

## ***Conceptual summary of*** **Revelation Revealed: Twelve Topics to Analyze and Appraise**

### **Epochal Revelation: Policy and Practice**

#### **1. The characteristic patterns of epochal revelation.**

The text consists of a thorough analysis of the five epochal revelations, partly by asking participants to comment on the similarities and differences. Coverage of the fourth epochal revelation is particularly detailed, including tables that portray the characteristics of the inhabited worlds in Satania and identify the seven bestowals of Michael of Nebadon. Further, participants will discuss the Bestowal Commission by Immanuel and the methods that the revelators used in order to adapt Jesus' lectures at Urmia. In the segment pertaining to the fifth epochal revelation, participants will comment on various factors that may have motivated our spiritual superiors to present the epochal revelation in writing, thereby departing quite markedly from the general patterns that a Mighty Messenger portrays in Paper 52.

#### **2. Why did the revelators bring forth the fifth epochal revelation during the first one-third of the 20th century?**

Participants will focus on five crises that afflicted humanity during the first one-third of the 20th century: the spiritual crisis, the religious crisis, the philosophic crisis, the political and military crisis, and the social and cultural crisis. They will interpret these circumstances and offer their own views on the degree to which one or more of these factors may have influenced the revelators.

### **The Global Endeavor: Four Key Characteristics**

#### **3. Avoiding any effort to evangelize.**

**4. The personal relationships that will link idealists, innovators, and reformers operating in society with the members and associates of the substantive working groups.**

**5. Why regional associations are and must be the most important structural feature of the Global Endeavor.**

**6. The path leading to the founding convention when the Global Endeavor will actually come to life.**

These four topics explain essential aspects of the Global Endeavor, an idealistic and altruistic initiative that is modeled on the work of the master seraphim. The net result, however, will be a modest, behind-the-scenes support network for innovators and reformers who are operating in society. The initiative remains in its formative stages, and we hope that some listeners will take an active interest.

The four topics are analyzed rather briefly. Taken together, they correspond to only 19 pages in *Revelation Revealed*, thereby averaging 4.75 pages per topic. In contrast, the eight topics associated with the patterns of epochal revelation and with six key aspects of *The Urantia Book* extend for 220 pages, which is an average of 27.5 pages per topic.

# The Fifth Epochal Revelation: Six Key Aspects

## 7. The extended transition from institutional to personal religion.

Consideration of topic 7 begins with a Melchizedek's explanation of how religion developed naturally, and then turns to Jesus' description of the three types of religion. In subsequent segments, participants examine the full text of Jesus' first and second discourses on true religion; the characteristics of personal religion; the principle of unity, not uniformity; aspects of materialism and secularism; and the lengthy transition from institutional to personal religion. In the latter regard, part of the discussion will relate to the following insightful remarks that Jesus included in his first discourse: "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 Midwayer Commission, 1729:3 / 155:5.8*).

## 8. Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.

Since topic 8 encompasses 59 pages of *Revelation Revealed*, it is exceedingly difficult to summarize it briefly. The true teachings of Jesus ARE personal religion, whereas Christianity is an organized, institutional religion *about* Jesus. Even so, the leaders of early Christianity retained "enough of Jesus' teachings to immortalize it" (*the Midwayer Commission, 2086:4 / 195:10.18*). In the process, however, they invented their own doctrines and creeds, thereby contravening Jesus' repeated and explicit instructions whereby "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, 1592:1-2 / 141:5.4*). The Apostle Paul was the original and most grievous offender, having invented "the Christian doctrine of the atonement — the teaching that Jesus was the sacrificed Son who would satisfy the Father's stern justice and appease the divine wrath" (*the Midwayer Commission, 1670:4 / 149:2.3*).

Controversy over the nature and identity of Jesus lasted more than 125 years, leading to the formula adopted at the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) — a formula that converted quite a few dissenting Christians into an oppressed minority. In 1054 CE, intense disagreement over one aspect of the Christian view of the Trinity (*i.e.*, how the Spirit relates to the Father and the Son) catalyzed the split between Western and Eastern Orthodox Christians that endures to this day. Much of the even more abrasive contentions that pervaded the Reformation of the 16th century pertained to the supposed requirements for attaining salvation (survival) and avoiding eternal punishment in hell. (The latter danger was an unwise accretion that the early Christians carried over from the Jewish tradition; it did not stem from anything that Jesus taught. Nonetheless, the concept of hell has stimulated intense and pervasive dismay, fear, and terror among professed Christians for almost 2,000 years.)

A Brilliant Evening Star calls swearing on a "holy book" a form of refined fetishism, although he concedes that venerating "a superb collection of letters, laws, legends, allegories, myths, poems, and chronicles" does represent "real evolutionary progress" (*a Brilliant Evening Star, 969:6-7 / 88:2.8-9*). In fairness, we should bear in mind that the Hebrew priests who edited previous writings while in exile in Babylon indulged in multiple distortions and misrepresentations, thereby engendering "a fiction of sacred history" that has been "disastrously exploited by both Jewish and Christian writers" (*a Melchizedek, 1071:3-4 / 97:8.5-6*). Of the 14 books of the New Testament that have traditionally been ascribed to the Apostle Paul, the great majority of scholars believe that three of them were definitely written by someone else, and they also voice serious doubts about two others. In section 8 of Paper 121, the Midwayer Commission explains certain limitations and shortcomings associated with the four

gospels, although the Commission stipulates that "All these writers presented honest pictures of Jesus as they saw, remembered, or had learned of him" (*the Midwayer Commission, 1342:6 / 121:8.11*). Nonetheless, gospel passages on the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Jesus created great confusion and serious misunderstandings (*the Midwayer Commission, 1915:5 / 176:2.8*).

Here are a few of the challenging questions that participants will endeavor to answer:

— Will a reformation in the Christian church someday cause at least certain denominations thereof to concentrate on the unadulterated religious teachings of Jesus, rather than continue to focus their faith and observance on teachings about Jesus?

— Is it possible for organized, institutional Christianity to evolve in such fundamental ways as to become the eventual scaffolding for the real religion of Jesus?

— Do you have any ideas on how believers could seek to develop new observances symbolizing the real religion of Jesus and the mindal and spiritual realities that it entails and implies, as a Brilliant Evening Star recommends in section 7 of Paper 87?

## 9. Comparing and contrasting the ministry of the guardian seraphim and the work of the master seraphim.

The revelators refer to spiritual beings of direct descent from the Spirit as the daughters of God; therefore it seems reasonable to associate the seraphim with certain psychological perspectives that have traditionally been considered feminine, such as a disposition to serve, assist, and support without manifesting an active effort to direct, dominate, or control. The seraphim work through the social, ethical, and moral environment of human beings, seeking to influence us while respecting our free-will choices. Although the guardian seraphim minister to the spiritual welfare of each individual, the master seraphim seem compelled to be substantially more selective, since their mission relates to advancing and uplifting society and civilization. In the topic's final pages, participants will ponder the revelators' elliptical references to the six orders of unrevealed angels and to the unrevealed major purposes of the other six superuniverses. Challenging questions then offer participants an opportunity to speculate about possible relationships and linkages.

## 10. Dangers to the home and to family life that stem from the rising tide of self-gratification.

Western customs pertaining to marriage mainly descended from the essentially contractual approach embodied in Roman law. Between 1000 and 1100 CE, however, Christian clerics and theologians expanded the authority and power of the organized, institutional church by claiming that marriage is a sacrament and by subjecting it to a forest of religious requirements and restrictions. For almost 500 years, this assertion of clerical authority yielded considerable income for a complex system of ecclesiastical courts; but canon law unexpectedly wreaked havoc in the middle of the 16th century, when King Henry VIII of England could not obtain the divorce he needed in order to marry his paramour Anne Boleyn. That personal dilemma of his made a substantial contribution to the Protestant Reformation. Further, Protestant Christians eventually evolved several approaches to marriage and family life that differed from the Roman Catholic tradition and also from each other.

The Chief of Seraphim expresses considerable concern about trends that are currently endangering the stability of the home and the family, especially in relation to insufficient self-control and the rising tide of self-gratification. Nonetheless, she also identifies a number of improvements that have occurred in recent centuries: (a) "marriage is slowly becoming mutual, romantic, parental, poetical, affectionate, ethical, and even idealistic" (*922:8 / 83:1.5*); and (b) "The relations between the sexes are evolving favorably" (*923:5 / 83:2.5*).

## 11. The ongoing evolution of the human mind as a crucial contribution to more advanced levels of society and civilization on our planet Urantia.

Topic 11 begins by analyzing mind as a constituent reality of the finite level, on the understanding that consciousness and memory, although occurring *in* mind, are not mind itself. The two intelligence-ministry circuits that affect us are those of the Seventh Master Spirit and of the Creative Mother Spirit; the latter includes the ministry of the seven adjutant mind-spirits. From a practical perspective, the human mind is a living system, a structured arrangement of mindal energy that receives, reacts to, rearranges, and processes sensations, desires, ideas, and ideals. Therefore it is reasonable to associate the customs and traditions of humanity's many branches with habits and convictions that are essentially mindal — conventional patterns of behavior that many individuals carry out without inquiring into the underlying reasons and without making an active effort to analyze them from logical perspectives. In part, participants will consider whether the human mind projects some kind of radiant energy that pervades the body and that may extend a bit beyond it. In addition, participants will grapple with the concept of kindred minds and will seek to interpret and explain an astonishing statement attributed to the group of morontia world seraphim who are called "Mind Planners": "Even on Urantia, these seraphim teach the everlasting truth: If your own mind does not serve you well, you can exchange it for the mind of Jesus of Nazareth, who always serves you well" (*an Archangel of Nebadon, 553:7 / 48:6.26*).

## 12. Promoting understanding of, loyalty to, and active cooperation with God immanent, especially via our close association with God the Mother, the Supreme Being.

In the first few pages of topic 12, the text explores the reality of immanence (God surrounding and pervading us), in part by citing the revelators' teachings that "In God, man lives, moves, and has his being" (*a Divine Counselor, 22:5 / 1:1.2*), and then by analyzing how this reality applies to the Father—I AM and also to the Supreme Being. After all, a Mighty Messenger states: "From the finite standpoint, we actually live, move, and have our being within the immanence of the Supreme" (*a Mighty Messenger, 1283:1 / 117:3.12*). Human beings are participating in and contributing to the creative synthesis whereby God the Supreme, the Almighty Supreme, and the Supreme Mind are evolving into the Supreme Being as a discrete and contactable person who has been fully actualized. This evolution and personal emergence of the Supreme Being requires *not only* extraordinary spiritual achievement throughout every constellation of every local universe that comprise the seven super-universes, *but also* total harmony and perfect equilibrium throughout all corresponding domains of matter and energy.

A Mighty Messenger tells us: "the Supreme Being, the Universal Mother ... dominates the human personality throughout the local universe childhood of the growing soul" (*a Mighty Messenger, 1288:4-5 / 117:6.5-6*). Further, the same author emphasizes: "With the Father, sonship is the great relationship. With God the Supreme, achievement is the prerequisite to status — one must do something as well as be something" (*a Mighty Messenger, 1260:1 / 115:0.1*). While bearing in mind that "God the Supreme is truth, beauty, and goodness" (*a Mighty Messenger, 1279:5 / 117:1.7*), participants will evaluate and compare the phrases "God the Father" and "God the Mother." We are fortunate, however, that no one has imagined a Deity person called "God the Mother-in-law"!

## Active & interactive discussion: Pluralism, diversity, and mutual respect

The many segments of *Revelation Revealed* amount to intellectual and spiritual drama, for they operate as *scenarios for active discussion*. Analysis is not an end in itself, but the extended quotations from *The Urantia Book* are indispensable in establishing that the ideas being discussed are meaningful and real. I hope that the quotations and the accompanying analysis will function like the scenery in a play, thereby stimulating and encouraging active engagement.

During broadcasts on Cosmic Citizen, the challenging questions embedded in the text will undoubtedly stimulate a range of different answers. As the moderator, I will do my best to encourage and facilitate a variety of reactions, for pluralism and diversity are crucial aspects of the process that I envision. These methods will convey the net message that it is entirely acceptable, indeed normal and even praiseworthy, for readers of *The Urantia Book* to formulate diverse interpretations on a wide range of topics. After all, the fifth epochal revelation does not promote or foster uniformity! To the contrary, the revelators themselves repeatedly demonstrate their own pluralism and diversity while maintaining a tone, context, and climate permeated and suffused with spiritual unity and mutual respect.

I hope that listeners and readers will acquire a deeper understanding of epochal revelation. From a practical perspective, the discussion of topic 1 will serve to highlight and emphasize the pattern that I am seeking to demonstrate: Standard, non-emergency epochal revelations include major features aimed at advancing and upgrading human society and civilization. The third and fourth epochal revelations did not do that, whereas the fifth epochal revelation definitely does. Since these features of *The Urantia Book* harmonize with standard practice, it seems appropriate to call attention to them and to hope that some listeners and readers will take an active interest in the committee's plans for the Global Endeavor.

(October 16, 2016)

The full text of *Revelation Revealed* is available in a PDF file that you can download from the website of the Committee for the Global Endeavor:

<http://www.globalendeavor.net>

The link to it is near the bottom of the home page — the last entry in the column at the left.