
**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
GENERAL COUNCIL OF FIFTH EPOCHAL FELLOWSHIP**
February 16, 1991

A special meeting of the General Council of Fifth Epochal Fellowship was convened at 7:45 P.M., February 16, 1991 at the Days Inn, Rocky Point, Tampa, Florida.

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Thomas S. Allen, Robert Bruyn, Avi Dogim, Marta Elders, David N. Elders, Berkeley Elliott, Lucile Faw, Anthony R. Finstad, Scott M. Forsythe, John W. Hales, John D. Hay, Bill Hazen, Gard Jameson, James G. Johnston, Thomas A. Kendall, Marilyn J. Kulieke, Lynne B. Kulieke, John L. Lange, Peter Laurence, Eileen Laurence, Lyn Davis Lear, L. Dan Massey, Harry McMullan III, Larry Mullins, Michael A. Painter, David Robertson, Lee Smith, Paul Snider, Brent St. Denis, Melissa Wells.

Stephen Dreier, Douglas Fraser, Janice C. Heinberg, R. Steve Law, James McNelly, and Mo Siegel were absent.

Approximately 30 observers were present at the outset of the meeting at the Council's invitation.

Chairman David Elders called the meeting to order with Brent St. Denis as Secretary. The meeting started with a few moments of prayer and the Chairman's words of welcome. In particular Mr. Elders pointed out the historical precedent being set with this meeting having been opened up to observers.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried (For 29, Against 0, Abstaining 0) to adopt the minutes of the special meetings of the General Council of September 16, 1989 and January 27, 1990, which had been previously mailed to the members for their review.

Mr. Elders, in the absence of Steve Dreier who chaired the Executive Committee's organizational Name Change Subcommittee, reported on the recommendations to be placed before the Council. (A copy of February 10, 1991 memorandum is on file.)

The highlights of the report are as follows: . The initial adoption of "Fifth Epochal Fellowship" as the organization's provisional name and the subsequent evolution toward the use of "The Fellowship" as the operational name. . The implementation of the descriptive phrase, "for readers of The Urantia Book" to accompany the provisional name, Fifth Epochal Fellowship and operational name "The Fellowship". . The registration of "Fifth Epochal Fellowship Corporation" as the organization's legal name for business purposes. . The suggestion that societies drop the use of the word "Urantia" in their respective names

and add a descriptive phrase similar to the Fellowship's (e.g. "URANTIA Society of Glenview" would become "Glenview Society" for readers of The Urantia Book). . Based on responses to the name report at the meetings this weekend in Tampa, the Executive Committee could approve the necessary, if any, changes to the Fellowship's constitution for consideration at the June 1991 Triennial Delegate Assembly and General Council meeting.

It was reported to the General Council that responses to the name report proposals were favorable coming from both the previous day's meetings of Area Coordinators and the informal meeting of TDA delegates, alternates, and society representatives.

Mr. Elders suggested that a memorandum be distributed to the Fellowship's membership concerning the current consensus on the organization's name. The Judicial Committee would be instructed to draft the needed constitutional amendments.

In the discussion that followed it was pointed out (a) that the descriptive phrase "for readers of The Urantia Book" would not be included in any legal registration of the organization's name (b) that the Fellowship's attorneys had responded to Foundation concerns regarding the use of the said descriptive phrase indicating the opinion that it was legal to use such a description.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried (29 for, 0 against, 0 abstain) that the Judicial Committee draft constitutional language to effect a change in the organization's name to "The Fellowship" with the corporate name to be "Fifth Epochal Fellowship Corporation" and that the membership be polled to obtain the response of members to this proposal.

A point of order was raised concerning the inclusion of election vote counts in the minutes of General Council meetings. The concern was that publication of this kind of information could be embarrassing to some candidates. At the present time the General Council is governed by Robert's Rules of Order on this subject which requires the recording of ballot counts.

The Chairman suggested that the Judicial Committee examine the subject of including sensitive information such as this in the minutes.

Some councilors expressed concern that any editing of the minutes be allowed since there is historical value in these records.

The General Council considered a memorandum prepared by the Judicial Committee outlining six (6) possible constitutional amendments. (A copy of the February 11, 1991 memorandum is on file.)

The discussion which ensued may be summarized as follows:

(1) Distribution of Assets - Remove URANTIA Foundation as a beneficiary in the event the Fellowship dissolved and its assets distributed. Leave the beneficiaries unspecified allowing the Executive

Committee the authority to determine same in the event of dissolution.

During the discussion it was suggested that societies could be named as beneficiaries.

(2) Procedure for Amendment - Provide more flexibility in making constitutional changes by allowing amendments to be approved at any properly called special or regular meeting of the General Council.

(3) Form for the words "The Urantia Book" - Change all uses in the constitution to "The Urantia Book" rather than stylized forms.

(4) Organization's Name - Change all references to "Urantia Brotherhood" to "The Fellowship".

(5) Local Society Name - The Judicial Committee recommended that societies not be required to use the word "Urantia" in their name as now required by the constitution. It was suggested that, alternatively, the Charter Committee could establish name standards or that the local name question could be left up to each society to decide.

At its meeting two days earlier the Executive Committee had recommended that this matter be dealt with by the Charter Committee which would consult with the societies on this subject.

(6) Corporate Name - Amend the pertinent by-laws to reflect the corporate name, "Fifth Epochal Fellowship Corporation".

Additional recommendations for constitutional change included:

(a) The use of gender-inclusive language in the constitution.

(b) Amending the Purpose statement to read "...the life and teachings of Jesus" in lieu of "...the teachings of Jesus Christ". The Judicial Committee would report back to the Executive Committee at its April 26-27, 1991 meeting which would then consider recommendations for the June 1991 TDA and General Council meeting.

The Council turned its attention to the subject of opening up organizational meetings of the Fellowship to observers.

Questions and comments included: Were telephone conference calls to be open? Is there sufficient room in the scheduled meeting place for observers? "It can be difficult to get things done in public." "The Council needs to keep the option to close its meetings." "Having observers is consistent with our new openness." How would a meeting be closed? Is there a procedure? Would the request of one councilor be sufficient? and "We sometimes get bogged down with the details. let's try it, then fix it if necessary."

Logistical concerns such as the confidentiality of business conducted in "closed" portions of otherwise open meetings, meeting space, requiring observers to indicate that they intend to attend, etc., would be dealt with by the Executive Committee.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried (25,2,2) that General Council meetings of the Fellowship be open to observation by members, that the General Council shall have the option of closing its meetings.

Discussion ensued concerning the Fellowship's "Strategic Planning" process.

(Note: General Councilors, Area Coordinators, TDA delegates and alternates had spent the morning and afternoon of this same day working on the Strategic Plan.)

A draft resolution was placed before the Council involving (a) A letter to be sent to all members soliciting their "commitment-to-action" and required Fellowship resources for individual initiatives relative to disseminating the revelation. (b) The preparation of an updated Strategic Plan based on this weekend's meeting and the membership responses.

The highlights of the discussion are as follows:

. It was important to include the needs of all four "purpose groups" in a call for membership responses. . The letter calling for input would be developed in consultation with the four purpose group leaders, the proponents Gard Jameson and Larry Mullins as well as the officers. . Membership feedback would be solicited in time for the April 1991 Executive Committee meeting. . The Executive Committee would then circulate a revised strategic plan draft to all Fellowship societies and Councilors by mid-May 1991. A motion was made, seconded, and carried (27,0,2) that a letter be developed by the Strategic Plan's purpose group leaders and mailed by mid-March to the membership for the purpose of gathering information and soliciting commitment relative to the development of the Fellowship's Strategic Plan.

With respect to a further resolution to deal with consultations to involve societies and General Councilors the following questions and concerns were raised: . We must be sensitive to the timing. . The Strategic Plan would go through an annual cycle. . How much importance do we place on responses? How do we evaluate the feedback? . This is a process to gather "dreams and visions". . Societies may need a longer time-frame in which to respond. . The Strategic Plan is now very partial; "it needs more group effort. . The partial nature of the plan can be dealt with by requiring each purpose group leader to make a statement as to the degree of completeness of his/her section to accompany their revised purpose group effort within the Strategic Plan. . "We should avoid developing a weighty, cumbersome procedure so as to avoid frustration. . We might be expecting too much to fully deal with the next stage of the Strategic Plan process at the June 1991 General Council meeting. . It's important to involve the membership and to balance the importance of taking action "soon" on some issues and taking time with other matters.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried (27,0,2) that the development of the strategic plan proceed

with the incorporation of ideas resulting from the Tampa mid-year meeting as well as results from the letter developed by the plan's purpose group leaders with a report to the General Council at its regular meeting in June.

The following set of resolutions was presented to the Council as passed by the informal meeting of triennial delegates and alternates held the previous day. (Note: Fourteen societies were represented out of eighteen.) The resolutions were passed to express the sense of the delegates in attendance and were not to be considered as binding.

- (a) That the General Council, in close cooperation with the societies, develop a simple and effective mechanism for regular (at least annual) society participation in the deliberations of the General Council. Existing ideas, including each society electing a General Councilor, as well as all other relevant ideas, should be evaluated in developing such a mechanism.
- (b) That an amendment be made to the constitution to provide for direct representation by each society on the General Council.
- (c) That terms of office for General Councilors be reduced to six years.
- (d) That, with respect to members-at-large, the Judicial Committee study the matter of finding ways to bring MALs into the organizational process.
- (e) That the appropriate General Council committee look at the possibility of using teleconferencing as a way to reduce the cost of serving as a member of the General Council and the Executive Committee.
- (f) That copies of the minutes of the General Council, Executive Committee, and Area Coordinators be circulated to the presidents and secretaries of societies.
- (g) That all organizational meetings of the Fellowship be open to observation by members and that each organizational group has the option of closing the meeting at its discretion.
- (h) That the General Council solicit input from societies before finalizing major decisions when possible and appropriate.
- (i) That a subcommittee be formed from among the 1991 delegates and alternates to begin the process of planning the format and procedure for the 1991 TDA in June. (The following persons volunteered to serve on said subcommittee: Marvin Gawryn, Michael Challis, Lila Dogim, Betty Teresso, and Scott Forsythe.)
- (j) That the guidelines respecting the qualifications for nominees to the General Council be amended so that they are more comprehensive including skills, knowledge and experience.

(k) That the name of our organization be changed to "The Fellowship" and that the constitution be amended accordingly.

(l) That the General Council consider the following ideas concerning an annual delegate assembly: . That the Fellowship modify its constitution to implement an Annual Delegate Assembly of society representatives. . That each society Delegate and Alternate serve for a three-year term culminating in the Triennial Delegate Assembly. . That the first Annual Delegate Assembly take place in 1992. . That the Annual Delegate Assembly consider resolutions to be submitted to the General Council. . That Delegates and Alternates to the Annual Delegate Assembly be invited to attend meetings of the General Council as observers. . And, that the General Council report back to the Assembly concerning the status of submitted resolutions.

(m) That whereas today's meeting is not a constitutionally mandated TDA and

Whereas this meeting does give us an opportunity to bring to our societies information and rationale regarding resolutions that may be introduced at the June 1991 TDA and

Whereas throughout our discussions today we have been extolling the virtues of society input

Now therefore be it resolved that the votes today are not binding but are rather to give the sense of the group on this date.

In the discussions which followed it was pointed out that (a) the TDA could, through the election process, deal with the issue of society representation on the Council and (b) the Executive Committee can consider items not already covered by the General Council at this meeting or in-process for constitutional amendment.

The pre-TDA resolutions (listed above along with a summary of the discussions) would be circulated to The Fellowship societies' officers.

A motion was placed before the Council calling for an amendment to be prepared for consideration in June 1991 to increase the number of seats on the General Council by the number of societies and to allow each society to appoint a person to fill one of the new seats.

Comments which followed included whether the motion was in order, several societies were missing from yesterday's pre-TDA meeting, the pre-TDA resolutions were not to be considered binding, 18 added to 36 would mean 54 Council seats and the matter may be prematurely before the Council. It was considered necessary to obtain society input on this proposal.

A motion was made, seconded, and defeated (5,22,2) that the Executive Committee be directed to draft appropriate constitutional changes for submission to the General Council in June 1991 to provide that (1) the number of General Councilors be increased by the number of societies in good standing, and that

each such extra seat be elected directly by each respective society; and (2) that the term of councilors be reduced to six from nine years.

The General Council was informed that as of this date only four applications had been received from members seeking election to the General Council.

The Chairman complimented the society delegates, alternates, and representatives and the meeting moderator, Harry McMullan, on efforts yesterday to prepare for the June 1991 TDA.

Mike Painter reported on the meeting of Area Coordinators held the previous day. There were 20 ACs in attendance and four members of the Domestic Extension Committee. Reports were made by each AC and a project update provided by David Elders after an opening address by Peter Laurence.

Issues raised by the ACs included how to deal with "troublesome" personalities at study group meetings, telephone programs, book consignment and the need for annual and regular regional AC meetings.

After the group expressed its thanks to "retiring" members of the General Council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 P.M.

(Not signed) _____ Secretary
Approved: (Signed) David N. Elders, President