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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]