

4. Working group responsibilities

- (a) The ten substantive working groups will seek to serve, assist, and inspire individuals and groups in society who wish to propose or promote initiatives, innovations, or reforms that relate to their own fields of experience, knowledge, or interest.
- (b) The working groups will not advocate or advance proposals of their own. To the contrary, they will be a catalyst and resource for those who are active in society and who wish to develop or refine their ideas and approaches.
- (c) The working groups are therefore frameworks for altruistic and idealistic service aimed at fostering higher levels of human civilization. Members and associates will operate modestly and quietly; they will refrain from attracting attention to themselves and will stay well in the background.
- (d) The work of the master seraphim is their spiritual inspiration and model, but the activities of the working groups embody a range of practical adjustments. For example, the religious guardians are only one of the twelve corps of master seraphim, and therefore only one of the ten substantive working groups will serve and assist fellow human beings who are active in religion. On the other hand, the same working group will also serve and assist those who are active in philosophy.
- (e) Members and associates shall not evangelize those they serve, nor seek to impose their own views or values. Nonetheless, dissemination of the teachings will be an indirect benefit, the outcome of personal cooperation and natural curiosity. Many of those whom a working group assists will wonder, "Why are you people doing this? What do you get out of it?" It is therefore reasonable to believe that the endeavor will stimulate substantial interest in the fifth epochal revelation.

Loyalty and commitment

Members and associates may have strong personal views and perhaps an intense interest in certain initiatives or causes. On occasion, such personal convictions may tempt a member or an associate of a substantive working group to deviate from the standard pattern of modest and quiet work that remains well in the background and out of the public eye.

A temptation of this nature might accord with the personal goals or spiritual ideals of an individual member or associate, but it would nonetheless pose a grave threat to the purpose of the working group. After all, prominent public involvement in efforts to promote a particular initiative or cause would endanger the working group's reputation for impartiality and balance. If a working group were to lose that reputation, it could no longer function as a respected and influential resource for everyone who is active in the corresponding fields.

Thus certain members and associates may have to sift through their goals from time to time, in order to decide which aims and aspirations rank higher than others. If loyalty to a working group's mission is not sufficiently strong to overcome the desire of a member or an associate to play a prominent public role in promoting a particular initiative or cause, then he or she must cease to participate in the working group.

WORKING GROUP 2

Working group on personal growth and development

SCOPE. Working group 2 will assist and serve those who help others achieve, express, and apply their full potential as members of human society. These efforts will include service to educational, career, and employment advisers, as well as personal growth consultants and psychologists, psychiatrists, and other counselors and therapists who help individuals overcome their emotional and mental difficulties. In addition, the working group will assist and serve those who teach or write about any of these subjects.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. The revelators comment at length on personal growth and development, including passages in which an Archangel of Nekardon calls attention to the need for the coordination of specialists and techniques that will enable individuals to find suitable employment [910:2-6 / 81:6.29-33]. Members and associates of working group 2 will be well aware of these teachings as they endeavor to assist and serve individuals and groups in society.

WORKING GROUP 3

Working group on philosophy and religion

SCOPE. Working group 3 will assist and serve those who are active in philosophy and religion, including anyone who teaches in these fields or writes about either subject.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. Members and associates of working group 3 will remember that their essential goal is cooperation and possible inspiration in the context of assistance and service. They have no authority over individuals and groups who are active in philosophy or religion, nor any mandate that would entitle them to use working group 3 as a vehicle for an overt campaign to propagate philosophic or religious views of their own. To the contrary, dissemination of the teachings will occur indirectly and over an extended period of time, as the outcome of personal cooperation and natural curiosity.

Just as the other nine substantive working groups will endeavor to address the concerns, needs, and aspirations of those who are active in the corresponding fields, so also will working group 3 seek to address the concerns, needs, and aspirations of those who are active in philosophy or religion. Members and associates would be wise to reflect on the methods that Jesus used during his sojourn at Rome:

He selected five of the leading Stoics, eleven of the Cynics, and sixteen of the mystery-cult leaders and spent much of his spare time for almost six months in intimate association with these religious teachers. And this was his method of instruction: Never once did he attack their errors or even mention the flaws in their teachings. In each case he would select the truth in what they taught and then proceed so to embellish and illuminate this truth in their minds that in a very short time this enhancement of the truth effectively crowded out the associated error . . . [The Midwayer Commission, pages 1455-1456 of The Urantia Book / 132:0.4]

WORKING GROUP 4

Working group on civic life, public service, and global cooperation

SCOPE. Working group 4 will assist and serve those who are active in civic life or public affairs on local, regional, national, international, or global levels. These efforts will include service to civic and public interest groups, the legal profession and related fields, police and others who address security concerns, military personnel, civilian officials of the various branches of government, diplomats, and all those who analyze or disseminate information on these subjects, or who teach or write about them.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. The revelators' analysis of the extended evolution of civil and political life on our planet will enable the members and associates of working group 4 to take a long view, in full awareness that "*No great social or economic change should be attempted suddenly*" [*an Archangel of Nebadon, 911:5 / 81:6.40*]. As they seek to assist and inspire, they will be well aware of the need for patience and persistence. A Melchizedek tells us, "Mankind's struggle to perfect government on Urantia has to do with perfecting channels of administration, with adapting them to ever-changing current needs, with improving power distribution within government, and then with selecting such administrative leaders as are truly wise" [*799:1 / 70:12.20*]. These and similar insights will enhance the working group's value as a stimulus and resource for those it serves.

WORKING GROUP 5

Working group on social harmony

SCOPE. Working group 5 will assist and serve those who promote cooperation, cohesion, sympathy, and mutual understanding among human beings regardless of gender, race, color, emotional affinities, nationality or ethnic origin, social or political opinions, and religious views or other spiritual or philosophic beliefs. Such efforts will include service to organizations and associations that advocate equity and fairness, either as a general principle or on behalf of those who share one or more characteristics. The working group's endeavors will also include service to social workers, sociologists, and others who teach or write on any of these subjects, as well as to individuals and groups that explain or interpret the social or cultural achievements of certain categories of human beings, or who promote interest in such topics.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. A Mighty Messenger tells us that achieving the worldwide brotherhood of man on Urantia will take far longer and require far greater effort than on a normal evolutionary world [597:3 / 52:6.2]. The members and associates of working group 5 will undoubtedly focus on his comments, especially those that relate to social fraternity and intellectual cross-fertilization.

WORKING GROUP 6

Working group on science

Scope. Working group 6 will assist and serve those who are active in mathematics and the natural sciences, or who teach or write about any of these subjects. This includes all sciences that relate to the empirical or theoretical study of the physical world and its phenomena, or the study of those aspects of matter, energy, or physical life that extend beyond our planet.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. A Melchizedek of Nebadon calls attention to:

the fact that revelation does synthesize the apparently divergent sciences of nature and the theology of religion into a consistent and logical universe philosophy, a co-ordinated and unbroken explanation of both science and religion, thus creating a harmony of mind and satisfaction of spirit which answers in human experience those questionings of the mortal mind which craves to know how the Infinite works out his will and plans in matter, with minds, and on spirit.
[1106:0 / 101:2.1]

Members and associates must be genuinely responsive to the needs, concerns, and aspirations of individuals and groups who are active in the natural sciences. Although this principle of tactful assistance will be the main reference point for the working group's day-to-day activities, awareness of the essential unity of matter, mind, and spirit will be a major intellectual and philosophic advantage as members and associates help individuals and groups increase their effectiveness in relating to others in society. Nonetheless, aspects of the teachings that are associated with matter, energy, or cosmology will be disseminated indirectly and over an extended period of time, as the outcome of personal cooperation and natural curiosity.

WORKING GROUP 7

Working group on education

SCOPE. Working group 7 will assist and serve those who are active in the mental, moral, or ethical training of individuals, families, or larger groups such as communities, nations, and races, or who write or teach about such topics. Aesthetic aspects are part of this training, which includes instruction to persons of all ages and may be theoretical, practical, or both. In addition, working group 7 will assist and serve those who collect, classify, arrange, manage, and disseminate the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of all mankind.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. A Melchizedek of Nebadon states that education “must continue throughout a lifetime” [806:5 / 71:7.5] and that its purpose “should be acquirement of skill, pursuit of wisdom, realization of selfhood, and attainment of spiritual values” [806:1 / 71:7.1]. Although the Midwayer Commission approaches these questions in a different way, it portrays goals that are essentially the same:

The purpose of all education should be to foster and further the supreme purpose of life, the development of a majestic and well-balanced personality. There is great need for the teaching of moral discipline in the place of so much self-gratification. [2086:3 / 195:10.17]

Except in schools sponsored by churches or other religious organizations, moral and ethical questions are not a prominent feature of the courses that primary and secondary students take in Western countries. Most contemporary educators show relatively little interest in these topics, so the efforts of working group 7 to draw attention to them will mainly have to be indirect and understated.

WORKING GROUP 8

Working group on health

SCOPE. Working group 8 will assist and serve those who seek to promote health and prevent or treat disease, or who write or teach about such topics or conduct research in regard to them. These efforts will also include service to those whose work pertains to sanitation, water purification, immunization, or other duties that relate to health or medical care, as well as to individuals and groups who develop, test, or manufacture medicines or devices that help people maintain their health or overcome disability or illness. The working group is not limited by currently accepted approaches to health and shall use its own discretion in assisting and serving those who advocate novel, unusual, or alternative methods that it considers ethical and appropriate.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. The revelators make it clear that health involves far more than just the correct functioning of material mechanisms. A Divine Counselor states, “Health, sanity, and happiness are integrations of truth, beauty, and goodness as they are blended in human experience” [43:4 / 2:7.11]. A Melchizedek of Nebadon comments in much the same vein: “Health, mental efficiency, and happiness arise from the unification of physical systems, mind systems, and spirit systems” [1097:7-1098:0 / 100:4.3]. He also tells us, “Religious experience is markedly influenced by physical health, inherited temperament, and social environment” [1095:1 / 100:1.6].

In practice, the members and associates of working group 8 will do their best to address the concerns, needs, and aspirations of those who are active in fields related to health. In all likelihood, their most important function will be to stimulate, inspire, and assist individuals and groups who wish to promote advanced or improved methods.

WORKING GROUP 9

Working group on the home and the family

SCOPE. Working group 9 will assist and serve those who are active in fields that relate to the preservation and advancement of the home, or who write or teach about such topics. These efforts will include service to those who seek to prepare or train individuals for the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood, those who provide moral, intellectual, or material assistance that helps parents raise their children, and those who promote appropriate concern and care for elders who can no longer function without assistance. In addition, working group 9 will assist and serve counselors and advisers who help resolve conflicts and maintain healthy personal relationships within the family, those who facilitate adoption or appropriate care and nurture in foster homes, and those whose activities of a legal, administrative, or judicial character are mainly associated with family matters.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. The Chief of Seraphim states that the home is “the basic institution of human civilization” [1256:3 / 114:6.13]. She warns against “the menacing rising tide of self-gratification, the modern pleasure mania,” calling this “the greatest threat that has ever been leveled at the social evolutionary institution of family life, the home” [942:2-3 / 84:8.1-2]. An Archangel of Nebadon points out, “modern civilization is at a standstill in spiritual development and the safeguarding of the home institution” [909:6 / 81:6.25].

Almost all individuals and groups that seek to enhance and improve family life agree that current circumstances give cause for serious concern. Since the members and associates of working group 9 will have a strong sense of solidarity, they will want to help those they serve pursue constructive goals — and will look for creative and imaginative ways to do that.

WORKING GROUP 10

Working group on industry, agriculture, and commerce

SCOPE. Working group 10 will assist and serve those who are active in industrial, agricultural, or commercial fields, including financial, developmental, and experimental aspects, automated systems for processing and handling information, and all branches of engineering. In addition, working group 10 will assist and serve those who write or teach about such topics.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. A Melchizedek of Nebadon states:

Present-day profit-motivated economics is doomed unless profit motives can be augmented by service motives. ...

In economics, profit motivation is to service motivation what fear is to love in religion. But the profit motive must not be suddenly destroyed or removed; it keeps many otherwise slothful mortals hard at work. It is not necessary, however, that this social energy arouser be forever selfish in its objectives.

The profit motive of economic activities is altogether base and wholly unworthy of an advanced order of society; nevertheless, it is an indispensable factor throughout the earlier phases of civilization. Profit motivation must not be taken away from men until they have firmly possessed themselves of superior types of nonprofit motives for economic striving and social serving — the transcendent urges of superlative wisdom, intriguing brotherhood, and excellency of spiritual attainment. [805:5-7 / 71:6.1-3]

Service motives are becoming more prominent in many branches of industry, agriculture, and commerce, and efforts to encourage that trend will be a key part of the work of working group 10. On the other hand, these efforts will certainly not be the working group's sole focus. After all, the Melchizedek's remarks imply a gradual process during which the profit motive will persist but decline in relative importance, and it is reasonable to believe that the transition will take several centuries. In practice, members and associates are likely to devote most of their time and energy to helping individuals and groups develop, pursue, or promote more advanced and more effective ways to provide goods and services.

WORKING GROUP 11

Working group on literature, the arts, and entertainment

SCOPE. Working group 11 will assist and serve those who are active in literature, the arts, or entertainment, including music, humor, drama and other visual media, games, exercise, sports, and travel, or who provide the setting and circumstances for social gatherings, relaxation, or other forms of wholesome amusement. In addition, working group 11 will assist and serve those who write or teach about such topics.

SPIRIT AND OVERTONES. Working group 11 corresponds to the angels of diversion, the corps of master seraphim “who foster the values of play, humor, and rest” while seeking “to uplift man’s recreational diversions and thus to promote the more profitable utilization of human leisure” [*the Chief of Seraphim, 1256:5 / 114:6.15*]. The same author states:

All efforts to obtain wholesome diversion and to engage in uplifting play are sound; refreshing sleep, rest, recreation, and all pastimes which prevent the boredom of monotony are worth while. Competitive games, storytelling, and even the taste of good food may serve as forms of self-gratification. [942:6-943:0 / 84:8.5]

A Melchizedek of Nebadon provides an interesting insight that will become increasingly important during the next few generations and centuries:

The exalted state not only compels its citizens to work but also entices them into profitable and uplifting utilization of the increasing leisure which results from toil liberation by the advancing machine age. Leisure must produce as well as consume. [803:7 / 71:3.7]

The highest priority will therefore be to help individuals and groups promote more uplifting forms of rest and relaxation — leisure activities that will make positive contributions to human life. Nonetheless, an Archangel of Nebadon reminds us:

Humor and play — relaxation — are never reactions of progressive exertion; always are they the echoes of a backward glance, a reminiscence of the past. [549:6-550:0 / 48:4.19]

Although other aspects of literature and the arts may be evocative, symbolic, or even contemplative, they too must contend with the relatively slow ascent of human taste — a reality that is closely associated with the glacial advance of civilization itself.