remarks by a Melchizedek suffice to demonstrate that spiritual relationships and ministry were not and are not in any way impaired by the factual and philosophic mistakes involved in Christian doctrines concerning the Trinity. He thought, however, that these mistakes may have detracted from cosmological understanding, especially when compared with the much more profound explanations that the revelators have provided.

The fourth panelist commented on the difference between facts and the truth. One can be entirely wrong in regard to the facts, but understand the truth. He did not believe that Christian mistakes in interpreting the Trinity would have affected cosmic consciousness before we reached the fifth epochal revelation. On the other hand, he believed that humanity will now be able to operate in a higher gear, given a proper understanding of what the Trinity really is.

## **PRACTICAL FACTORS**

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

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_6QHPLuABZojhdiE8XJRQg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdiE8XJRQg)

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

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

Regards, Neal Waldrop.  
Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor  
[March 9, 2019 at 3:57 pm]