

1/27

THE REVELATORY PROCESS; PERSPECTIVE AND CONTEXT

David Kantor
January 30, 1993

THE REVELATORY PROCESS; PERSPECTIVE AND CONTEXT

Introduction

1. Our Relationship to The Urantia Book

Revelation; Context and Paradigm

Revelation; External Referents

2. Revelation in our Lives

Revelation in our History

The Early Church

The Middle Ages

The Reformation

19th & 20th Century Developments

Revelation in Contemporary Theology

The Urantia Book as Revelation

Revelation in our Communities

References

(C) Copyright 1993, David A. Kantor
Permission to reproduce complete copies of this document for
distribution free of any charge is hereby given.

THE REVELATORY PROCESS; PERSPECTIVE AND CONTEXT

"Fanaticism: Intense, uncritical devotion."

...Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary

Introduction

Following is the text for a talk delivered to a forum convened by The Golden Gate Circles in San Francisco on January 30, 1993 for readers of The Urantia Book. The purpose of the forum was to discuss issues related to on-going revelation in reader communities.

It is suggested that the serious student of these matters review Paper 103 in The Urantia Book, "The Reality of Religious Experience" in conjunction with the following material on the revelatory process.

Much of the material in the following text on the historical development of the idea of revelation is taken from Avery Dulles' book, Models of Revelation, and George Marsden's book, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism.

The last time I addressed a group of readers of The Urantia Book was the occasion of a dinner which The Family of God Foundation put on to celebrate 25 years of radio broadcasting. My objective on that occasion was the articulation of arguments which would convince the listeners that we at The Family of God Foundation were working with the Planetary Spiritual Government and were involved in a special project which was a critical component of the fifth epochal revelation -- the protection of the revelation during a period of global chaos and the training of teachers to be involved in the subsequent rebuilding of the world.

In the course of pursuing those delusions an estimated \$3,000,000 in resources was consumed. In addition, we destroyed a twenty-five year effort to create a service organization which was beginning to establish international operations. Numerous individuals experienced substantial personal suffering in the destruction of ideals, hopes, marriages, careers and life savings.

An even greater loss was the destruction of Urantia Brotherhood by Urantia Foundation and the millions of dollars consumed by the latter organization on legal matters of dubious value.

We must wake up and recognize that at the source of each of these tragedies lies the claim that someone is acting as a special agent of the source of the fifth epochal revelation.

Until we come to terms with this reality, we will continue to flounder as a movement and will continue to consume the resources of the group dealing with the repercussions of failing to wisely manage ourselves.

Today I hope to share some thoughts which have developed as I have tried to understand and assimilate the implications of this phenomena. I have been intimately involved with this issue over the past twenty-five years and feel qualified to at least attempt an articulation of the nature of the problem.

My primary objective is to expand the context in which we view the fifth epochal revelation. My hope is that this will help us evaluate our situation and discover some of the reasons why we continue to experience these disruptive episodes in our attempts to develop a cohesive community of readers.

I will approach this objective by briefly discussing the importance of understanding the context in which the fifth epochal revelation appears. I will then review four major periods in the development of Christianity, looking to illuminate our present situation. I will conclude by giving a brief overview of contemporary theological thinking on the topic of revelation and addressing some of the issues related to on-going revelation in our communities of readers.

I am by no means offering a final position on these topics; rather is it my hope that an informed on-going dialog will develop within the readership so that we may all more fully understand the processes in which we are involved.

Let's begin with a quote from "The Meaning of Revelation",
by H. Richard Niebuhr:

"We climb the mountain of revelation that we may gain a view of the shadowed valley in which we dwell and from the valley we look up again to the mountain. Each arduous journey brings new understanding, but also new wonder and surprise. This mountain is not one we climbed once upon a time; it is a well-known peak we never wholly know, which must be climbed again in every generation, on every new day. There is no time or place in human history, there is no moment in the church's past, nor is there any set of doctrines, any philosophy or theology of which we might say, "Here the knowledge possible through revelation...is fully set forth." Revelation is not only progressive, but it requires of those to whom it has come that they begin the never-ending pilgrim's progress of the reasoning Christian heart."¹

¹H. Richard Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation, (MacMillan Publishing Company, 1941), 100.

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE URANTIA BOOK

Context and Paradigm²

Let's look more closely at the nature of the context in which a religious system is embedded.

One of the primary purposes of all existing religions is to provide a context in which their adherents may apprehend the presence of God. Each religious system defines certain conceptual boundaries, goals and methods.

As a community of students of The Urantia Book we do not have a formally articulated context or paradigm within which our studies and interpretations of our spiritual experience take place.³ Consider some of the paradigms which we have seen emerge over the years.

The Forum functioned successfully for many years based on a paradigm of participation in the celestial transmission of an epochal revelation.

Urantia Foundation attempted to create a secular/political paradigm for the readership based on the power relationships established in the earlier Forum.

Vern Grimsley initially attempted to shape the readership with an evangelical paradigm.

The concept of a teacher mission provides a paradigm, a set of conceptual boundaries and assumptions within which the meaning of ideas derived from a study of The Urantia Book may be interpreted.

I maintain that none of the paradigms which have so far emerged in the readership have been adequately informed. Each one has been based on factors emerging from within the readership

²For a philosophic background on the role of context and paradigm in the process of inquiry see Ian G. Barbour, Myths, Models and Paradigms, (HarperCollins, 1974) and Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (University of Chicago Press, 1962). Thomas Kuhn's book is a classic treatment of paradigm and its role in defining a community of inquiry.

³It is interesting to note that new religious movements seem to be characterized in their first few generations of adherents by competition between alternative paradigm communities which spontaneously develop as individuals respond differentially to the new religious material.

itself, rather than on the factors of planetary religious and intellectual life which The Urantia Book is destined to transform.

The cultural context in which each of the previous epochal revelations appeared constituted a major part of the revelation itself. Later on, we will see how The Urantia Book appears to be masterfully designed to exist in relationship with planetary religious culture rather than as a separate cosmological model.

External Referents

There exists a large body of knowledge pertaining to the issues which confront us as a developing community. We have almost two thousand years of records of spiritually committed men and women who have dedicated their lives to the work of the fourth epochal revelation.

Imagine how instructive it would be to go back and read the records of the Melchizedek missionaries, or the records of progress maintained by the Prince's staff. That's precisely what we can do with the fourth epochal revelation when we study the accumulated literature of Christianity.

We also have accumulated centuries of serious study in such fields as psychology, social anthropology and the psychology of religion. Can we really presume to be about the business of this revelation while failing to critically evaluate our assumptions and activities with this wealth of knowledge? Even the revelators of the book utilized the best available human concepts whenever possible.

Let me give you a good example of the limitations encountered when one refuses to use outside referents to interpret the meaning of a text. In the Bible, the opening verse in John's gospel says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". While the English Bible uses the term "word", in John's original Greek the term "logos" was used. Most of you are probably well aware that this term "logos", in addition to being the Greek term for "word", represented a philosophical concept which had been developing in Greek thought for over 200 years. To simply see the term as a semantic object is to seriously delimit one's understanding of the text. Only by going outside of the Bible and studying Greek philosophy can an adequate understanding of what John is trying to tell us about Jesus be gained.

I believe the same situation exists with much of The Urantia Book -- there is a valuable depth of meaning and insight which can be gained only by going outside the book and making the effort to link meanings derived from the book with the vast external body of knowledge available in our world today.

At The Family of God Foundation I felt that our situation was so new, novel and unprecedented that no outside information could possibly provide greater understanding of what we were experiencing. Everything we believed about our special mission could be easily justified by reference to the appropriate quotes in The Urantia Book. Our special knowledge and insight was so unique that it was utterly beyond any critical assessment by anyone other than ourselves.

Compare this attitude with the statement on page 69 of The Urantia Book which says, "...no matter how valid (real) religious experience is, it must be willing to subject itself to intelligent criticism and reasonable philosophic interpretation; it must not seek to be a thing apart in the totality of human experience."

We made some terrible mistakes out in Clayton, and I continue to be suprised to find that the lessons to be learned from this fiasco have not been more fully assimilated by The Urantia Book readership.

Let me add that never in my life had I felt more spiritually committed to any undertaking. My prayer and worship life was very rich and the subjective quality of my inner spiritual life was better than I had ever before experienced. But such attitudes and feelings of the heart do not compensate for a failure of the intellect to verify meanings, for a failure to critically assess the full implications of ones ideas and actions in the world, and for the redefinition of one's community to include only those individuals who share the same viewpoint. Such failures will always lead to isolation, disaster and disillusionment. When such errors are made by an entire social group, the essential work of the kingdom is set back yet again.

It is very important to understand that I am not questioning the validity of anyone's experience. We are not making up these things or fraudulently manipulating people. Neither are we very likely to often encounter individuals who are actually hallucinating. The experiences in general are real.

What I am bringing into question are the meanings that are subsequently assigned to the experience in order to make it accessible to mind and to share it with the community. What are the criteria by which you evaluate and interpret experiential phenomena? Your answer to this question is your personal

philosophy of religion.⁴ The care and integrity with which we approach the development of our personal philosophy of religion has profound implications for our community of readers.

The mechanism by which we assign meanings to our experience is heavily dependent on many factors and is profoundly conditioned by the psychological environment in which the meanings are being assigned.⁵ This is a critical personal issue confronting all of us -- what are the criteria by which we assign meanings to our experiences?⁶ Are we striving to be conscious of the psychological environment in which we do our thinking? Are we exposing our minds to a wide variety of ideas so that we have a rich conceptual vocabulary with which to associate our experiences?

⁴It is worthwhile to read section 7 of Paper 101, "A Personal Philosophy of Religion". The development of a personal philosophy of religion is a critical task generally unrecognized by the readership which is essential to safe apprehension of spiritual experience, particularly if the reader has no roots in an existing religious tradition. How do we interpret and integrate our spiritual experiences with the rest of our lives?

⁵Paper 101 on page 1113 of The Urantia Book tells us that, "The materials out of which to build a personal philosophy of religion are derived from both the inner and the environmental experience of the individual. The social status, economic conditions, educational opportunities, moral trends, institutional influences, political developments, racial tendencies, and the religious teachings of one's time and place all become factors in the formulation of a personal philosophy of religion. Even the inherent temperament and intellectual bent markedly determine the pattern of religious philosophy. Vocation, marriage, and kindred all influence the evolution of one's personal standards of life."

⁶See paper 101, section 7, "A Personal Philosophy of Religion" for an expansion of this concept.

REVELATION IN OUR LIVES

Insights from our History

I'm now going to consider four major periods in the development of Christianity. I will review some of the reactions of individuals and communities to events in these periods and show how they relate to our present day concerns. We will consider the early church, the middle ages, the Reformation and developments of the past two centuries.

The Early Church⁷

The Christian paradigm which has encapsulated the life and teachings of Jesus for 2,000 years bears careful study. How did it develop?⁸ What are its strengths and weaknesses? What are its major unresolved issues? How has it facilitated or impeded the assimilation of the fourth epochal revelation by humanity? These are questions which we all should be endeavoring to answer because they are very relevant to the fifth epochal revelation.

It is instructive to note that a significant part of this encapsulation occurred as a result of the community of believers attempting to define itself amidst a confusing collection of secondary writings of questionable origin, radically shifting beliefs within communities of believers, and the ever-present expectation of Jesus' immediate return to establish his Kingdom.

We can see this process occurring in New Testament writings. In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes to the church at Corinth. In addition to the serious moral problems in this community, individuals are seeing angels, getting messages, having visions, speaking in tongues, and attempting to perform miracles. Paul

⁷An excellent sociological study of this period is contained in Helmut Koester, Introduction to the New Testament, in two volumes, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). See also John Shelby Spong, Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism, (New York: HarperCollins, 1991); The serious student will want to review the two classic texts on this topic, the works of Eusebius and Josephus. Suggested editions are William Whiston, Josephus, Complete Works, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981) and G.A. Williamson, (trans), Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine, (USA: Dorset Press, 1983).

⁸See page 1084 paragraph 2 of The Urantia Book for a glimpse of the many influences on this process.

attempts to restore order and to relate their experiences and situation to a foundation in his understanding of Jesus' teachings.

We have no record of the response of the church at Corinth to Paul's letter, but a reading of his second letter to the church suggests that they told him to flake off. His response in his second letter is to articulate the basis for his authority to impose order on their community, a letter which has been used for 2,000 years to validate Paul's views.⁹

History repeatedly shows us that non-rational actions and beliefs always appear when strong spiritual ideals activate a community in which there is an inadequate intellectual pool of symbols from which meanings may be derived for assignment to the ideals and values experienced in the spiritual life of its members.

By focusing on the miraculous events of Jesus' life, the early church lost sight of his human life and his teachings, and were caught in a tide of collective emotional reactions to the profound events which had so recently occurred. Today, many readers of The Urantia Book are far more interested in identifying with the personalities behind the revelation than in doing the work necessary to really comprehend the revelation itself, and are caught in a similar tide of feelings for which they have no adequate means of integration.

One of the lessons to be learned from the situations we will review today is the importance of balanced intellectual and spiritual growth. Such balanced growth is the only means of sure progress in the presence of revelation.¹⁰

Let's briefly look at the early Christian views of what knowledge and revelation meant.

⁹It is important to appreciate what is happening here. The historical evidence shows that religious communities do not long tolerate disorder. Sooner or later, an authority emerges which is able to establish norms for the group which provide the stability necessary for growth and development while protecting the group from the instabilities generated on its fringes. In the early church Paul played a great role in providing this authority. Following the disruptions of the Protestant reformation the ordering authority became the secular state.

¹⁰On page 1080 of The Urantia Book we find that "The ideal human estate is that in which philosophy, religion and science are welded into a meaningful unity by the conjoined action of wisdom, faith and experience."

Christian faith and theology, for nearly two thousand years, have been predicated on the conviction that God gave a permanently valid revelation concerning himself in Biblical times. For 1,500 years, Christian theology has been committed to this revelation and has sought to propagate it, defend it, and explain its implications. Because revelation was taken for granted, little effort was made to even define the concept.

In the 4th century, Augustine articulated an intellectual foundation which supported 1,000 years of Christian inquiry. The Hebrew Bible and certain writings of the apostles and documents of the early church were taken as the foundation from which the meaning of all observations and experiences could be inferred. In Augustine, the foundation of knowledge is based on an assent to a body of doctrines supposedly revealed by God.¹¹

What is the primary problem with this view that specific knowledge provides the foundation from which spiritual experience emerges? The Urantia Book is quite clear in showing that the experience of the presence of God happens first; we then attempt to use the devices of human language to understand, describe and explain the experience.¹² I believe it was St. Anselm who coined the phrase "faith seeking understanding" which has adequately described the theological enterprise for many centuries.

Clearly anyone who says that a spiritual experience will result from believing certain things to be true, is wrong. Reality, according to The Urantia Book, doesn't work that way. Belief is a repercussion of spiritual experience; spiritual experience does not occur as a result of belief. Spiritual experience does not follow upon acceptance of a set of underlying principles -- it is a gift freely and graciously given by God.¹³ Assent to belief results in nothing more than a shift

¹¹J. Deotis Roberts, A Philosophical Introduction to Theology, (Trinity Press International, 1991), 101.

¹²In The Urantia Book see the following: Page 1141 paragraph 4: "The mission of theology is merely to facilitate the self-consciousness of personal spiritual experience"; page 1130 paragraph 4: "Religion, then, is based on experience and religious thought; theology, the philosophy of religion, is an honest attempt to interpret that experience".

¹³Page 1105 paragraph 1 of The Urantia Book states that, "The highest religious experience is not dependent on prior acts of belief, tradition, and authority; neither is religion the offspring of sublime feelings and purely mystical emotions. It is, rather, a profoundly deep and actual experience of spiritual communion with the spirit influences resident within the human mind...".

of psychological perspective.

The Middle Ages¹⁴

Let's take a look at some developments which occurred during the middle ages, particularly the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The period of the crusades was drawing to a close. A period of scholastic effort was about to begin. Guttenburg's printing press was still 250 years away and the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation 300 years in the future. But Europe was beginning to rediscover knowledge itself, as well as its heritage from Greece and Rome.

Christian, Islamic and Jewish scholars were struggling to understand the nature of belief and knowledge. They attempted to resolve questions such as, What is knowlege? How do we "know"? How do we acquire personal knowledge and validate it as being representative enough of reality for us to consider it "real"? What is the difference between belief and knowledge? What is the relationship between knowledge of facts, feeling sure of facts, or believing certain facts are true? What are the means by which we justify our claims to "know" something as "true"?¹⁵

Thomas Aquinas, born about 1224, made a major effort to address these issues and to bring a sense of intellectual integrity to religious knowledge. He focused on the interrelationship of both reason and revelation. He is perhaps best known for his use of Aristotelian philosophy to provide a framework within which to articulate Christian ideas.

This same time period also saw the development of Christian monastic mysticism, perhaps best characterized by the thought of Meister Eckhart who maintained that we can enjoy a direct experience of God in this life and do not have to be content with

¹⁴For a fascinating history of this period see Barbara Tuchman, Bible and Sword; England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour, (Ballantine Books, 1956).

¹⁵The adjutant mind spirit model of consciousness set forth in The Urantia Book radically alters the epistemological landscape. Quotes such as page 1141 paragraph 6, and page 1949 paragraph 6 are bold new statements about the nature of knowledge.

Likewise, the description of the Spirit of Knowledge on page 402 paragraph 2 which closely ties courage and counsel to knowledge provides the basis for profoundly new insights into the process of "knowing" and its relationship to a community of inquiry.

the knowledge about God attained from reason and revelation.¹⁶

If we accept the idea that our inner experience consists of perceptions of both material and spiritual realities, we can see that each of these two views developing within Christianity represented by Aquinas and Eckhart, no matter how far they developed, could provide only a partial resolution to the problem of fully apprehending reality.¹⁷

To human perception, material and spiritual reality appear to be two distinct domains. In the spiritual domain, we progress by an apprehension of values. In the material domain, we progress by a rational association of facts.¹⁸ The rational logic of material reality is useless in understanding spiritual reality. Likewise, the faith techniques used to apprehend the spiritual are unable to yield rational knowledge of causal material relationships.¹⁹

¹⁶Roberts, A Philosophical Introduction to Theology, 116.

¹⁷See The Urantia Book page 1135, last paragraph: "A logical and consistent philosophic concept of the universe cannot be built up on the postulations of either materialism or spiritism, for both of these systems of thinking, when universally applied, are compelled to view the cosmos in distortion, the former contacting with a universe turned inside out, the latter realizing the nature of a universe turned outside in. Never, then, can either science or religion, in and of themselves, standing alone, hope to gain an adequate understanding of universal truths and relationships without the guidance of human philosophy and the illumination of divine revelation." See also page 1106 paragraph 1: "Reason is the method of science; faith is the method of religion; logic is the attempted technique of philosophy. Revelation compensates for the absence of the morontia viewpoint by providing a technique for achieving unity in the comprehension of the reality and relationships of matter and spirit by the mediation of mind."

¹⁸See The Urantia Book page 1110 paragraph 2: "Science deals with facts; religion is concerned only with values. Through enlightened philosophy the mind endeavors to unite the meanings of both facts and values, thereby arriving at a concept of complete reality."

¹⁹Review the quote on page 1114 of The Urantia Book which reminds us that "Faith has falsified its trust when it presumes to deny realities and to confer upon its devotees assumed knowledge. Faith is a traitor when it fosters betrayal of intellectual integrity...". See also page 2078 paragraph 5 which says that "The 'scientific method' is...utterly useless in the evaluation of spiritual realities and religious experiences".

A clear perception of reality is found only in the mind integration of these two domains and methodologies. The Urantia Book indicates that in the mortal life it is revelation which accomplishes this task. In the morontia life it is a function of the mota component of morontia personality. This is the domain of truth, and we are told on Page 1109 that "truth is always a revelation".

It is important to appreciate what a living reality truth is. It comes into experiential existence as mind coordinates and links the material with the spiritual -- it is directly perceivable by personality only when this dynamic process is taking place. It cannot be codified or stored for future use. Neither can it be transmitted from one universe location to another. It must be reflectively recognized by mind in the moment in which it is apprehended. It is a repercussion of a spiritual life process -- it is living.

On page 888 we read that "Truth is relative and expanding; it lives always in the present, achieving new expression in each...human life."

And on page 1138 we find the following: "Revelation originates neither a science nor a religion; its function is to co-ordinate both science and religion with the truth of reality...".

Perhaps we can more fully appreciate the nature of balanced development by considering the production of music. A good musician, while working in the domain of emotion and feeling, is dependant upon an intellectual foundation, a knowledge of scales and intervals as well as arduously acquired neurological skills necessary to manage the instrument. The expression of the musician's feelings will be limited by any lack of technical skills and musical knowledge.

Likewise, a musician who has developed a great deal of technical skill but who lacks depth in his emotional experience is not very likely to produce beautiful music. In a sublime expression of music, the musician is in the flow of expression -- fusing the intellectual and emotional elements into an integrated whole.

Is it any different in our personal lives? Intellectual mastery in an individual who lacks spiritual depth results in the production of relatively valueless ideas. So it is with an individual who has a profound experience with God but has not developed the intellectual or philosophical tools which would yield an adequate expression of his or her experience.

In Paper 110 on page 1209 we read that, "When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that

of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, overspiritual development tends to produce a fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller."

What do I mean by the term "balanced growth"? I should add the term "balanced consciousness", or "balanced mindal functioning" to this consideration. My reading of The Urantia Book leads me to conclude that the objective of mental functioning is an integration and balancing of the functioning of the first six adjutant mind spirits co-ordinated by the Spirit of Wisdom.²⁰

Note that the task here is not to let the Spirit of Worship override the other adjutants, but to bring them all into coordination with the Spirit of Wisdom.

I appreciate the manner in which The Urantia Book calls us to balanced growth and balanced consciousness -- it is the only way in which our development can be meaningful to us as individuals or be of value to other selves in our communities.

The Reformation²¹

Let's take a moment to review some of the circumstances surrounding the Protestant reformation.

In the early 16th century, Martin Luther ruthlessly attacked the authority of the church. In 1520 he invited the German Princes to take the reform of the church into their own hands, to abolish the tributes to Rome, the celibacy of the clergy, Masses for the dead, pilgrimages, religious orders, and other Catholic practices and institutions.

He then made an appeal to the clergy in a volume titled, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church" wherein he set forth a new theology of the New Testament and rejected the sacrifice of the Mass. He was excommunicated and imprisoned in 1521.

In his absence, the community in Wittenberg came apart. Individuals were attempting to get control of the reformation movement as were competing groups of Catholics, Humanists and exponents of a socially radical gospel. Luther's insistence that individuals had the ability to fully interpret the scriptures for

²⁰See paper 36, page 402 paragraph 2 for a description of the functions of the seven adjutants.

²¹See also A. Dulles, Models of Revelation.

themselves opened the floodgates of mystical extravagance; individuals were hearing divine voices and getting special revelations. Once again the belief that Jesus was about to return immediately and establish his kingdom was widespread. It took Luther's personal intervention and work to bring some semblance of stability back into university and church life.

Here we have a situation wherein the means by which people assimilated and understood their spiritual experience was suddenly and radically altered. New foundations had no time to develop in the collective life of the community. The forces of religious fanaticism and intolerance unleashed by the Protestant reformation and the subsequent Catholic counter-reformation were so great that Europe was plunged into a series of bloody civil wars which lasted for over a hundred years. It was only the emergence of a secular state which was able to stop the bloodshed by providing a political structure which transcended religious differences.

What we can observe during the Reformation are individuals whose spiritual natures are activated by social and political forces in an environment which is lacking an appropriate symbolic frame of reference in which they may assimilate those experiences.

In his book "Models of Revelation", Avery Dulles articulates the way in which we use the symbols of culture and linguistics to apprehend the presence of God.²² When the depth of spiritual experience sufficiently exceeds the capacity of the available symbols, the psyche of the individual will begin to generate its own set of symbols as a means of mediating strong spiritual drives and preventing psychological disruption.

We have an analogous situation in many of our reader communities today. Many readers have declared their freedom from established religious systems but in so doing have destroyed their connections with religious traditions, knowledge and symbols, as well as communally held values which serve to stabilize strong religious impulses.²³ Many of them have little or no experience with philosophy, theology or any form of disciplined critical thought -- they have removed themselves from all criteria for critical assessment and evaluation of their ideas. At the same time these readers are activating the deep

²²Avery Dulles, Models of Revelation, (Orbis Books, 1992).

²³See The Urantia Book, page 1098 paragraph 4: "The world is filled with lost souls...wandering about in confusion among the isms and cults of a frustrated philosophic era. Too few have learned how to install a philosophy of living in the place of religious authority."

recesses of their psyches by exposing themselves to the powerful archetypal ideas and images presented in The Urantia Book. It is very understandable that such communities and individuals would begin generating their own symbolic contexts within which to mediate their experiences.

Self-generated symbolic contexts can spread rapidly -- when similar internal tensions exist in multiple communities, a resolution which develops in one community is readily applicable in other similar communities-in-tension. The resulting mutual reinforcement fuels further spread of the new belief system. A study of the revivalist movements of the late 19th century in England and North America in response to the over-intellectualization of Christianity is instructive.²⁴ Eric Hoffer gives this issue extensive treatment.²⁵

Let's consider another repercussion of the Reformation.

The Council of Trent convened by the Roman church in response to the heresy of Luther produced a statement of the Church's threefold role with regard to revealed truth:

- 1) She must safeguard and faithfully preserve the deposit of truth which has been entrusted to her care inviolate, free from all contamination and innovation.
- 2) She must explain it, according to its true sense and infallibly teach the revealed doctrine.
- 3) She must proscribe all errors which threaten this truth.²⁶

These are the arguments which have been used for 2,000 years to justify the existence of a massive system of power and control over the 4th epocal revelation. Lets look at these factors again and let's keep them in mind because we're likely to hear them used with the 5th epocal revelation:

- 1) "Trust us; we're going to preserve the text inviolate."
- 2) "Trust us; we'll provide teachers to tell you what

²⁴George M. Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991).

²⁵Eric Hoffer, The True Believer, (Harper & Row, 1951).

²⁶Rene LaTourelle, Theology of Revelation, (Society of St. Paul, 1966), 306.

it really means."

3) "Trust us; we'll provide an authority to protect you from anything which might threaten your understanding of this revelation."

We must ever keep in mind the advice given on page 1089 of The Urantia Book; "Religion can be kept free from unholy secular alliances only by:

1. A critically corrective philosophy.
2. Freedom from all social, economic, and political alliances.
3. Creative, comforting, and love-expanding fellowships.
4. Progressive enhancement of spiritual insight and the appreciation of cosmic values.
5. Prevention of fanaticism by the compensations of the scientific mental attitude".

I think it is important to get a sense of the spectrum of human religious responses. At one end we have rigid authoritarian control of the community which essentially views any development or growth as a threat to the established view of reality. At the other extreme we have unrestrained religious "enthusiasm" of individuals who have no controlling mechanisms at all for mediating their spiritual experiences in meaningful ways.

We must strive to find a home in the center of this spectrum in which individual exploration, discovery, growth and development is encouraged in a context which provides safety, stability and continuity for the community.

19th and 20th Century Developments²⁷

Let's now consider some of the developments of the last two centuries and how they affect our present religious environment.

By the 16th century, the scholastic theologians had begun to use the term "revelation" not to designate a specific action on the part of God, but rather an objective body of truth which Christians accepted as simply given by God to the Church.

Treatises on revelation did not begin to be written until the 17th and 18th centuries. But since that time, theologians have recognized that an implicit doctrine of revelation underlies every major theological undertaking. The controversies that have raged in our own century about the divinity of Christ, the inerrancy of the Bible, the infallibility of the Church, secular and political theology, and the value of other religions would be unintelligible apart from the varying convictions about revelation.

By the late 19th century, individuals such as Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud were bringing into question the validity of ideas which had been foundational to Christianity for centuries. At the same time, Biblical scholarship utilizing new techniques in historical, linguistic and textual analysis was providing knowledge about the origins and nature of the Biblical texts that quickly transformed claims of divine inspiration and inerrancy into cultural artifacts.

It is interesting to observe the interplay between the rational and non-rational elements in our intellectual history. Almost as if in response to this intellectualization and rationalization of theology, waves of revivalism swept across England and North America. Large numbers of individuals found meaning in the Pentecostal and Holiness movements which provided an experience of the heart in a religious world which was becoming increasingly secular and rational; fundamentalism spread rapidly as a reaction to both Biblical criticism and the implications of Darwinism.

But these same pressures forced serious theologians to reconsider the significance and reality of the supposed revelatory origins of Christianity. What followed was a century of expansive development of a theology of revelation which I

²⁷See George M. Marsden, Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991) and Paul Tillich, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, (Harper & Row, 1967).

believe will prove to have been preparatory to the opening up of Christianity to the reception of The Urantia Book.

By the middle of the 20th century, so many new views of the nature of revelation had emerged that the Roman church issued, as part of Vatican II, a dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation in which the claim was formally made that the final authority is neither scripture nor tradition but the teaching office of the church: "The task of authentically interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on, has been entrusted exclusively to the living teaching office of the church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ".²⁸

But aside from this apparent hardening of position by the Roman church, the 20th century saw the concept of revelation developing in some new and exciting ways. Leading theologians felt unable to go back to the older orthodoxies which would have identified revelation with fixed doctrines or with a miraculous history. Liberal theologians were well aware of the obscurities in biblical history and the variations in biblical doctrine. They therefore sought a theology of revelation that could honestly accept the results of critical scholarship without falling into the spiritual dullness of secularism.

Perhaps this shift in thinking is best characterized by Auguste Sabatier who maintained that religious doctrines are a kind of sedimentation that occurs when revelation is made the object of human reflection.²⁹

There was such a proliferation of new ideas that the theologians who specialized in revelation began to separate into different schools having radically different conceptions of revelation.

²⁸Rene LaTourelle, Theology of Revelation, (Society of St. Paul, 1966).

²⁹Auguste Sabatier, Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit, (McClure, Phillips & Co., 1904). This book was very influential around the turn of the century and appears to be the source of material used in sections 5 & 6 of paper 155.

Revelation in Contemporary Theology

Today the issue of revelation has become so significant that there is hardly a recognized theologian of the past century who has not devoted at least a chapter to the topic. Many complete books on the topic of revelation alone have been written and considerable thought and study have been devoted to understanding what revelation is and how it might be recognized and validated.

All I can hope to give you today is a sense of the amount of behind-the-scenes work which appears to have been done to prepare Christianity for the appearance of a new revelation. The last 200 years alone have seen the thinking move from the rigid position of the Roman church to radically new views which could be used verbatim to describe The Urantia Book. I do not think this is merely co-incidental.

Michael Buckley discusses the process of discovering new meaning in a theological tradition.³⁰ From him we get the following ideas:

There is only an apparent conflict between revelation and tradition. Revelation can only illuminate what is hidden within the given. Revelation is the grasp of new meaning; tradition is its mediator, providing the elements which make possible new disclosures. Revelation and tradition are not opposed; they are coordinated. They constitute the rhythm and the unity of inquiry. Revelation seizes upon a newness of meaning or a retrieval of significance, but the actual material upon which the revelatory process works is tradition. Tradition provides the present with a depth that nothing less settled can match.

Buckley maintains that the richness and depth of any theological reflection depends upon one's awareness of the context of tradition in which the reflection is being done.

Let me share some other ideas from contemporary theologians:

H. Richard Niebuhr who was Professor of Theology and Christian Ethics at Yale University Divinity School prior to his death deals primarily with issues of personal revelation; his criteria have more to do with personal apprehension of revelatory

³⁰Michael S. J. Buckley, At The Origins of Modern Atheism, (Yale University Press, 1987).

material and its integration into a community of believers.³¹

"Revelation is that which illuminates our history and makes it intelligible. Revelation is the discovery of rational pattern in the factors of our existence and our history." (pg 68)

"Revelation proves itself to be revelation of reality by its ability to guide us to many other truths." (pg 102)

"A revelation which furnishes us with a starting point for the interpretation of past, present and future history is inherently subject to progressive validation." (page 97)

"Revelation is not the communication of supernatural knowledge and not the stimulation of numinous feelings; rather is revelation the peculiar activity of God, his giving of himself to us in communion." (pg 112 quoting W. Herrmann)

"Christian life consists in becoming a person through association with Jesus rather than in the acceptance of creeds and laws. For many early Christians their certainty was simply this; they had met a person who made persons of them." (pg 108).

Let me share a brief passage from his book so that you can get a sense of the spiritual quality of his writing:

"Revelation means the self-disclosing of the eternal Knower. It is the self-disclosure of light in our darkness. Revelation means that we find ourselves to be valued rather than valuing. When the great riches of God reduce our wealth to poverty, that is revelation. When we find out that we are no longer thinking him, but that he first thought us, that is revelation. Revelation is the emergence of the person upon whose external garments we had looked as objects of curiosity. Revelation means that in our common history the fate which lowers over us as persons in our communities reveals itself to be a person in community with us. Revelation so infuses us with a sense of communion with the

³¹H. R. Niebuhr, The Meaning of Revelation, (MacMillan Publishing Company, 1941). This book contains a detailed description of how Morontia Mota works and how revelation performs this function in mortal life. It also contains a very insightful discussion of Animism, the mechanism by which primitive religion personifies and anthropomorphizes elements of the natural world. Niebuhr includes experiences of consciousness in this natural world and describes our tendency to respond in Animistic ways.

Revealer that our only valid response is a prayer saying, "Our Father." (condensed from pgs 111 & 112)

Avery Dulles is a Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Fordham University and former President of The Catholic Theological Society of America. He organizes the primary ideas about revelation which have dominated 20th century thinking into five types.³² He also considers criteria by which supposed revelatory material should be evaluated.

Here are Dulles' Criteria for evaluating supposed revelatory material:

1. Continuity -- Does it stand in continuity with what believers of previous generations have recognized as leading them into a richer experience of God's presence?

2. Internal Coherence -- Is it capable of being conceptually formulated in an intelligible manner free from internal self-contradiction?

3. Plausibility -- Does it run counter to what is generally thought to be true in other areas of life? If so, is it capable of providing an alternative explanation of the phenomena responsible for the general state of opinion?

4. Adequacy to experience -- Does it illuminate the deeper dimensions of secular and religious experience both within and beyond the Christian community?

5. Practical fruitfulness -- If once accepted, will it help its adherents to sustain moral effort, reinforce Christian commitment and enhance the life of the community?

6. Theoretical fruitfulness -- Will it satisfy the quest for religious understanding and thus be of assistance to the theological enterprise?

7. Value for dialogue -- Will it assist in the exchange of insights with Christians of other schools and traditions, with adherents of other religions, and with adherents of the great secular faiths?

In addition to these criteria for evaluating revelatory material, Dulles organizes the primary ideas about revelation which have dominated 20th century thinking into five types.

1. Revelation as Doctrine -- the meaning of a text taken as

³²A. Dulles, Models of Revelation.

a set of propositional statements, each expressing a divine affirmation which is valid always and everywhere.

2. Revelation as History -- Revelation occurs primarily through deeds, rather than words; revelation is made accessible by studying history and the manner in which God has historically revealed himself.

3. Revelation as Inner Experience -- The self-revealing God is regarded as making himself present to the consciousness of the individual in a way that minimizes the need for mediation through created signs.

4. Revelation as Dialectical Presence -- Revelation occurs in the dialectical process³³ as we attempt to understand the nature of God.

5. Revelation as New Awareness -- Revelation is an experience of participation in divine life.

Dulles devotes a chapter to the articulation of each of these five models, tracing their historical origins. He then uses these models as the basis for setting forth a theory of symbolic mediation as a primary mode of revelatory activity.

Richard Swinburne, Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at the University of Oxford has just published a book in which he explores the need for a revelation and the means by which we would go about verifying that we had indeed received a revelation.³⁴ The primary concept of revelation with which he deals in his book is what we would consider to be epochal revelation. He asks such questions as, "Given what we know about God do we have reason to suppose that he might intervene and reveal something to us?" "What are the ways in which God might communicate with us?" "How would we know that a purported revelation was really what it claimed to be?" Swinburne also lists criteria to use in evaluating such a situation.

Here are some of Swinburne's criteria for evaluating the validity of any supposed revelatory material:

1. The content must be relevant for the deepest levels of human well-being.
2. It should include details of life beyond this one, to the

³³As in Hegel

³⁴Richard Swinburne, Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy, (Clarendon Press, 1992).

end that we be encouraged in our pursuit of the good and to help us in our character formation.

3. While we may be unable to directly prove the truth of what is given, the content must, as far as we can tell, be incapable of being proven false.

4. Evidence for or against the truth claims of the revelation must be weighed in the same way as evidence for and against the truth of any other body of claims.

This is just a small sampling of the richness of some of the contemporary thinking on the topic of revelation.

I urge you to spend some time exploring the ideas of some of these thinkers. Every serious student of the topic of revelation should read Niebuhrs' book. This is exciting work; the advances in the field of theology over the past century have been no less significant and revolutionary than those in science and technology. We truly are in the midst of the most significant revolution in thought this planet has ever seen.

If we are going to content ourselves with naive mystical indulgences, we're going to wake up one day and find that those spiritual men and women we're told about on page 2082 who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings have shown up and done so, and have siezed the unprecedented opportunities which we are failing to grasp.

The Urantia Book as Revelation

The Urantia Book is in many ways a profoundly human document. Page 17 indicates that more than one thousand human concepts were used. Page 16 refers to the task of co-ordinating essential knowledge and giving preference to the highest relevant existing human concepts. Page 1343 says that the section on the teachings of Jesus alone is composed from over two thousand human concepts of Jesus.

Matthew Block has done some significant work in beginning to catalog the human sources of the material in the book.³⁵ I know that Carolyn Kendall and others have worked on this task over the years as well. Let's take a moment to consider the significance of the fact that human sources were used for the expression of the ideas whenever possible. Why was this done this way? Was it because of linguistic difficulties? Is human symbolic communication really so unique that celestial personalities would have difficulty accurately manipulating our symbols?

I think there is more to it than simply achieving a clarity of expression. By drawing upon so many different human sources, The Urantia Book becomes firmly rooted in the intellectual foundations of 20th century thought. The revelators were thus able to control which elements of the existing intellectual culture would become linked to the revelatory material. In addition, they were thus able to reinforce specific developing threads of thought and eliminate others from further significant development.

Rather than limiting us to internal referents, the revelators provide us with hundreds of pointers linking us to external materials for enhanced interpretation and understanding of the book. What an elegant way in which to introduce revelatory material into such a volatile environment!

An extremely important repercussion of this technique is that it allows the life and teachings of Jesus to be effectively restated in the context of 20th century thought, creating a situation wherein the transformative power of the Master's bestowal might be further liberated in a world which so desperately needs it.

The cosmology thus created in The Urantia Book as a

³⁵Matthew Block, "A Bibliographic Essay on Some Human Books Used in The Urantia Book", (privately published, 1992).

composition of all these human expressions, enhanced by revelation where necessary, is a profound synthesis of all the major dialectical components of Christian thought from the past 2,000 years. An example is the synthesis provided by the integration of trinitarian theology with process theology in the articulation of the relationship between the evolving Supreme and the Paradise Trinity.³⁶ This one aspect of the book alone provides a potent new thesis from which an understanding of God's integrated transcendence and immanence may be explored.

In the first years following publication, the basis on which Urantia Foundation attempted to control the development of the readership was their supposed access to secondary information and traditions which were associated with the work of the contact commission and the Forum. The revelators seem to have been quite clear in their expression of their desire that none of this secondary material should even survive the actual task of producing the book.

But most importantly, these kitchen table stories and traditions have neither the psychological, cultural nor spiritual depth to provide a context with sufficient conceptual scope to adequately frame The Urantia Book.

In addition to what we have reviewed here already in terms of cultural preparation for its appearance and a theory of its conceptual design, this revelation reactivates the foundational mythology of Christian religious civilization. Such powerful images as Adam and Eve, The Garden of Eden, Moses, Melchizedek, Jesus, the crucifixion and resurrection as well as our views of life beyond death are being revitalized with powerful new meanings. Do we fully appreciate the psychological force and spiritual power of this revelation?

The only context substantial enough to support the assimilation of this text and the development of its potentials lies in the 2,000 year history of the unfolding of the 4th epochal revelation -- the accumulated history of individuals, communities and evolving thought which is represented in contemporary Christianity.

We are still less than half-way through the first post-publication century. The task of integrating the revelation with the developing fronts of contemporary thought has barely begun; more doors are open for us than we have the ability to enter.

With so many years of apparent preparation in place for what

³⁶See Joseph A. Bracken, Society and Spirit: A Trinitarian Cosmology, (Susquehanna University Press, 1991), for a glimpse at how theologians are struggling with this issue.

seems to be a well-managed effort of planetary spiritual uplift, with the unprecedented wealth of knowledge freely available to us at any library or bookstore, with the well-documented psycho/social instabilities which accompany any sudden advance in spiritual contact, the probability of the reality of the supposed teacher mission is, in my mind, virtually non-existent. It is simply irrelevant to the revelational processes which we can easily observe at work in our cultural environment.

Revelation in our Communities

In conclusion, I would like to say just a few words about on-going revelation in our communities of readers.

The Urantia Book is quite clear in its presentation of personal revelation as an on-going, continuous process within the experience of each individual.

On page 1109 we read that "Truth is always a revelation...".

On page 1122 is the statement that "The pursuit of knowledge constitutes science; the search for wisdom is philosophy; the love for God is religion; the hunger for truth is a revelation".

And on page 1203 we find that "...Indirectly and unrecognized the Adjuster is constantly communicating with the human subject..."

We each benefit daily, moment by moment, from the support and assistance of numerous influences, from the adjutant mind spirits to the ministering spirits of the Trinity. In addition, I believe that we each have a great deal of potential for experiencing and expressing spiritual realities.

This relationship which we each have with the process of revelation presents us with some difficult problems. These problems are compounded by the fact that we do not have a well-developed cultural tradition which helps us to apprehend and express our individual experience with revelation in productive ways. In our culture, revelation has been traditionally seen as an experience of the few, made available to the masses of humanity only through the mediation of a class of teacher/priests.

These teacher/priest castes emerge when individuals begin to view themselves as agents representing the source of revelation. The problem is compounded when these individuals then begin to create a social identity for themselves in their communities based on this mistaken view of their identity. Jesus made great efforts to free humanity from the bondage of priests, a bondage under which much of humanity still languishes. The idea that a

teacher/priest caste would be re-introduced as part of the fifth epochal revelation simply has no place in my understanding of the forward progression of epochal revelation on this planet.

There are two factors which foster the continuation of priesthoods. Just as there are individuals willing to present themselves as agents of the source of revelation, there are those who are all too willing to look to human sources for assurance and guidance. One of our greatest challenges is to learn how to live in an environment of on-going personal revelation. We must learn how to apprehend revelation as individual persons, and to discover its meaning as members of communities in informed dialog.

I remain to this day deeply affected by the knowledge that other people were significantly influenced by the position I took in the Clayton episode. I have come to more fully appreciate the serious moral issues involved whenever we bring ideas into our community. We must assume full responsibility for who we are, what we do and the thoughts and ideas we express. If we have the attitude that we are "just getting out of the way so that God can speak through us", we are in reality abdicating moral responsibility for our own behavior.

Richard Niebuhr maintains that anyone who intends to bring revelatory material into their community has a moral responsibility to study both history and psychology. I think this is the very least which we should expect from each other.

Avery Dulles goes so far as to suggest that the community itself is the real recipient of revelation; "The community, rather than its individual members, is the prime recipient of revelation. In community, humanity exists and acts socially -- that is to say, as a network of people in relationships. Revelation is administered as sacrament, so that individuals can achieve together, in their interrelatedness, new levels of life and meaning that they could not achieve in isolation. Only in connection with the community of believers, does the individual have access to the full revelation of God in Jesus."³⁷

We seem to appreciate the fact that the unrestrained indulgence of our sexual natures can destroy relationships, damage our families and bring chaos to our communities. What we don't seem to appreciate is that the same type of moral and cultural restraint with which we manage our sexuality should be applied to our spiritual natures as well. My experience is that spirituality has its own driving passions which can easily consume the psyche if allowed to do so.

³⁷Avery Dulles, Models of Revelation, paraphrased from pg 220.

I have attempted to cover a lot of material in this presentation. Let me summarize to two main points:

1. In order to more fully understand The Urantia Book, in order to more fully understand the reactions that individuals and communities are having to this book and in order to more wisely manage our development as a community, it is essential that we study the context of historical and religious culture in which this revelation appears.

2. We must strive for a balanced state of consciousness -- the balanced functioning of the first six adjutants co-ordinated by the Spirit of Wisdom -- in order to avoid the extremes of unrestrained religious delusion and rigid authoritarian control.

It is my hope that you will be stimulated to pursue an exploration of these issues on your own. We truly have only begun to comprehend the magnitude of the events of which we are a part.

In conclusion I would like to thank you for allowing me to share these thoughts with you today and to direct your attention to 2 Timothy 2:15 which says, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman which needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."

Thank you.

REFERENCES

Barbour, Ian G., Myths, Models and Paradigms, New York: HarperCollins, 1974.

Block, Matthew, "A Bibliographic Essay on Some Human Books Used in The Urantia Book", privately published, 1992.

Buckley, Michael S. J., At the Origins of Modern Atheism, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987.

Dulles, Avery, Models of Revelation, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992.

* Dulles' articulation of five models of revelation is very informative as are his insights into the history of revelatory thought.

Hastings, Arthur, With the Tongues of Men and Angels, Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1991.

* A review of channeling phenomena from a new-age perspective. This expository overview provides more food for thought than clear conclusions.

Hoffer, Eric, The True Believer, New York: Harper & Row, 1951.

Koester, Helmut, Introduction to the New Testament; History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

* In two volumes, a very readable account of the context in which early Christianity took form.

Kuhn, Thomas S., The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

* This is a classic text on the role of paradigm in the shaping of communities of inquiry.

Latourelle, Rene, Theology of Revelation, Staten Island: Alba House, 1966

* The conservative Roman viewpoint of the revelatory process with a review of revelatory issues covered in Vatican II.

Marsden, George M., Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991

* Excellent background for understanding the role of these groups in twentieth century American religious life.

McFague, Sallie, Metaphorical Theology, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

Niebuhr, H. Richard, The Meaning of Revelation, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1941.

* This book should be in the library of every serious student of The Urantia Book. The first chapter may seem somewhat dry to the reader unaccustomed to reading such essays. Chapters 3 and 4 are absolutely masterful and provide a wonderful context for considering The Urantia Book. Don't miss this outstanding example of some of the best of 20th century theological thinking. This book is very readable and contains excellent criteria for evaluating the claim of any material to be revelatory.

Otto, Rudolf, The Idea of the Holy, London: Oxford University Press, 1950.

* This book is considered a classic inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational.

Rahner, Karl, Theological Investigations, Volume XVI, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1983

* Interesting commentary in chapter 12 on the Vatican II position on Revelation. Also, chapter 9 constitutes an essay which articulates the need of theology for the perspective offered by The Urantia Book and describes the reasons why it would be impossible for a group of human beings to put together such a work.

Reist, Benjamin, Processive Revelation, Louisville:
Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

* While not easily readable, this book is an interesting exploration of mechanisms of revelation in the context of the evolving Supreme.

Roberts, J. Deotis, A Philosophical Introduction to Theology, Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1991.

Russell, D. S., Divine Disclosure, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992.

* Fascinating review of revelatory/apocalyptic literature from the inter-testamental period.

Sadler, William S. Jr., A Study of the Master Universe, Chicago: Second Society Foundation, 1968. Also appendices to the above published in a separate volume.

Spong, John Shelby, Rescuing the Bible from Fundamentalism, New York: HarperCollins, 1991.

Swinburne, Richard, Revelation; from Metaphor to Analogy, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992.

* Serious academic treatment of the topic of Revelation as it relates to Christian claims of a revelatory origin of their religion. Swinburne deals primarily with what we would refer to as epochal revelation in contrast to Niebuhr who deals with the more personal aspects of revelation. Swinburne also sets forth criteria for evaluating whether or not a set of ideas contains revealed truth.

Tillich, Paul, Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, 1967.

* A very readable introduction to this topic. These are transcripts of lectures rather than a highly structured and developed theological exposition.

Tuchman, Barbara, Bible and Sword; England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour, New York: Ballantine Books, 1956.

* An amazing story of the impact of the Bible on the development of British national life and the subsequent Protestant religious culture in North America. Her accounts of the crusades alone are worth the time taken to read this book.

Whiston, William, (trans.), Josephus, Complete Works, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1981.

Williams, G. A., (trans.), Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine, USA: Dorset Press, 1983.

_____, The Urantia Book, Chicago: Urantia Foundation, 1955.