Teamwork—Where do We See Ourselves as a Group of Pioneer Religionists for the Fifth Epoch?

We've been taken on an incredible journey this weekend. My thanks to Nigel, Vern, and William for presenting us with so much to think about—with so much to ponder and absorb. When I read *The Urantia Book* I find that many of the concepts seem to have been designed to act as a springboard. The concepts presented are merely ideas—they don't become real or meaningful and they don't really have true value unless they're pondered, embraced, and put into action by the reader/believer. If there is no action by the reader, if no important decisions are made internally about the truths gleaned, then the words are just words—dead, lifeless letters appearing on a piece of paper; the ideas stop at some intellectual level of indecision—inertia.

The presentations and discussions of this weekend have given us many springboards from which to trigger some dynamic action. How do we see ourselves as a group of pioneer religionists who follow the teachings of *The Urantia Book*? Many of us have come to this conference because of our love and interest in the book and because we've been mightily moved by the truths gleaned in it. Our inner lives have been so touched by the spiritual realities felt that we feel moved to improve ourselves and the world at large by learning more about these teachings, and to explore ways of spreading these teachings to our fellow human beings around the entire globe. How many of us have felt the call to service by this passage on page 43.3:

The religious challenge of this age is to those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual insight who will dare to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness. Such a new and righteous vision of morality will attract all that is good in the mind of man and challenge that which is best in the human soul.

So many inspiring and challenging calls are in this book. The "new and appealing philosophy of living" they tell us about is what will take the planet into the fifth epoch and it's not going to be done for us. In the true evolutionary, experiential way portrayed to us in *The Urantia Book*, it'll be up to us free will mortal creatures to figure out how to get this done. The powers on high have given us a fabulous tool and guide in *The Urantia Book* and all the spiritual help we could ever dream of—mind, Spirit of Truth, Thought Adjusters, guardian angels etc—and even Jesus himself predicted this present era when he said to his apostles:

And when the kingdom shall have come to its full fruition, be assured that the Father in heaven will not fail to visit you with an enlarged revelation of truth and an enhanced demonstration of righteousness, even as he has already bestowed upon this world him who became the prince of darkness, and then Adam, who was followed by Melchizedek, and in these days, the Son of Man. And so will my Father continue to manifest his mercy and show forth his love, even to this dark and evil world. (p.1914.4)

This corroborates what they tell us in the section titled "The Gift of Revelation" on page 1007 where it says:

There have been many events of religious revelation but only five of epochal significance. These were as follows: …and they go on to list the 5 epochal revelations as:

1. *The Dalamatian teachings*, which was Calagastia who became the prince of darkness, as Jesus described him.
2. *The Edenic teachings*—Adam and Eve
3. *Melchizedek of Salem*
4. *Jesus of Nazareth*
5. *The Urantia Papers. The papers, of which this is one, constitute the most recent presentation of truth to the mortals of Urantia.* (p.1007,1008)

But we know from studying *The Urantia Book* that the Father's methods are to let us figure out many of the details ourselves. So how do we get practical about meeting the challenges that call us to bring about a spiritual renaissance to the people of the world? There are so many things we can all think of doing, both as individuals and as groups, to spread the teachings, but at some stage we need to get serious about banding together as pioneers for the new revelation—to move forward with a unity of spirit and purpose and to be useful hands and feet for the revelators who went to such lengths to present us with the fifth epochal revelation via *The Urantia Book.*

About the Power of Teamwork it has been said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." (Margaret Mead). *The Urantia Book* presents us with many challenges and insights about teamwork which I feel need to be explored and understood as we ponder the work we are called to do together. We need to understand something about the hurdles that can get in our way that limit the effectiveness of our efforts to work in teams. It tells us on page 312.1:

One of the most important lessons to be learned during your mortal career is ***teamwork***. [And they emphasise the word "teamwork".] *The spheres of perfection are manned by those who have mastered this art of working with other beings.*

And on page 311.5 it tells us:

Of all the problems in the universe requiring an exercise of the consummate wisdom of experience and adaptability, ***none are more important than those arising out of the relationships and associations of intelligent beings***. [emphasis mine.]

We know from studying *The Urantia Book* that the mastery of working with others is one of the main features of the evolutionary, finite career of we mortals. If we study the section on the Edentia Training worlds on page 493 we see that it's going to be a long and difficult road to master teamwork, and to get dignified in our socialisation. We will inevitably have conflicts—that's a given because of our imperfect natures—but we sometimes need conflict in order to grow. Sometimes important truths come to the surface during a conflict. We should be careful not to get too hung up on the fact that there is conflict from time to time, and we shouldn't really worry too much about the fact that we may not deal with it very well—rather we should be continually working on how to deal with it better next time, and helping one another learn how to get better at dealing with it. **What is inexcusable though is if we allow the conflict to destroy the relationship.**

Those of us who've chosen to serve the revelation by working in groups or in teams must learn how to work *effectively* together with our friends. We must learn to focus on common goals while often being confronted with the challenge of disagreeing with our dear friends. Friendships are put to the acid test of realness when confronted with such challenges. *The Urantia Book* gives us many lessons in working effectively together. If we, as teams of *Urantia Book* readers wish to change the world by introducing the book and its teachings to mankind, we must ever be mindful of the power of intelligent teamwork, coupled with wise leadership. We're told on page 911.2 of *The Urantia Book*:

In civilization much, very much, depends on an enthusiastic and effective load-pulling spirit. Ten men are of little more value than one in lifting a great load unless they lift together—all at the same moment. And such teamwork—social co-operation—is dependent on leadership. (p.911.2)

The essential ingredients needed for effective teamwork is for the team members to agree on the goals, and for each team member to recognise, adopt, and cooperate with the other team members and with the team's leaders. This often means facing the challenge of having to go along with something we may not agree with. A couple of major hindrances to successful cooperation lies in the fact that many of us possess the immature tendency to revere individualism as well as to mistrust those with leadership qualities or those who are in leadership positions. We can abort the effectiveness of the team by falling out with

one another over differences of style or opinion.

The apostles, Nathaniel and Thomas make interesting case studies in effective and ineffective teamwork. In his final admonitions and warnings to the apostles Jesus said to Nathaniel:

"*Nathaniel, you have learned to live above prejudice and to practice increased tolerance since you became my apostle. But there is much more for you to learn. You have been a blessing to your fellows in that they have always been admonished by your consistent sincerity. When I have gone, it may be that your frankness will interfere with your getting along well with your brethren, both old and new. You should learn that the expression of even a good thought must be modulated in accordance with the intellectual status and spiritual development of the hearer. Sincerity is most serviceable in the work of the kingdom when it is wedded to discretion.*

"If you would learn to work with your brethren, you might accomplish more permanent things, … (p.1960.2, p.1961.1)

Jesus also said to Nathaniel: *"If, therefore, you serve me with a whole heart, make sure that you are devoted to the welfare of my brethren on earth with tireless affection. Admix friendship with your counsel and add love to your philosophy. Serve your fellow men even as I have served you. Be faithful to men as I have watched over you. Be less critical; expect less of some men and thereby lessen the extent of your disappointment."* (p.2049.1)

Note how Jesus tells Nathaniel: *"If you would learn to work with your brethren, you might accomplish more permanent things…"* and how he gave him a complete set of instructions on how to accomplish greater tolerance for his fellows.

We know from our reading on page 2051.4 however that Nathaniel could not work with Peter and the others after Pentecost as he was opposed to the shift in the proclamation of the gospel from sonship with God and brotherhood with man, to the proclamation of the risen Christ. So although he was right in the fact, he missed the essential truth of persevering with his fellows to work for the greater cause. Nathaniel was even described as being the "odd genius of the twelve." (p.1558.5) If he'd had stayed and worked with the team Jesus went to such lengths to train, perhaps his greater understanding of the gospel message would have eventually had a positive impact on the direction the Christian movement was to take. As it was, he went off alone into India and no doubt did good work, but how much more could he have accomplished if he'd only taken head of Jesus' preferred admonition for him.

While Nathaniel had a hard time working with those who he didn't agree with, Thomas on the hand showed more tolerance. On page1562.2 we're told:

In the councils of the twelve Thomas was always cautious, advocating a policy of safety first, but if his conservatism was voted down or overruled, he was always the first fearlessly to move out in execution of the program decided upon. Again and again would he stand out against some project as being foolhardy and presumptuous; he would debate to the bitter end, but when Andrew would put the proposition to a vote, and after the twelve would elect to do that which he had so strenuously opposed, Thomas was the first to say, "Let's go!" He was a good loser. He did not hold grudges nor nurse wounded feelings. Time and again did he oppose letting Jesus expose himself to danger, but when the Master would decide to take such risks, always was it Thomas who rallied the apostles with his courageous words, "Come on, comrades, let's go and die with him."

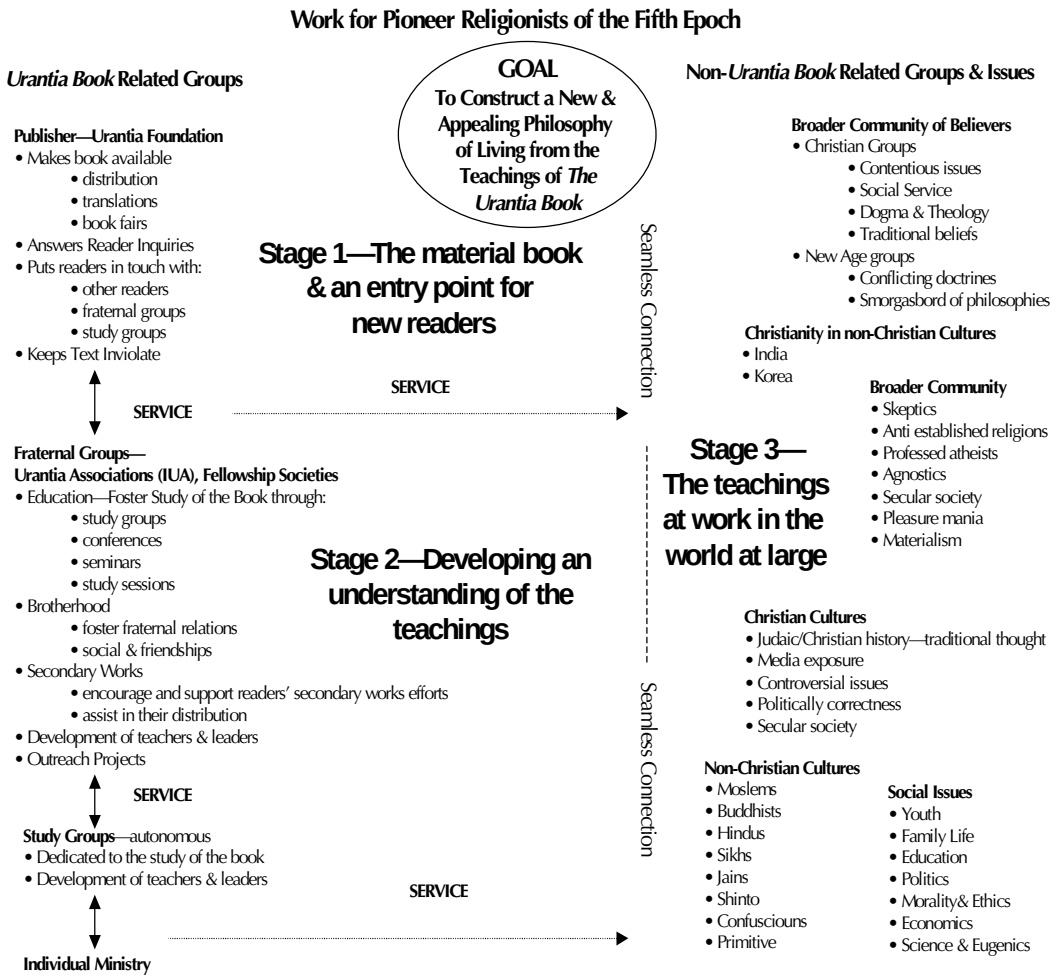
We can learn a lot from Thomas who showed an incredible willingness to go along with the program even if he didn't fully agree with the methods chosen by his leaders and fellow team players.

So my fellow students of *The Urantia Book*, my fellow pioneer religionists for the fifth epoch—wouldn't it wonderful if we could demonstrate the true attitudes of our souls when working with one another. If we could learn to thrive and grow from our experiences with one another and form mighty teams of men and

women willing to commit themselves to the work of the Urantia revelation. May we learn to cooperate with one another in order to achieve meaningful ends. May we remain united by focusing on our common goals and settle in for the long haul which is guaranteed to be difficult but no doubt exciting and rewarding.

I'd like to summarise by saying that the true value of any genuinely spiritual inner life experience is the extent we effectively share our true selves with others, the extent we genuinely love and serve our fellows and maintain that love through the storms of time as we work and strive with one another for the greater cause. On page 1096.6 we read:

Religion is not a technique for attaining a static and blissful peace of mind; it is an impulse for ***organizing the soul for dynamic service****. (emphasis mine) It is the enlistment of the totality of selfhood in the loyal service of loving God and serving man.* (p.1096.6)

When the believer is truly mobilized by the spirit power that comes as a result of the sincere consecration to the doing of the will of God, then the fruits of the spirit will truly manifest—the soul will become organized for DYNAMIC SERVICE.

So with that said, I'd now like us to take a look at a diagram I've put together of how I see the varied approaches to achieving our goal of bringing about a spiritual renaissance to the planet with *The Urantia Book* and its teachings. We all feel moved in different ways to serve in different capacities and I firmly believe we can harness each of our individual calls to service and work in a coordinated and cooperative fashion as one vast team of reader/believers committed to a common cause. I'd like your opinions so let's use this as a discussion piece to explore the various opportunities that lie in store for us all.