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

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

On Saturday, July 27, we conducted our seventeenth webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.”

Special status for the clergy

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

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

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

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

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

(1) teach;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Previewing our webinar on August 3

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

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

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

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

Civil authority of the popes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Complete list of attachments

1. Topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*.

Attachments pertaining to the kingdom that the popes established

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

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

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

— Pope Pius IX

5. "Pius IX" (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

6. "Syllabus of Errors" (Wikipedia).

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

— Infallibility / First Vatican Council 1870

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

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

9. Introduction by the German theologian Hans Küng.

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

11. "Hans Küng" (Wikipedia).

12. Excerpts from the book.

Questions for discussion

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRACTICAL FACTORS

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

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

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

2. Here is the standard time line that applies to all our discussions, including the next webinar on Saturday, August 3:

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

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

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