

Horizons near and far

MANY ASPECTS of the Global Endeavor may seem surprising at first glance. Nonetheless, the endeavor has deep roots in the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, and I state that with complete assurance and total conviction. In terms of the endeavor's key activities, it can be understood as a service project that is closely associated with the Father's plan for progressive growth and development on our planet Urantia.

Since the Global Endeavor encompasses the full range of human society and civilization, it does include efforts to foster the progressive growth and development of spirituality and religion. On the other hand, religion is not the main point, and I must emphasize that at the outset.

If you pick up a copy of *The Urantia Book* and open it to the table of contents, a casual glance suffices to establish that religion is not the sole topic that the revelators analyze or explain. For example, in Part III the authors devote considerable attention to the history of humanity from a spiritual and social perspective. In Paper 52, "Planetary Mortal Epochs," a Mighty Messenger tells us that our world is "a full dispensation and more behind the average planetary schedule" [*a Mighty Messenger*, 593:5 / 52:3.6]. Thus it is obvious that we the people of Urantia have a huge backlog of unfinished tasks.

Meeting these challenges will require enormous energy and imagination on the part of human beings who want to improve the fields of activity that they know and cherish. Readers of *The Urantia Book* who participate in the Global Endeavor will seek to assist and encourage these innovators, using the work of the twelve corps of master seraphim as our spiritual model.

Many of you who are listening to me today participated in a workshop on the master seraphim near the beginning of this conference, and perhaps you remember that the Chief of Seraphim describes their work in section 6 of Paper 114 [*pages 1254-1256*]. During that workshop, the participants adopted the roles of a particular corps of the master seraphim,

while seeking to develop goals and strategies aimed at improving human life on our planet. For some of you, the workshop may have been a vivid reminder of the need for human beings to confront our planet's myriad challenges from a spiritual perspective.

Patience and maturity

Now the people of the United States of America are certainly not the most patient group on earth. I was born among you, and I am as well aware of this as you are. Further, you and I and everyone else need to understand that there is real danger, very substantial danger, in this characteristic impatience that we readily associate with many of our fellow countrymen. After all, impatience made a key contribution to the cataclysmic failure of the first and second epochal revelations.

Let me set your mind at rest: Nothing in the Global Endeavor could possibly be described as "instant gratification." The Global Endeavor is not a project for a weekend, a week, a month, a year, a decade, or even for a century. No, the endeavor is a project for *one thousand years*, the entire millennium during which creative innovators who desire to improve life on earth will unceasingly imagine, invent, and experiment. A Melchizedek of Nebadon tells us:

Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization; certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny. [*A Melchizedek, 1086:4 / 99:1.1*]

These tempestuous, tumultuous circumstances are the context for the Global Endeavor. Our time line cannot short circuit the millennium that the Melchizedek defines. After all, we the people of Urantia are on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny! Therefore we must be patient; we cannot be impatient.

A Mighty Messenger also emphasizes the need for a very long view. He states:

There is a direct relationship between maturity and the unit of time consciousness in any given intellect. ... As the human mind reckons backward into the past, it is evaluating past experience for the purpose of bringing it to bear on a present situation. As mind reaches out into

the future, it is attempting to evaluate the future significance of possible action. And having thus reckoned with both experience and wisdom, the human will exercises judgment-decision in the present, and the plan of action thus born of the past and the future becomes existent. ... The plans of maturity, founded on past experience, are coming into being in the present in such manner as to enhance the values of the future.
[*A Mighty Messenger*, 1295:3,4,7 / 118:1.3,4,7]

The Global Endeavor demonstrates these values of maturity. We reckon backward into the past by understanding the shortcomings and defects that still beset humanity because of the Caligastia betrayal and the Adamic default. We reach out into the future by envisioning a world in which human character undergoes tremendous transformations, so that it becomes possible to put the golden rule into practical operation; a world in which true self-government is beginning to function, so that fewer and fewer restrictive laws are necessary; a world in which the problems of disease and delinquency are virtually solved; and a world in which the average length of life rises well above three hundred years. According to a Mighty Messenger, the people of a normal inhabited planet achieve all these advances in their world's post-bestowal age [*a Mighty Messenger*, pages 595-597 passim / 52:5]. It will take the people of Urantia far longer, but our descendants and heirs will eventually bring forth these realities here. The work of the Global Endeavor points us toward these outcomes.

Global and regional vistas

My life's unusual circumstances have enabled me to live on five of the six inhabited continents and visit the other one. From my own personal experience, I know that we the people of the United States of America are appreciated on many other continents because we are open and friendly, democratic and tolerant, optimistic and progressive, and also because we are original, imaginative, and creative. Our "can-do" spirit is legendary throughout the world, and many people admire it.

Unfortunately, however, I am also aware of certain other traits that are less pleasant and far less appreciated. Too many of the people of the United States are inclined to measure the inhabitants of other countries in terms of their practical value to us, rather than strive to relate to them as fellow human beings who are equally God's children, who have equal value for their own sake. That is depressing in itself, but this instrumental approach to human relationships is not our gravest fault. In describing that tendency, I do not wish to imply

that all citizens of the United States succumb to it, but in all frankness I am obliged to admit that this particular defect is far too common for me to be comfortable about it.

My fellow countrymen and other friends, I am referring to the much too widely shared conviction among the people of the United States that we have nothing to learn from others, and that instead it is up to others to learn from us and to conduct their lives according to our preferences and prescriptions. Well, no. Now there may have been some of you who did not quite hear my answer the first time, so I shall say it again: No!

Both in principle and in practice, we the people of the United States of America have much to learn from the experiences of others, and much to offer them by drawing on experiences of our own. This practical reality is built into the design of the Global Endeavor, and the idea of the Global Endeavor will leave a deeper and more vivid impression if you keep this factor in mind.

In a structural sense, the endeavor is an inspiring framework for altruistic service and assistance at the discretion of participants who live in a particular region, and for sharing ideas and experience among participants who live in different regions. Thus the people of North America are not going to tell the people of other regions what to do, and the people of other regions are not going to tell us what to do either. No, the people of all regions of our planet Urantia will continue to evolve as equals and will continue to learn from each other.

Unifying human society

The overtones and implications of the Global Endeavor may be as important as the need for patience and maturity and the requirement for global and regional approaches. In a philosophic sense, we can describe the endeavor as an integral part of an extended and patient campaign to unify human society within a broad spiritual framework of love and mutual respect. Because participants will *live* the teachings instead of preaching them, their work will demonstrate an important truth that the endeavor embodies: God actively fosters all wholesome aspects of human life; his interests and concerns are certainly not limited to verifying that his children on earth conform to moral norms and honor ethical principles.

When the great majority of human beings accept this spiritual framework, at least in a broad and general way, they will consign secularism and materialism to the long list of historic deceptions and illusions. In part, the demise of secularism and materialism will overcome a paradox that affects us now and that the Midwayer Commission portrays: “The majority of professed Christians of Western civilization are unwittingly actual secularists” [*the Midwayer Commission, 2081:3 / 195:8.3*].

“Other directions”

A friend of mine once told me that when he was driving in an unfamiliar area, he came to a fork in the road where he saw some highly unusual road signs. The first sign said, “All directions.” The second one read, “Other directions.” When you stop laughing at the contradiction — the obvious incompatibility between the phrases “All directions” and “Other directions” — perhaps you will allow me to point out that these two phrases are actually quite meaningful for us, at least as symbols.

In effect, humanity is currently standing at the corner of “All directions” that we have explored up to now, and “Other directions” that we have not yet imagined or invented. This is essentially what the Melchizedek meant in one of the sentences that I read before: “The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments” [*a Melchizedek, 1086:4 / 99:1.1*].

These “Other directions” of ours will have to be found laboriously, one by one, each on its own merits. That complex and intricate *process* of trial and error, imagination and experiment, will last a millennium or even longer. On the other hand, no one can predict the specific steps that will be appropriate and necessary in each field of human life while society repeatedly regenerates itself. Actions and measures will come and go, and a particular step that is appropriate and useful in one region may be premature or disadvantageous in another.

The Global Endeavor seeks to foster and promote this process of imagination and discovery. The work of the endeavor centers on the altruistic and idealistic service that participants will provide to individuals and groups in society who wish to promote progressive growth and development in their own fields of experience, knowledge, or interest. Participants will operate modestly and quietly; they will refrain from attracting attention to themselves and will stay well in the background.

Unstinting and unselfish service

The horizons we seek now are as near as our immediate surroundings, as far away as continents across immense oceans. Certain directions that mankind has already explored will eventually yield invaluable refinements, whereas other innovations will emerge from unremitting exploration of options currently unknown. Some horizons that humanity will pursue in years not far ahead already whirl as close to us as the daydreams of human beings now alive, whereas many horizons of the succeeding few centuries will not even be imaginable until mankind enters the era of our grandchildren's grandchildren.

In this millennium of unceasing adaptation, we the people of Urantia will anchor in few tranquil harbors, will tread few brilliantly illuminated paths. Instead, we will watch the horizons we gaze upon steadily recede as mankind nears them. Amidst all such dilemmas and self-doubts, readers of *The Urantia Book* who participate in the work of the Global Endeavor will serve and assist innovators who do their utmost to upgrade existing patterns of activity.

I realize that there are many forms of service, and I know that the work of the Global Endeavor is not the only option. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind that readers of *The Urantia Book* who participate in the work of the Global Endeavor will act on key teachings of our sovereign Creator Son Christ Michael during his bestowal on Urantia in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth:

Jesus taught that *service* to one's fellows is the highest concept of the brotherhood of spirit believers. Salvation should be taken for granted by those who believe in the fatherhood of God. The believer's chief concern should not be the selfish desire for personal salvation but rather the unselfish urge to love and, therefore, serve one's fellows even as Jesus loved and served mortal men. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2017:4 / 188:4.9*]

As the Midwayer Commission also emphasizes, the religion of Jesus dominates and transforms everyone who embraces it with energy and enthusiasm:

Modern men and women of intelligence evade the religion of Jesus because of their fears of what it will do *to* them — and *with* them. And all such fears are well founded. The religion of Jesus does, indeed, dominate and transform its believers, demanding that men

dedicate their lives to seeking for a knowledge of the will of the Father in heaven and requiring that the energies of living be consecrated to the unselfish service of the brotherhood of man. [*The Midwayer Commission, 2083:3 / 195:9.6*]

I am quite willing to concede that the unselfish service of the brotherhood of man encompasses many methods, but it is also abundantly clear that the work of the Global Endeavor amply deserves that description. So if anything I have said moves you, if anything I have said harmonizes with your own understanding of yourself, please take an active interest.

Neal Waldrop

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Bradenton, Florida, U.S.A.