

EPOCHAL PATHWAYS

SUDDEN TRANSFORMATION is seldom sought or courted, for human beings prefer to tinker carefully, cautiously, slowly. This permits them to conduct a thorough review of potential innovations as they may affect a structure thought fundamentally sound. When, however, has the situation of Urantia been truly satisfactory, either in conceptual or cosmic terms? Not since Lucifer, Satan, and Caligastia rebelled approximately 200,000 years ago. Further, the remedial measures that Adam and Eve attempted fell far short of what they intended, for the Material Son and Daughter ultimately defaulted on their trust.

Although these defects and dilemmas had endured for many millennia, by the opening decades of the twentieth century there were many aspects of human life on Urantia that were already in crisis or rapidly hurtling toward it. Therefore our spiritual superiors who sponsored the fifth epochal revelation concluded that continuity was no longer an option. Their arduous efforts to express themselves in English eventually bequeathed us extraordinary insights, but they also obliged us to respond with the utmost imagination and energy. In a memorandum dated January 19, 1955 that turned out to be as disconcerting as it was incisive, William S. Sadler, Jr. vented his profound preoccupations:

A CULTURAL CHRYSALIS IN RELATION TO PAROCHIAL AND PROVINCIAL THINKING

A chrysalis is an interesting thing. It acts as a sort of social or institutional incubator. The social grouping of the Forum served as a chrysalis for the ensuing Brotherhood. In a much larger sense Protestant Christianity serves as a chrysalis for the Urantia Papers. The function of a chrysalis appears to be inescapable, but the end products are not an unmixed blessing.

For example, Judaism served as a chrysalis for the gospel of Jesus. Without this chrysalis Jesus could not have taught. ... But this chrysalis proved to be in some respects embarrassing, not only to the gospel, but even to Jesus himself. ...

The present problem. We as a group in the Forum are nurtured in the teachings of Protestant Christianity. And unless we make a determined effort to do otherwise, we are going to think in a parochial and in a provincial manner. ...

I think we should make a sincere and prayerful effort to rise above the bias which is inherent in our backgrounds.

Sadler apparently intuited a key cosmic reality: The fifth epochal revelation is neither an outgrowth of Christianity, nor an appendix to Christianity, nor Christianity 2.0. This understanding attested to a momentous shift in the spiritual paradigm, and the fact that Sadler sensed it is impressive in itself. On the other hand, these paragraphs of his give no hint that he had internalized another paradigm shift that was at least equally important: Rather than focus almost entirely on spiritual and religious matters, as had been the case during the epochal revelations of Melchizedek of Salem and Jesus of Nazareth, the revelators who sponsored the fifth epochal revelation took careful aim at the entire range of human life and experience. When they did this, they implicitly restored and revitalized the standard approach to epochal revelation on an inhabited planet — a synthesis of many methods whereby revelators do their utmost to advance and upgrade all aspects of society and civilization, not just spirituality and religion. (In effect, the sponsors of epochal revelation pursue the general plan for progressive evolutionary growth that a Mighty Messenger portrays in Paper 52, “Planetary Mortal Epochs.”)

Now, over sixty years after William S. Sadler, Jr. typed his memorandum, we need to interpret the social and cultural aspects of the fifth epochal revelation as the gateway to an entire millennium during which creative innovators who desire to improve life on earth will unceasingly imagine, invent, and experiment, thereby helping the people of Urantia begin overcoming the accumulated backlog of unfinished tasks that still afflict us because of the Caligastia betrayal and the default of Adam and Eve. Along this path, these innovators and the many other human beings who cooperate with them will make substantial contributions to the augmenting sovereignty of God the Mother, the Supreme Being, the evolving deity who sums and synthesizes all realities and values on the finite level.

Nonetheless, we must not neglect the fifth epochal revelation’s spiritual and religious aspects, instead making sure to take careful note of the mission and intent of our Paradise Creator Son during the bestowal life he lived on Urantia approximately 2,000 years ago. When Jesus of Nazareth became fully aware of his spiritual identity as Michael of Nebadon, he undoubtedly treasured the assurance that Immanuel offered him not long before he left Salvington: [“As a dispensational Son you are granted certain privileges pertaining to the advancement of the *spiritual* and *religious* status of the world peoples” \[Mantutia Melchizedek, 120:3.5 / 1329:6\]](#). In the immediately succeeding paragraph, however, Immanuel clarified the nature of Michael’s task:

"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, 120:3.6 / 1330:1]

Therefore Christ Michael of Nebadon, incarnate in the human form of Jesus of Nazareth, proclaimed and promoted *personal* (individual) religion, as becomes luminously clear when we study the discourses on religion that the revelators enshrined in sections 5 and 6 of Paper 155. Nonetheless, we end up with the impression that the apostles and their successors stumbled at these advanced teachings, for they went on to establish organized, institutional frameworks in which professional religionists issue orders to believers and claim to speak for God. This, of course, was profoundly at odds with what Jesus taught. After all, he declared: "I have come to proclaim spiritual liberty, teach eternal truth, and foster living faith" [the Midwayer Commission, 153:2.6 / 1710:4].

Further, 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, 138:6.3 / 1543:1]. Nonetheless, they did. In addition, Jesus emphasized spiritual unity, while repeatedly warning against creeds and traditions that would serve to guide and control believers:

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, 141:5.4 / 1592:2]

Even so, his followers and their successors succumbed to these temptations too.

In seeking to appraise the net outcomes, the Midwayer Commission comments:

The visible church should refuse longer to handicap the progress of the invisible and spiritual brotherhood of the kingdom of God. And this brotherhood is destined to become a *living organism* in contrast to an institutionalized social organization. [The Midwayer Commission, 195:10.11 / 2085:3]

If we now endeavor to compile and summarize all these factors, it is reasonable to conclude that the revelators have left us two overarching questions:

1. When will committed readers of *The Urantia Book* concentrate their energies on *living* the true teachings of Jesus?
2. When will they *also* devote substantial energy and attention to promoting the progressive growth and development of society and civilization, thereby making their own personal contributions to the evolving sovereignty of the Supreme Being on Urantia of Satania in Norlatiadek of Nebadon?

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(NOTE: For more extensive exploration of these and similar themes, please feel free to download Neal's detailed discussion document Revelation Revealed from the website of the Committee for the Global Endeavor (www.globalendeavor.net)).