
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the General Council of The Fellowship

February 4-6, 1994

A special meeting of the General Council was convened at 7:15 P.M., Friday, February 4, 1994, at the LaGuardia Marriott Hotel, 102-05 Ditmars Boulevard, E. Elmhurst, New York.

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Thomas S. Allen, Claudia Ayers, Beth Bartley, Sara Blackstock, Robert Bruyn, Avi Dogim, Stephen Dreier, David N. Elders, Janet Farrington, Duane Faw, Lucile Faw, Scott M. Forsythe, Marvin Gawrynn, John W. Hales, Bill Hazen, Janice C. Heinberg, Eef Hoedemaker, Gard Jameson, Geri Johnson, Marilynn J. Kulieke, John L. Lange, Eileen Laurence, Lyn Davis Lear, Joe Liszka, L. Dan Massey, Harry McMullan, III, Brent St. Denis, Mo Siegel, Lee Smith.

Absent were: Glen Bell, Jr., Paul Knott, Lynne Kulieke, Larry Mullins, Michael Painter, David Robertson, and Melissa Wells.

The President, Stephen Dreier, called the meeting to order with Lucile Faw acting as secretary. The President asked for review and approval of the agenda.

The meeting continued with a series of reports from committee chairs and officers.

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE: John Lange reported on recent activities of the International Fellowship Committee. John Lange and Berkeley Elliott recently visited readers in Columbia and Chile. They met with about 200 readers. The Columbian readers may be interested in affiliation with the Fellowship. Readers are having difficulty getting copies of the Spanish translation of The Urantia Book. The Fellowship is attempting to resolve that problem. The Fellowship has a fund to purchase 150 Spanish books. Members are encouraged to order them from local bookstores and send them to the Fellowship office for reimbursement. The Fellowship is defraying the cost of shipping these books to South America.

Lila Dogirn, Ann Garner, David Kantor, Bobbie Dreier and Steve Dreier attended the second Urania Conference in Moscow in November. They presented The Urantia Book to about 150 people. The same group did a presentation in Vilnius, Lithuania to about 50 people. There is great need for a Russian

translation of The Urantia Book.

The International Fellowship Committee plans to extend its efforts to introduce The Urantia Book to peoples in Asia. Geri Johnson suggested that a movie would be a useful outreach tool in India, where relatively few people read.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE: Gard Jameson reported on the Fraternal Relations Committee participation at the Parliament of World Religions recently held in Chicago. The Urantia Book booth was well received. Several members made presentations or were interviewed for TV reports. It was suggested that we continue to participate in activities of this kind.

DOMESTIC EXTENSION COMMITTEE: Mo Siegel reported on expo activities. The expo booth was taken to 10 cities, twice to New York and Los Angeles, for a total of 14 shows. A total of 250,000 attended these events. The Society of Greater New York tried an experimental program of subsidizing the cost of books at the NY expo, selling them for \$19.95. Over thirty books were sold. Price seems to make a difference.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Dan Massey reported on the planned activities for Summer 94 in Oklahoma City. The Triennial Delegate Assembly will meet informally on Friday, July 1, 1994. The formal session will begin Saturday, July 2, 1994 at 9:00 A.M. The Summer Intensives will begin on Sunday, July 3. A picnic at the McMullan farm is scheduled for the evening of July 4. The theme will be "Man's Universe Integration7".

The Scientific Symposium will begin on Tuesday, July 5. The Executive Committee will meet on Thursday, July 7 at 1:00 P.M. The Triennial Meeting of the General Council will convene on Friday, July 8, at 9:00 A.M.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 1996: Steve Dreier reported on site location for IC96. San Diego is too expensive, more than twice the cost of IC93. The site selection committee will visit Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, Arizona in late May or early June. Conference expenses for this facility are relatively low. It was requested that information on costs of air travel to the site be considered as part to the selection process.

The meeting recessed for a break at 8:35 P.M. The meeting resumed at 8:45 P.M.

Prior to discussing the proposal for reorganization of the Fellowship, it was suggested that the group take some time to brainstorm on the question of where things would be in 20-30 years. There was no objection. Observers were invited to participate in this discussion. A summary of the thoughts expressed follows:

The Fellowship will be international. The Urantia Book will have penetrated all major world cultures. There will be more societies. There will be much greater diversity among readers The main function of

the Fellowship will be to network and coordinate The Fellowship will be culturally neutral The Fellowship will be family oriented The Fellowship will be characterized by sensitivity to multiple viewpoints The Fellowship will be an association of International affiliates There will be a network of Urantia learning centers The world will be in chaos The Urantia reader community will be characterized by increased unity, less schism There will be increased demand for more books and more translations

The Urantia Book will be available in many languages The great diversity of Urantia groups will make efforts at control fruitless The copyright will have expired; multiple printings will be available Greater efforts will be made to spread knowledge of the book Most churches will be aware of the book There will be attacks from mainline religious groups The second coming of Jesus will have taken place Mainstream religions will affect the culture of UB readers There will be a fuller appreciation of unseen friends and more cooperation with them Churches will be unified by The Urantia Book The Fellowship will peak in numbers Persecution will cause many readers to flee from association with The Urantia Book The Urantia Book will be available on the information highway - cd roms and virtual reality

The Fellowship will be a small and esoteric entity. Unity will be the main group The churches will engage in vigorous discussion of The Urantia Book There will be schisms in the churches over The Urantia Book There will be 750,000 books in circulation There will be more books, more study groups, and an international flavor. The Fellowship will be one group of many There will be more splintering among readers of The Urantia Book The life and teachings of Jesus will be recognized as the greatest story ever told The main focus of interest in The Urantia Book will be outside the US Increasing social problems due to degenerates and defectives will make the UB more acceptable A movie will have been made about the life and teachings of Jesus based upon The Urantia Book People will judge Urantia Book readers primarily on the basis of the lives they live Many secondary works will have been developed to assist people in studying The Urantia Book Urantia Book conferences will have become family events, attractive to whole families Many of these things will happen within 5 years, not 30 Methods will have been developed to interest young people in The Urantia Book

Adam's DNA will be discovered and will be the basis of great genetic improvement Readers of The Urantia Book will suffer persecution, even death The Fellowship will still be discussing society representation The Urantia Book will recede, but the way of life based on it will be prominent. We will understand much more about the life and teachings of Jesus It will take 5 generations to effect significant changes There will be an interactive TV channel dedicated to The Urantia Book There will be no conflicts with organized religions. UB readers will be non-threatening Certain beings will help invigorate all readers The Fellowship will be publishing The Urantia Book The Urantia Book will cost \$12.00 retail Science will discover the ultimaton Schools for Urantia families will have developed The new and greater John the Baptist will arrive Things will not be much different from the way they are today Fusion translation will be generally recognized as an alternative to physical death We have been quivering on he brink; in 30 years we will be over it Great growth will have taken place. Study groups and societies will evolve into other forms

The great musician who will transform the world will appear The challenge will be the apathy that follows the discovery of the book in other cultures The Urantia Book will have been attacked by

fundamentalists and Moslems People from various religious traditions will be attracted to The Urantia Book There will be further collapse of the nation state, greater integration of nations We will still be trying to foresee the future There will be increased realization that the kingdom of God is within; the rest will take care of itself.

The meeting recessed at 11:07 P.M. until 9:00 A.M. the following morning. The meeting resumed at 9:15 on Saturday morning.

Representatives from Fellowship Societies were invited to report on their society's reaction to the proposal for structural reorganization. The following comments were made:

FIRST SOCIETY OF OKLAHOMA (Tom Allen) The society discussed the proposals and will wait to see what develops.

GOLDEN GATE CIRCLE - SAN FRANCISCO (Larry Geis) The proposal may impinge on local autonomy by requiring a local society to amend its constitution.

FIRST SOCIETY -CHICAGO (David Kulieke) The society needs more time to think about these changes. We might just be changing from one American point of view to another. Members-at-Large should have some representation. Direct representation might not be a good idea without some provision for proportional representation, and First Society is opposed to proportional representation. We need to look more closely at the whole question of membership and the central organization.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SOCIETY - COLORADO (Steve McIntosh) - Members are not in agreement concerning the Fellowship. Some feel it is irrelevant; others see value in a central organization. The majority of members want to see structural changes implemented as soon as possible.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SOCIETY - COLORADO (Paula Thompson) - Area coordinators need to feel they are a part of the process. In making changes we should be careful not to lose our identity. We should go slowly and not make rapid changes to what has been built up over the years. Changes are necessary, but they should be in response to needs and carefully thought out.

GOLDEN GATE CIRCLE - SAN FRANCISCO (Bob Blackstock) - The society met twice to discuss the matter. They are opposed to proportional representation. They feel each society should elect one councilor; each society can elect two councilors until the number of societies increase significantly. The proposed Judicial Council should have 7 members with terms of 7 to 14 years.

SOCIETY OF GREATER NEW YORK -NEW YORK CITY (Dale Sztejnberg) - The society is opposed to multiple votes based upon the size of membership. There is too much difficulty defining membership for this purpose. Members-at-large should remain independent. The Judicial Council sounds like a Supreme Court.

GRAND CANYON SOCIETY -ARIZONA (Bruce Wenger) Bruce expressed surprise that there was so much expression of concern about adopting the reorganization proposal. He suspects that societies which did not respond probably had no opposition. The society would like to elect their own representative to the General Council. Definitions of membership must not impinge upon the right of the local society to determine standards for membership. The President should be elected by the entire membership. The General Council may become too large as the number of societies increase. The Judicial Council sound like a good idea.

HEART OF AMERICA SOCIETY - KANSAS (Virginia Brown) -The society is going through hard times. Eight people attended their meeting. Most are content with things as they are. They do like the idea of having one representative from each society. It would help them feel more connected.

EVERGREEN SOCIETY - WASHINGTON STATE (Janice Heinberg) - The society feels it has always had direct representation. They are not clear about certain aspects of the Judicial Council. Societies should be encouraged to take in members-at-large who are in their vicinity. They already have members who do not live nearby. Go slowly and think things out. We don't want rushed changes which we will later regret. Society representatives should meet regionally.

PLUSS - SEATTLE (Tony Finstad) The society is not strongly in favor of the proposed reorganization plan. They now feel that all General Councilors are working for all readers. The society is involved locally and nationally and feels connected.

ONTARIO FELLOWSHIP - CANADA (Sue Tennant) The society has lost members. They are very scattered. They would like to see local representation on the General Council. She prefers to concentrate on local developments.

FIRST SOCIETY OF LOS ANGELES - LOS ANGELES (Lyn Lear) The society has always had representation. Change is good, but should be done slowly. The membership in Los Angeles is very scattered and needs to get together more.

SACRAMENTO (Claudia Ayers) They would like to be the first group chartered in the new organization. They are in favor of the proposal as presented by the ad-hoc committee.

The meeting recessed at 10:30 A.M. The meeting reconvened at 10:41 A.M.

A society delegate expressed amazement at the prospect of adopting the entire ad-hoc committee reorganization proposal at this meeting. The proposal needs much more consideration and process. It should go back to the TDA for further input.

(Mo, Duane) A MOTION (94/2-1) was made and seconded that the General Council direct the Executive Committee to initiate procedures to amend constitution to allow each society to elect one General Councilor for a 3 year term. The Triennial Delegate Assembly would continue to elect 36

General Councilors as currently provided for in the Fellowship Constitution.

Discussion on the motion(94/2-1): Under current circumstances the General Council would have up to 54 members. The TDA would elect 36 and the societies would elect 18. Societies would have the option to elect a representative to the General Council. Some might choose not to. The number of councilors would probably be less than 54. Societies should concern themselves with study, outreach and worship. Societies may tend to elect on the basis of local issues and feelings. The TDA process may generate a wider view. For example, the TDA might choose to elect people who have an international viewpoint. Some societies are not functioning well at this time. Representation might improve their situation. Franchise might generate renewed interest. If the societies elect a representative, they are empowered. There is a direct relationship between the society and the central organization. Those proposing change would be happy to see some progress, not necessarily a major restructuring. We should try to effect some kind of direct society representation this year, and continue looking at other options in succeeding years. The General Council should not be made up of people whose sole purpose is to represent a local viewpoint. The council should be made up of individuals who will seek to achieve unity and cooperation among the total readership. The Fellowship cannot empower a society or an individual. Societies have to empower themselves by remaining functional, participating in the TDA, sending representatives to conclaves and requiring reports from them. Societies are empowered by doing things, such as expos and other outreach activities Triennial Delegates and Alternates should be elected for a three year period and have the responsibility for presenting the viewpoints of their society and reporting back to the society. A mechanism would have to be worked out. Historically there were not many resolutions coming out of the until 1991. When conclaves were added society representatives had opportunities to discuss issues and developments taking place in their societies. A combination of society conclaves and the TDA process is a good balance. The TDA process can show greater impartiality in evaluating and electing a councilor. Perhaps there should be two bodies meeting annually. An Annual Delegate Assembly of society representatives to focus on local matters, and the General Council which would focus on international perspectives. Each society should elect one delegate and the Triennial Delegate Assembly should fill any open positions. The proposal does not take members-at-large into account. A number of members-at-large are among our largest contributors and most active individuals. The organization is not yet stable enough for the direct election scheme. The filtering of the Triennial Delegate Assembly is still necessary to get the best leadership. We do not need a separate judiciary for the Fellowship. We are not that kind of an organization. It would only encourage a litigious atmosphere. The current Judicial Committee functions as an advisory and conciliatory body. An inactive society might elect a representative to the council who was not particularly interested in the overall movement. The original proposal of the Ad-hoc Committee on Restructuring should be adopted. It has been carefully thought out and is the best we have. We should stop toying with it. Fix only what really needs fixing; don't change just for the sake of change. Wholesale change is not required, only adjustments to the current structure. We need a balance between a deliberative group which is charged with seeing the whole picture, and another group which represents local interests. The General Council/Annual Delegate Assembly combination may provide this. Discussions of this kind, between the General Council and society delegates should take place twice a year. That would help resolve most of the problems. This discussion has been dynamic with many good ideas expressed. If the number of societies increase significantly, the General Council would become unwieldy. Equal representation is a problem because small societies

would have same vote as large. Proportional representation is a problem because large societies would overpower small societies. An Annual Delegate Assembly model does not require voting status on the General Council. Councilors should be able to represent both local and global views. Those are the kind of people who should serve on the council. Some of the societies are not functioning at a level which would result in the election of a councilor. The Annual Delegate Assembly is a better model. Societies which are no longer functioning effectively should be de-chartered.

THE VOTE on motion (94/2-1) was 12-Yes, 14 -No, 0-Abstain. The motion FAILED.

(M. Kulieke) A MOTION (94/2-2) was made and seconded that a report be generated about this meeting and sent to the societies so that the TDA could prepare further resolutions concerning society representation and forward these to the General Council for action.

Discussion on the motion: Some members felt that it was too early to act on restructuring, and recommended that discussion with the societies continue.

A MOTION to call the question PASSED by a vote of 21,4, 1. THE VOTE on motion(94/2-2) was 4-Yes, 21 -No, 1 -Abstain. The motion FAILED.

(Dogim, Jameson) A MOTION(94/2-3) was made and seconded that the Judicial Committee be directed to prepare an amendment to establish an annual delegate assembly which would meet separately and jointly with the General Council. The delegate would be elected by the local society for a 3 year term. Delegates would have voice but not vote at joint meetings with the General Council.

Discussion on the motion:

· What would ADA do in intervening years? · How would it be financed - local, personal, central? · Would they have a vote on the council? A 3 year term may be too much of a burden on the delegate. If delegates have voice but not vote, they will feel disenfranchised.

THE VOTE on the motion(94/2-3) was 3-Yes, 19-No, 2-Abstain. The motion FAILED.

(Elders, Laurence) A MOTION(94/2-4) was made and seconded that the Judicial Committee be directed to prepare an amendment to establish an annual delegate assembly which would meet both separately and jointly with the General Council. A delegate would be elected by a local society for a 3 year term. Up to 36 duly elected society delegates may attend General Council meetings with voice and vote on issues which come to the General Council from the Annual Delegate Assembly.

Discussion on the motion. The structure is too simple. The structure is not simple enough. The General Council would lose control over its agenda.

THE VOTE on motion(94/2-4) was 3-Yes, 15-No, 4-Abstain. The motion FAILED.

(Siegel) A MOTION(94/2-5) was made and seconded that the Executive Committee instruct the Judicial Committee to prepare amendment increasing the size of the General Council from 36 to 48 as follows: Upon adoption of the amendment, each succeeding TDA will elect 16 councilors. The total number would rise to 48 over a nine year period.

(Lear) A friendly amendment was proposed and accepted that full number of additional General Council seats be established immediately, with 1/3 being elected for terms of 3,6 and 9 years respectively.

A MOTION to call the question FAILED by a vote of 16-Yes, 9-No, O-Abstain. (2/3 required)

THE VOTE on motion (94/2-5) was 3-Yes, 22-No, O-Abstain. The motion FAILED.

The meeting recessed at 3:45 P.M. The meeting resumed at 4:00 P.M.

Since audiovisual equipment had been ordered for a report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Family, the meeting continued with a report of that committee. Sara Blackstock presented the committee report in memory of Julia Fenderson who prepared much material on family. The Fellowship has allocated \$5000 for development of materials. The ad-hoc committee makes the following suggestions for materials development:

Wrightwood Forums; Secondary works; Seminars and workshops on marriage and family; Bringing Jesus' teachings to children; Supporting the grieving process; Publishing conference papers; Study guides on family; Brochure illustrating the UB with emphasis on family; Family life activities at conferences; Library resource for family issues; Family activities on Internet; Explore summer UB camp; Family issues hot line; Interfamily council to facilitate programs

The committee may in the future propose the formation of a standing committee-The Familial Relationship Committee-to support family oriented programs and services.

Discussion on the report of the ad-hoc committee:

There should be a forum which is open to all who are interested. The committee should be a focal point for networking at conferences, meetings, and other functions. The committee should look into providing family camps, or some simple and economical way families can get together. Input to this committee should come from the entire readership. All views should be incorporated. Provision should be made for non-reading spouses and children. Logistical support from the Fellowship is needed to network with families in other countries. There should be collaboration with existing standing committees. It is essential that children grow up in a family atmosphere which will facilitate their relationship with God. A parenting newsletter should be created to share experience and feedback. One parent stated that she did not want dogma taught to her children.

The meeting recessed at 4:57 P.M. The meeting resumed at 5:06 P.M.

The discussion on organizational restructuring continued:

(Forsythe, Gawrynn) A MOTION was made and seconded to reconsider MOTION(94/2-1) previously defeated.

MOTION(94/2-1) STATES: THAT The General Council direct the Executive Committee to initiate procedures to amend the Fellowship Constitution to allow each society to elect one General Councilor for a 3 year term. The Triennial Delegate Assembly would continue to elect 36 General Councilors as currently provided for in the Fellowship Constitution.

The VOTE on the motion to RECONSIDER was 23-Yes, 3-No, O-Abstain. The motion to reconsider PASSED.

Discussion on motion (94/2-1 reconsidered):

A request was made to poll the Society Delegates to see how they felt about this matter. This was done without objection. The 11 delegates present gave their opinions and voted 7,3,1 for the reconsidered motion.

A MOTION to call the question FAILED by a vote of 13-Yes, 14-No, O-Abstain.

Discussion continued:

As societies increase in number the General Council will become too heavily weighted towards the viewpoint of societies. Why assume that society delegates have only local viewpoints? The proposal does not provide representation for members-at-large. Societies from other countries would get an immediate seat on the GC. As things grow we could institute the constitutional regionalization clauses to hold down the size of the General Council. Increasing the General Council size will make it less functional and leave more to Executive Committee. We will need travel funding for councilors from outside the US to participate. The model creates competition for candidates between the Triennial Delegate Assembly and the societies. Only societies which meet minimum installation requirements should be eligible to elect a General Councilor.

(Smith) A MOTION to call the question PASSED by a vote of 24-Yes, 1-No, O-Abstain

The VOTE on the motion(94/2-1 reconsidered) was 23-Yes, 3-No, 0-abstain. The motion PASSED.

The meeting was recessed at 6:00 PM until 9:00 A.M. on Sunday morning. The meeting resumed at 9:22 A-M. on Sunday morning.

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(Geri Johnson) A MOTION was made and seconded that all motions and resolutions made during this meeting relating to organizational structure be reproduced and sent to society officers and TDA delegates with a summary statement giving the vote count and the flavor of the discussion. Unapproved minutes will be sent to those societies and delegates requesting them.

The motion was ADOPTED without objection.

Other Business: (Forsythe) It was suggested that the Domestic Extension and International Fellowship Committees send in names of people who have been working actively to be considered for election to the General Council.

(Smith) It was suggested that a period of open discussion be scheduled at each special meeting of the General Council. (McMullan) It was suggested that thanks for their service be expressed to those General Councilors who are not seeking re-election.

Duane Faw was appointed to head committee to present a proposal to the April 94 Executive Committee meeting to celebrate Jesus' 2000 birthday.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 A.M.

The assembly concluded with a period of group worship under the guidance of Eileen Laurence.

Secretary

APPROVED: Chairman