Michael Lightline - March 17th, Saint Patrick’s Day, 2016.

Michael – T/R-JL

Dear Michael and Mother Spirit, tonight I would ask you to address yourself to our social and political life, if that is OK. I know the two of you generally direct yourselves to our personal, spiritual lives--what is happening right within us and directly around us--our friends and acquaintances. But it occurred to me that we also have a political life. We are always part of some political group in our close-by towns, cities, states, and countries. These are another kind of relationship as well, so tonight could you to speak to that part of our personal lives as well? Amen.

Michael: Good evening, this is Michael. Mother Spirit and I are always happy to give you our viewpoint on anything that you feel is important to you. As we’ve teased you with before, we can’t give you the stock market happenings tomorrow, but then again neither we, nor any other spiritual beings, know what that will be. Rather, we suggest that more and more you get a deep feeling that the future has not happened yet. We all live in an Eternal Now, and what we call the future is only our own projection. For even so far as God himself gives us all a degree of free will, even he cannot fully anticipate exactly what we will choose to do.

Your free will is real, and so part of it--part of the choices you make are those that relate to your fellow citizens. You asked if these are the kinds of relationships that we can address as your spiritual parents, and certainly, my dear ones, they are very much a part of your spiritual life--how you relate to the larger political organizations of which you are intrinsically a part. You are a citizen and your democracies especially depend upon you getting a good feeling for what your duties are, in the sense of what you owe your fellow citizens.

It can be a very welcome duty to stay tuned to what is happening all around you on these different levels of your cities, your states, and your countries. In this regard I want to extend an invitation for you to open your Urantia Book again, especially those who have yet to get to this part, and read about the Evolution of Government. It is a very interesting chapter with wonderful insight, one to read and get an understanding of the history of how you on Urantia have arranged yourselves in terms of social power, one to another.

It starts with the most basic kind of tribal organization, a council of elders in a consanguíneos group of families, small groups where everybody knew each other and just naturally followed those who were older with the greatest experience, as well as with the greatest mentality and intellect, and had proven themselves to be the wisest. There was a good, instinctual following of those ideas that arose and made the most sense to everybody there.

Yet how quickly this developed into a hereditary kind of leadership, just naturally following the children of a great leader, and how this became established in what you call the hereditary monarchies of all the early empires. We might note that this is still followed today. In the Middle East is a country involved in an enormous, bloody civil war where its previous ruler cost 40 to 50,000 lives to come into power and subdue all his opponents. Now his son has murdered hundreds of thousands of his countrymen and driven literally millions of others into exile to maintain power.

But also alongside these early hereditary rulers there were the beginnings of what you call a congress, a body of men who represented a larger group of people than just those of the ruler and his immediate, surrounding supporters. These have slowly gotten greater and greater power. Consider that point in England’s history where the Magna Carta limited the power of kings, and later, where kings were actually put to death. It was the ending of human nature to see their rulers as ruling in some Divine Right coming from God himself.

In your modern democracies now throughout the world you have a division of power between an executive--a single person with certain powers and limitations, a large congress representing the people, and then a judicial branch with up-to-date, day-by-day interpretations of the law. Here an executive has the power to enforce the law, a congress that actually writes the law, and then a judicial branch that interprets the law.

As you have read in your Urantia Book, this same scheme applies even in the heavenly realms. This is what you call a *democracy*--where the government is--as one of your wonderful presidents once stated--a government *of the people*--whose representatives of the people come from them, not from some hereditary monarchy. It is *by the people* through open elections, and then *for the people* by their own choices.

Mother Spirit and I have pointed out several times this is all based upon an assumed transparency where the people can have some grasp on what is truly happening in spite of what different political parties may be promulgating through the television and other media. Some way of checking this necessitates what you call the *freedom of the press*. Here in your United States this is spelled out in the first amendment of your constitution, the realization that without a free press, without a free dissemination of information, everything falls apart.

Of course in all working democracies, different political parties are formed to represent different constituencies of people--from the poorest to the most wealthy, from agrarian farming groups to those in large cities, and so forth. Different constituencies represent folks who have different points of view just because of the lives they live. Transparency means a number of different news outlets so people with a great good curiosity can get different points of view on anything that arises.

The free press that makes up a good, functioning democracy is what you call the Fourth Estate right next to the executive, legislative, and judicial. And so it has evolved in your modern democracies, giving rise to political processes where the people themselves have a much greater opportunity to evaluate their perspective leaders because you have an intense and very transparent competition. Your President or Prime Minister is no longer chosen in a traditional “smoke-filled back room” and then merely presented to the people. Now, when the different candidates can challenge each other openly, the people can have a greater sense of where each stands and what their policies would be.

This is good. This competition is necessary. It is the only way to ensure you do have some level of transparency. It also means that it is incumbent upon you--each of you, my dears--to be well informed and curious about the whole process. Be curious about the folks who are putting themselves forth to be your representative. Refuse a kind of apathy, or even a cynicism, that says, “Well, it doesn’t matter if I vote or not. It is all somehow beyond me.”

A well-informed and interested electorate is the only basic foundation. As one of your great statesman said, “I know no safe repository of the ultimate powers of society but the people themselves.” For it is the slow growth of genuine democracy throughout the world that Mother Spirit and I are so enthusiastic about. We can see it evolving, even if there are still those terrible incidents all over the world where it is being suppressed. Now, in your electronic age, it is becoming more and more difficult for some petty dictator to isolate his people and give them only what he himself chooses to reveal. Yes, there are still state controlled presses, but even that power is diminishing. On all levels you are getting closer to the ideal dissemination of political power into smaller and smaller more local groups where the politicians are closer to the people they represent, and answerable to them.

Yet it always depends upon the individual being interested and willing to spend the time to be well informed, then to cast their vote, and continue to see what is followed out. The competition is necessary and good. Now you have evolved to the point where you have not only majority rule and the ideal of one man, one vote--including women, of course--but also minority rights where you avoid the simple-minded tyranny of the majority.

So think about all these principles that I have just mentioned, dear ones. Do your best to understand what is really involved. Hopefully every system can evolve with more and more people being involved. More and more your lives are being put into your own hands, and not the hands of some petty dictator far away gathering and maintaining all the power to himself. This is the direction toward an ideal future—the inexorable dissemination of power into the hands of those where it has always come from, the people themselves.

I know these suggestions have been on a very general level, so if there are any questions or comments you have, about this or anything else this evening, go ahead.

Student #1: Well, that is a great topic. We are actually--in this area--having a study meeting on April 30th, on government and the Urantia Book’s Government Papers. Also, there is a paper on our Thought Adjusters that seems to be very pertinent to government as well. I hope to put more of that information on line for everyone, but I thought I’d put a blurb out here.

Here is the question it seems to me we have to deal with--the idea of sentimentality, OK? We want to be caring, but we can carry that too far and be too sentimental. That way we obscure the real issues with some kind of sentimentality. Can you talk about that?

Michael: Well, yes, my son. I would ask you to consider that there is a great difference between sentimentality and genuine sentiment--which is a word you have for emotion, your basic feelings about something, that has no positive or negative aspect to it. It is just expressing whatever your sentiment is about something, whereas sentimentality has a very negative connotation.

Sentimentality is a kind of wishful thinking with respect to the past. In other words, it is not a true memory, not a true assessment of the past, but seeing the past through what you call rose-colored-glasses. It is not the true past, even as you yourself have experienced it, but warped, twisted one way or another.

Sometimes sentimentality is only what you would call the positive or the good feelings about the past and forgetting or neglecting all the hard work it took you to get to where you are. It can also be the exact opposite, a kind of seeing only the worst of the past--all the struggle, all the pain and suffering. In any case, sentimentality refers to a false past. It is not truly and fully what happened, but rather a kind of blurred, even a lazy way of thinking about things.

With these false notions and understanding of the past, you are bound to make false decisions right in the present. Sentimentality causes you to go wildly astray in making good, wise decisions about the future. So do you understand the difference between genuine sentiment and sentimentality? And how sentimentality is bound to lead you astray?

Student: Yes, I see that. I was kind-of more concerned about value judgment--the judgment of the values of issues. Sometimes a stranded whale up on a beach brings a lot of people together to help, but then the problem of people being in homeless camps doesn’t galvanize anyone. It’s interesting how having no jobs doesn’t galvanize people; or other issues. It seems to me like our priorities get skewered.

Michael: My son, I guess we have a misunderstanding. I was trying to talk directly about value--what values you gain from the past, and how these can be enormously distorted through something called sentimentality. One of the most common forms of this is an old person talking about their past and blurring over, giving a false impression about what really happened, and saying everything was so much better, or easier. Or it can be the other way, emphasizing the negative. There’s the classical instance of old folks telling about how hard it was when they were youngsters, having to wade through three feet of snow with bare feet to get to school every day. Both are pure sentimentality.

In any case these are directly concerned with value. If you have the wrong values of what really happened in the past, you are bound to make terrible mistakes in the present. If you look at some present problem--say unemployment—with the sentimental notion that it is no better nor worse than it has ever been; this is a kind of sloppy thinking that is missing the value about what could be a growing problem.

Student #1: Thank you. That was very helpful.

Michael: Right. Sentimentality always has that distortion. But there is something called genuine sentiment which is a correct vision and grasp and understanding of all that went into your past experiences. This is where Mother Spirit and I have taught a kind of open-minded meditation where you just sit down, be still a while, and say, “OK, God, you have my own soul. What have you got for me—today?” Then just relive moments, especially very critical, meaningful, and valuable moments of your past in all their fullness, all that was involved--good or bad, painful or pleasurable: whatever it was! This can get you good value day-by-day. You can keep up with yourself--keep up with the true balance of your life and then, from this position, you can more accurately, spiritually evaluate something like homelessness, something like your political choices and policies, because you are living in a very full reality, not just sentimentality.

Unfortunately, with old age without this meditation, without this constant coming up to date and staying up to date, people can relapse into very faulty memories of the past--good or bad--that can so totally warp their own actual observations and perceptions day-to-day. This is a tragedy, and I’m sure you know folks who blame everybody else in some incident that happened way back in the past. They are still being held down by their own sentimentality towards that event, and how it cripples them even in the present. That is the true tragedy of sentimentality. All the while, keep in mind that genuine sentiment, genuine feeling, is actually the real stuff of life. Thank you for your question.

Student #2: Michael, could you speak to sentimentality as it relates to the efficacy of the church?

Michael: Yes, my son. As you know, we make a distinction between church, and religion--which in the most fundamental sense is your unique individual relationship to God and to the whole spiritual aspect of your life. That is your true religion, but then this can be socialized into what people generally think of when you say *religion*. They are thinking of Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and so forth.

Here so much depends upon the particular spiritual leader of the group insofar as every social organization like this does have a past, it does have continuity through time, and a kind of group-think or group consciousness that is involved. This is the purpose, the reward, and the value of a group. Further, when a group gets together there is generally some established form they follow in their worship. They may start with singing together, then a quote from scripture, maybe a sermon on the text. Almost all of the religions of the world have these elements in them.

As the hymns and scripture relate to a partisan way of seeing life--in the past, folks can get caught up in an enormous amount of sentimentality not truly reflecting a broader view, but getting political since they are promulgating a certain way of looking at life. This is both the value of the church--this viewpoint, but can also be where they are warping the past. They are not seeing it in its wholeness but only as it represents one way of looking at life, be it Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist.

As any church, any religion excludes part of reality just to promulgate its own view of things, that is almost a definition of sentimentality, a way of warping the fullness of the whole human experience. This is why it is so valuable that today you have, with your modern media in your more democratic countries, a freedom of religion where an individual can check out so many different ways of seeing things by different religions. This is the greatest check on sentimentality. Does that fill the bill? Was this what you were thinking of?

Student: Machiventa recently spoke about something that I believe the Urantia Book has also covered--a sort of a false sentiment, especially toward the poor and underprivileged. We’re trying to wrap our heads around what he was really trying to say. Is that enough information to work with?

Michael: Yes, my son. That is what I said: sentimentality is a false way of grasping reality. It can be the way some religions preach a kind of fatalism on a major theme Mother Spirit and I have gone into over and over again because people are so curious about it--the notion of reincarnation. It can foster both smugness and resignation--especially in those societies with a very rigid caste system. In those societies where almost everybody believes in reincarnation, if someone is born poor into a lower caste, they somehow deserved this. Somehow this is righteous. Somehow this is God’s way of punishing them, or instructing them. This is the rankest kind of sentimentality. Those born into the upper class or more wealthy strata of society feel justified looking down their nose at the poor, while smugly disregarding any way of alleviating their suffering. And in the poor it only offers a resignation that stifles ambition. So I agree. Does that explain exactly what we are getting at here?

Student: Yes. Machiventa was referring to a world-wide collection of religions as being interpreted basically through the eyes of biblical study. With reference to the teaching “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; but teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime,” I was trying to couch this question around conventional Christianity as it is being lived in the modern society of the United States. But I see your reference--it is probably similar--the reincarnation reference in some religions is a corollary of what happens in the church here. I couldn’t put my finger on it, except that the church fosters feeding people on a regular basis, which is why I see that as the “fishes thing” People really need to be taught how to fend for themselves, rather than to be seekers of alms.

Michael: Yes, my son. In your Urantia Book it states that for a lot of people the church promulgates a kind of smug, self-satisfaction for those who have, and a disregard for those who have not, rather than teaching the poor how to be self-sustaining and creative, productive members of society. That kind of sentimentality is also a way of keeping them in their place, maintaining the status quo rather than being truly progressive and evolving to a more egalitarian society.

Student #2: Thank you for your comments, Michael, I appreciate it.

Michael: Right. Indeed sentimentality can be a kind of fatalism where the conditions of one’s birth are immutable. But if you see each person starting out--at any level of society, economically--starting out as a personality directly from God with their own intrinsic value, then you are drawn toward a kind of democracy where even the poorest of a society are given a chance to better themselves through education, to be self-sustaining. They can be productive, creative members of society, rather than being encouraged just to accept their lot in life, as you say.

True democracy is seeing every person as equal in the eyes of God, not just as a member of a caste, or a social, or political, or economic group, but as individuals. It’s this particular woman, that specific man, this child. This is the true democracy that will, in time, lead to a better, more free and open, creative and productive society, because everybody is involved. Getting away from smugness and fatalism, every individual is taught to accept the full response-ability—the ability-to-respond to their particular situation. Now are there any other questions or comments this evening?

Well, my dears, I thank you for your attention and your curiosity. Mother Spirit spoke last time on this wonderful quality of curiosity--just being interested and finding interesting things to make your lives worthwhile, and exciting, and expanding--ever expanding, ever growing more and more knowledge and actual contact with reality. Look to greater understanding across all these different churches and religions and levels of society as all the different cultures of your world become available now.

This is the marvel of modern electronics. You can take your little electronic device, go outside by yourself in the woods, and talk with someone half a world away. This dissemination of power is leading to more and more individual freedom, and calling for more and more individual responsibility. So respond!--and be a larger part of your own life.

Think deeply about these things, my dear ones. Enjoy them, and be in my love. Feel deeply my peace. Good evening.