

"...This Higher Symbolism of a Higher Civilization..." 87:7.6

Video Presentation by Marvin Gawryn ■ March 24, 2018

Transcript

00:30 Marvin Gawryn: Welcome. Thank you for joining us today for this discussion. The subject today is this intriguing phrase in "The Urantia Book," from the section on the Nature of Cultism, which is Section 7, in Paper 87. And the phrase is: "this higher symbolism of a higher civilization." Intriguing phrase, very thought-provoking. I'd like to start off by reading the overview for this discussion. The revelators tell us that we have just entered a thousand-year period of massive societal transition. It will carry us from the current materialistic, nationalist cultures that have developed over the past 500 years, over to the beginnings of a higher stage of civilization – with the end of war and the establishment of a global government, one language, and a unified culture that values spiritual goals as primary. But they warned us that this next 1,000 years will be a time of head spinning, non-stop change and turbulence, both for societies and for the individuals afloat within them. With great risk of confusion, and dislocation, and regression even.

02:01 MG: Indeed, it is precisely in preparation for this stormy millennium of danger and opportunity that they have fortified us with this emergency revelation. And in Section 87:7, they urge us to evolve a new spiritual culture from the up-stepped truths of this revelation, a compelling higher symbolism, an idealistic vision for both self and society that can provide guidance for humanity, as well as solace and stability during this oncoming hurricane of transition.

02:50 MG: So, let's go ahead now and take a closer look at this really interesting phrase, which is the theme for today's conversation, this "higher symbolism of a higher civilization." First, I'd like to take a look at the context in which this phrase appears, some of the passages in "The Urantia Book" that relate to it and, in particular, some of the passages in the actual section where the phrase appears, which again is Paper 87, Section 7, the Nature of Cultism. And then after looking at the context for the phrase, we'll take a little bit of time to explore what this higher symbolism could be that they are referring to in these passages. And then after that, we'll go ahead and end this video segment.

03:42 MG: Okay. First, a little bit of context. This is a quote now for "The Urantia

Book." "When culture advances overfast, when material achievement outruns the evolution of worship-wisdom, then does civilization contain within itself the seeds of retrogression; and unless buttressed by the swift augmentation of experiential wisdom, such human societies will recede from high but premature levels of attainment and the 'dark ages' of the interregnum of wisdom will bear witness to the inexorable restoration of the imbalance between self-liberty and self-control." So, the lesson here seems to be that, if our spiritual culture does not keep pace with our material progress, we're in trouble.

04:45 MG: Here's another quote. "Urantia society can never hope to settle down as in past ages. The social ship has steamed out of the sheltered bays of established tradition, and has begun its cruise upon the high seas of evolutionary destiny. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium." So, there's our indication of a thousand-year period of tremendous change and transition that we've just entered, only recently. "The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and re-adjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny. The paramount mission of religion as a social influence is to stabilize the ideals of mankind during these dangerous times of transition from one phase of civilization to another." That's interesting. From the stage of civilization we are in, a period of a thousand years of transition into the beginnings of the next stage of civilization. "During these dangerous times of transition, from one phase of civilization to another, from one level of culture to another."

06:22 MG: So, how is it that religion can fulfill this crucial role of "stabilizing our ideals" during this long thousand-year period, this stretch of turbulent change? Well, I think there are some hints in this section on the Nature of Cultism. But before we take a look at these passages, I want to stress something that I think is very, very important. In this section, when the revelators use the term "cult," they mean that word as it was used back in the 1930s. Back then, the word "cult" was defined in its original, very broad meaning as culture. We have to keep in mind, that was before the era of the '60s and '70s when there was a lot of stuff in the news about personality cults, and the term "cult" became associated with an aberrant, small group of a personality cult. And actually, back in the 1930s, before those events happened, the phrase that they used to convey this sense of culture with the term "cult," the phrase they used to define what they mean by "cult" is "a technique for cultural manifestation." It's a great and very precise use of language. And they also used the term "symbolism" in this section a lot. And what they mean is that a cult is a culture, it's a symbolic vehicle, it's a medium for the conveyance of a set of cultural ideals. In a sense, it's a set of symbols that embodies those ideals.

08:07 MG: So, keeping in mind how they used these terms, cult and symbolism, let's take a look at these passages from the Nature of Cultism. Here's the first paragraph

in the section. "The cult type of social organization persisted because it provided a symbolism for the preservation and stimulation of moral sentiments and religious loyalties. Every inspiring ideal grasps for some perpetuating symbolism." Now, note something they do in this section: They're categorical in their statements, *every* inspiring ideal. They use the word "*must*" many, many times in this section in terms of what we must be exploring as readers of this revelation, in experimenting and exploring the possibilities of developing a new culture to reach out to the broader culture that surrounds us. Now back to the passage.

09:14 MG: "Every inspiring ideal grasps for some perpetuating symbolism, seeks some technique for cultural manifestation." There is *that phrase*, which will do two things. One is ensure survival of the ideals, make sure they're not lost. And secondly, augment the realization in people's lives of those ideals, the process of taking them from an intellectual, conceptual, theoretical reality, and translating them into living experience, incorporating them into people's lives so that people experience and feel them, and eventually *become* – embody – these higher spiritual truths.

10:03 MG: "From the dawn of civilization, every appealing movement in social culture or religious advancement has developed a symbolic ceremonial." And here is, in a sense, the most striking categorical statement they make. Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps, every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, a new technique for cultural manifestation, a spiritual culture. And even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism. So, even this Fifth Epochal Revelation, the restatement of the religion of Jesus, there must evolve a new and higher symbolism that embodies the core spiritual truths of this revelation, in a cultural medium that is spreadable, that will allow people to incorporate these spiritual realities in their lives. Modern man must find some adequate symbolism for his new and expanding ideas, ideals, and loyalties. And here is our title phrase. "And **this higher symbolism of a higher civilization** must be predicated on the concept of the Fatherhood of God and be pregnant with a mighty ideal of the brotherhood of man."

11:40 MG: And then the last paragraph we're going to look at – and we'll look at it a little more in depth a little later on – "No cult can endure" (no spiritual culture can endure), "and contribute to the progress of social civilization, and individual spiritual attainment unless it is based on the biologic, sociologic, and religious significance of the home. A surviving cult must symbolize that which is permanent in the presence of unceasing change; it must glorify that which unifies the stream of ever-changing social metamorphosis." So, this culture, what it must do is capture these ideals of spiritual relationship that can stabilize people's lives in the midst of these massive transitions, and help them retain those ideals, keep them at the forefront of their lives in the midst of this period of great turbulence that's coming.

12:51 MG: Okay. So, now we're going to have a little change of pace. Many of you may remember (I can't remember if it's the '70s or '80s, '90s, maybe all of those decades) there was a show on TV, the Johnny Carson show. And some of you might even remember that one of Johnny Carson's regular routines was what he called "The Great Carnac." And what he would do is he would don a turban – he would put a turban on his head – and he would assume the role of the great mentalist, the great mind reader, Carnac. And he would take an envelope, and in the envelope was a question inside, and he would hold the envelope to his head, and he would concentrate, and he would mind-read the answer to the question. And then, he'd open the envelope and he'd read aloud the question for that answer that he had intuited.

13:48 MG: So, let's go ahead and try our own Urantian version of "The Great Carnac." The answer is: "The family of God, the universal family of God." So, let's see, what's the question? The question is, "What is the new and higher spiritual symbolism that can stabilize society during this thousand-year transition and stimulate the emergence of the next and higher stage of civilization?" Okay, that's pretty interesting. So, maybe that's what "The Great Carnac" says is the answer to this question. But what is it that "The Urantia Book" says about it? What does The Urantia Book say about the possibility that the family of God could be the higher symbolism that they're trying to point us to? The **higher symbolism of a higher civilization?**

14:54 MG: Let's go ahead and take a look at a few relevant "Urantia Book" passages. The first one is from Paper 142, and this is Jesus speaking. He next explained that the kingdom idea was not the best way to illustrate man's relation to God. Jesus said, "The people of another age will better understand the gospel of the kingdom when it is presented in terms expressive of the family relationship, when man understands religion as the teaching of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, sonship with God." From Paper 170, "Jesus desired to substitute for the idea of the kingdom, king, and subjects, the concept of the heavenly family, the heavenly father, and the liberated sons of God." All the way at the beginning of the book, from Paper 2, the olden concept that God is a deity dominated by kingly morality was up-stepped by Jesus to that affectionately touching level of intimate family morality of the parent-child relationship than which there is none more tender and beautiful in mortal experience.

16:22 MG: Here's one from Paper 140. "The family occupied the very center of Jesus' philosophy of life, here and hereafter. He based his teachings about God on the family." So the family of God, as a symbolism, connects up the life we have here to the possibility of eternal life and spiritual family, here and hereafter. Here is a quote from Paper 160, and this is Rodan speaking. "I do not hesitate thus to glorify family life, for your Master has wisely chosen the father-child relationship as the very cornerstone of this new gospel."

17:15 MG: From Paper 170, "He once spoke of such an experience as "family fellowship with God the father. Jesus sought to substitute many terms for the kingdom but always without success." Now, let's pause here for a moment. Why was he not successful? Well, there were two factors back in that day. One was the vast majority of governmental forms back then were kingdoms, unlike today where there are very few kingdoms left and we have representative forms of government. The other and primary reason probably was the Jews had messianic expectations of Jesus. They expected a king, a material king, a deliverer, and no matter how hard he tried to move away from the kingdom concept, they insisted on moving back to it, so he finally relented. But what he said was, "The people of another age will better understand the truths of the gospel in family terms." So, he tried to substitute many terms for the kingdom, but always without success. Among others he used, the family of God, the father's will, the friends of God, and a whole series of other terms. But notice that at the beginning of this list is the term, the symbolic term, "the family of God."

18:41 MG: Here's another passage from Paper 103. "Jesus swept away all of the ceremonials of sacrifice and atonement. He destroyed the basis of all this fictitious guilt and sense of isolation in the universe by declaring that man is a child of God. The creature-Creator relationship was placed on a child-parent basis. God becomes a loving Father to his mortal sons and daughters. All ceremonials, not a legitimate part of such an intimate family relationship, are forever abrogated." So, there seemed to be some pretty strong indicators that we are likely the people of another age who will better understand the gospel as Jesus hoped to express it, in terms expressive of the family relationship, the global and universal family of God.

19:47 MG: Here is one last quote that I'd like us to consider. We looked at it earlier, but let's look at it again, a little more carefully this time. Again, from the section on the Nature of Cultism, "No cult" (or spiritual culture) "can endure and contribute to the progress of social civilization and individual spiritual attainment ..." I'll pause here to make the comment that, you're not only speaking about social relations, you're talking about a culture that the individual develops for their own spiritual life. "No cult can endure and contribute to the progress of social civilization and individual spiritual attainment unless it is based on the biologic, sociologic, and religious significance of the home."

20:37 MG: And then they say the same thing twice, in slightly different ways, with slightly different wording. And the revelators do this for emphasis because they know that sometimes we're kind of dense, and they have to say things multiple times, slightly differently, over and over, for us to get it. So, here is what they say. And keep in mind now, think about a thousand years of non-stop, head-spinning transition, very turbulent, very dislocating. And think about the symbolism of the family of God

as stabilizing in that context. And here is the statement. "A surviving cult," or spiritual culture, "must symbolize that which is permanent in the presence of unceasing change. It must glorify that which unifies the stream of ever-changing social metamorphosis." So, the question here that I'd like to leave us with – and for you all to think about – is what is it that is a constant, a glorious higher ideal that can stabilize culture and health, provide solace and guidance for individual spiritual seekers in the midst of this millennium, this oncoming thousand years of unceasing change? **Think about the possibility of the family of God, the universal family of God.** Does it fill these absolutely necessary functions?

22:11 MG: Well, I'd like to thank you and say that I really appreciate your time and attention in considering these ideas. Thank you.