

# The role of administrative complexity in the design of the Global Endeavor

THE EFFORTS OF THE TEN SUBSTANTIVE WORKING GROUPS are the direct relationship between the endeavor and its essential premise, the progressive growth of human society because of the process of imagination and innovation that promotes this outcome. Since fields of activity are quite varied, we must support the flexibility of each substantive working group — its right to manage its own internal affairs, determine its priority goals, and decide on the degrees of emphasis, attention, and energy that it wishes to assign to different activities and programs. This is simple, at least as an organizational concept.

On the other hand, each substantive working group must carry out all its efforts in the spirit of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, and in addition it must respect the instructions that outline the policies and administrative principles that apply to the entire regional association. These are obvious and important concerns, considerations that amply justify the supervision of the managerial working groups.

This, however, is not the whole story. The fact that someone is intensely interested in the fifth epochal revelation does not, by itself, suffice to eliminate certain weaknesses of human character. For example, the endeavor must be protected against temptations that relate to financial matters, and also against a desire to take advantage of one's organizational role by exercising authority in an exaggerated and egotistical fashion. And there are two other notable pitfalls that would threaten the endeavor's viability: (a) the distortion of the nature of a working group (or, perhaps, of an entire regional association) that would stem from an open and sustained campaign of evangelization; and (b) the misunderstandings and confusion that would arise if participants in any branch of the Global Endeavor were to conduct themselves in public as the partisans and champions of some initiative that has a high profile in society.

Let us be prudent, let us be realistic: It is very likely, perhaps certain, that each of the difficulties I have just identified will arise inside the Global Endeavor, in some region of the world, at some moment in the generations to come. Therefore the supervisory system must be capable and effective, at least in potential. Given the mature judgment and the personal experience of each of my colleagues, I do not see any of you who would deny this.

So now we arrive at the essential problem. I will start the discussion by recalling a Roman maxim that I learned at the age of fifteen: "*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*" If I translate rather freely, the maxim inquires, "Who will monitor the monitors?" For example, how will we diminish — and preferably exclude — the possibility that administrative participants of a regional association will become excessive, domineering, and dictatorial toward one or toward several substantive working groups? Here is my answer: Liberty, not license, prevails where authority is limited, divided, and shared.

In January and the first few days of February, I read an excellent biography in English of the French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859). I was planning to go on to read a translation of his masterpiece *Democracy in America*, but I said to myself, “Why not read it in the original?” I eventually ordered the original text from the Internet website <http://www.amazon.fr>, and I am currently reading it. The day after I received an E-mail message from a colleague who expressed certain concerns about complexity, I ran into the following paragraphs:

There are two means of diminishing the force of authority in a nation.

The first is to weaken power in its very principle by removing from society the right or the ability to defend itself in certain cases: to weaken authority in this manner is in general what in Europe is called founding freedom.

There is a second means of diminishing the action of authority: this does not consist of stripping society of some of its rights, or paralyzing its efforts, but of dividing the use of its forces among several hands; of multiplying officials while allocating to each of them all the power he needs to do what he is destined to execute. One encounters peoples whom this division of social powers can also bring to anarchy; by itself, however, it is not anarchic. In partitioning authority in this way, it is true, one renders its action less irresistible and less dangerous, but one does not destroy it. ...

In the United States, therefore, they did not claim that a man in a free country has the right to do everything; on the contrary, they imposed on him more varied social obligations than elsewhere; they did not have the idea of attacking the power of society in its principle and of contesting its rights; they limited themselves to dividing it in its exercise. They wanted in this manner to arrive at the point where authority is great and the official is small, so that society would continue to be well regulated and remain free.

[Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Volume I (1835), Part One, Chapter V. This excerpt appears on page 67 of the translation by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, as published by the University of Chicago Press in 2000.]

In principle, these are the methods that the Committee for the Global Endeavor put into practice when it drafted the aspects of the plan that are portrayed in the second set of diagrams. Several aspects of the administrative complexity stem from the fact that one must monitor the monitors entirely within the endeavor; the panoply of laws and governmental regulations — those that supervise the activities of a commercial enterprise — has no relationship to the Global Endeavor.

First, we should note that the plan contemplates administrative supervision in two varieties that are diverse and distinct. In other words, the supervision is not monolithic, and those who staff the two chains of supervision will have very different viewpoints. On the other hand, they will be compelled to operate in harmony during growth periods that will be rather delicate: (1) the managerial working groups will operate jointly, and on the basis of complete equality, throughout the trial period of a substantive working group; and (2) the Coordinating Commission and the Consultative Forum will carry out joint supervision while the managerial working groups of a regional association are in the process of establishing new substantive working groups.

These safeguards will protect new substantive working groups — and regional associations that are relatively recent — from tendencies that may arise on the part of those who protect managerial principles, accounting methods, and procedures for documentation and reporting (*i.e.*, WG1 and the Coordinating Commission). In effect, the experience of humanity demonstrates that those who exercise such responsibilities sometimes tend to favor methods that are uniform to the point of being stereotyped, and that in addition there may be unfortunate moments when they succumb to the temptation to express themselves in tones that others may consider demanding, severe, or even arbitrary. In contrast, persons with a very different character — the members of WG12 and the Consultative Forum, whose strongest preoccupations will pertain to spirituality, philosophy, and humanitarian viewpoints — simply will not consent to actions along such lines. Therefore the partnership of equality between WG1 and WG12 during the trial period of a new substantive working group will practically guarantee patient and generous treatment. Since it is reasonable to believe that the habits, practices, customs, and precedents that will be developed during the trial period will remain a solid basis that will facilitate subsequent changes, the joint regime of the two managerial working groups will end when a new substantive working group becomes fully operational.

Several other aspects that contribute to administrative complexity are associated with the process of organizational growth of the endeavor. For example, the Coordinating Commission and the Consultative Forum must always be able to carry out their roles of general supervision, and there must not be any change in electoral procedures that endangers these capabilities. On the other hand, the initial methods of election from above cannot be permanent, for the members of the working groups of the regional associations would be increasingly estranged from the activities and instructions of two global bodies in which they were not represented and had no influence. As a result, the provisions of the plan that are summarized in the second set of diagrams postulate a chain of steps that will relate to the composition of a global body.

**Period A.** The global body's five initial members and two alternates, all of them elected by participants in the founding convention (*temporary seats*).

**Period B.** The persons who succeeded the five initial members and two alternates elected during the founding convention, those who were elected by a vote of the same global body (*temporary seats*); AND the members of the global body whom the regional associations elected (*permanent seats*).

**Period C.** The members whom the regional associations elected (*permanent seats*); AND the members and alternates whose temporary seats were abolished when the endeavor crossed the threshold, but who are being permitted to complete the periods of service to which they were elected.

**Period D.** Only the members whom the regional associations elected (*permanent seats*).

In considering the practical circumstances that will apply when the Global Endeavor crosses the threshold, the committee that drafted the plan wanted to avoid an overly rapid reduction in the

number of members of the global bodies. That was the main reason for provisions that allow the persons who occupied the former temporary seats to complete the periods of service to which they were elected.

Although the transition in regard to electing the Administrator's team is not as complex, the motivation is similar: increase collective enthusiasm and belief in the unity of the endeavor by establishing, or by reinforcing, relationships that link those who carry out general supervision at the global level with the members of the working groups of the regional associations.

## The sinews of the administrative design

1. The substantive working groups will have considerable flexibility in planning and carrying out their own programs of idealistic service. This adaptability will apply to the outside of the endeavor: It will be the key characteristic of service to individuals and groups who operate in society. In contrast, the administrative provisions will pertain solely to the Global Endeavor's internal framework (*i.e.*, organizational relationships and the supervisory system). In principle, the global bodies and the managerial working groups will not deal with individuals and groups in society. (It is the Administrator and his or her two colleagues who will represent the endeavor in public.)
2. For persons who have no spiritual convictions and no religious beliefs — and especially for those among them who show disdain for all of the above and who congratulate themselves on the lack — there is nothing more amusing than to see spiritually motivated idealists who are quarreling among themselves or who are becoming thoroughly confused, especially when some of them may have succumbed to human weaknesses that betray the ideals and values that are proclaimed in their inspirational documents. Quite to the contrary, everyone who participates in the work of the Global Endeavor must always act in the spirit of the master seraphim (our spiritual models), and must do his or her best to remain constantly in harmony with the principles and values that are enshrined in *The Urantia Book*. For all these purposes, for all these reasons, it is obvious that we need a supervisory system that will be capable and effective.
3. In the experience of humanity as a whole, supervisory systems that are simple, direct, and monolithic create very substantial risk of authoritarian or even oppressive conduct, at least at certain moments. The French king Louis XIV is reported to have said, "I am the State." Nothing could be simpler; and that, of course, was tyranny. In contrast, preserving the freedom and flexibility of the substantive working groups requires an administrative structure in which supervisory authority is limited, divided, and shared. That causes certain complexities, but they are just as advantageous as they are necessary.
4. The Global Endeavor will develop bit by bit, being initially administered from above but later from below. Organizational growth will inevitably entail certain additional complexities.

5. In the final analysis, it is the balance in the administrative provisions that will create a durable and enduring framework. This is the context that will permit, facilitate, and stimulate a global program of idealistic service, an altruistic effort rooted in the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, a horizon of progressive growth whose benefits will accumulate region by region and eventually pervade the whole world.

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