
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE FELLOWSHIP

July 27-28, 1995

The annual meeting of the General Council was held Thursday, July 27-28, 1995 at Fairleigh Dickinson University, Teaneck, New Jersey.

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Beth Bartley, Geri Johnson, Gard Jameson, Robert Bruyn, Richard E. Johnson, Robert Burns, David Kantor, Michael Challis, Lee Smith, Avi Dogim, Marilynn Kulieke, Lila Dogim, John Lange, Stephen Dreier, Eileen Laurence, David N. Elders, Joseph Liska, Janet Farrington, L. Dan Massey, Lucile Faw, Harry McMullan III, Alison Gardner, Mo Siegel, Ann Garner, Marvin Gawryn, Paula Thompson, John Hales, Janice Heinberg, Steven Zendt.

Absent were Scott Forsythe, Eef Hoedemaker, John Hay, Steve McIntosh, Melissa Wells, and Sara Blackstock Robert Burns and Paul Knott arrived later in the meeting.

Stephen Dreier, President, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. and asked that Geri Johnson read a passage from The Urantia Book The Secretary noted that he had received proxies from the following people and indicated the person whom each designated to cast their vote: Steve McIntosh to Paula Thompson; Scott Forsythe to Harry McMullan III; Melissa Wells to Mo Siegel, John Hay to Harry McMullan III, Sara Blackstock to Lee Smith Fifteen observers were present at the beginning of the meeting. The chairman asked for any revisions to the agenda. Marvin Gawryn asked that the proposal to have a conference on the theme of spiritual unity be added as item 13.5

Minutes from the meetings of January 20-21, 1995 and March 11-12, 1995 were handed out for reference purposes only inasmuch as they are not yet in final form for approval.

The minutes of July 7, 1994 meeting were approved unanimously as presented (with minor correction to the value of property gifted to the Fellowship) by vote of the General Council.

Beth Bartley, Secretary General, read the census of the members of the Fellowship:

The First Society 66 First Society of Los Angeles 119 Society of Glenview 14* First Society of Oklahoma 195 Orvonton Society of Chicago 37 Fort Wayne Society 26 Evergreen Society of Washington 17 First Society of Houston 30 Golden Gate Circle for Students of The Urantia Book43

Connecticut Fellowship for readers of The Urantia Book 56* Dallas Society 48* Rocky Mountain Spiritual Fellowship 126 Northern Light Society of Alaska 36* Pilot Light Society of Seattle 35 Heart of America Society 55 Society of Greater New York for readers of the Urantia Book 26 Ontario Fellowship for Readers of The Urantia Book 35* Grand Canyon Society of Urantia Book Readers 59

Total society members 1,023 Members at large 291 Total Fellowship members 1,314 * No report submitted for 1994. Figure based on office records.

It was announced that Lyn Davis Lear has resigned from the General Council for family reasons. An election was held to fill her vacated seat until the next meeting of the Triennial Delegate Assembly. Biographies were distributed for people whose names had been submitted with their knowledge and permission. Biographies were submitted for each of the following: Gary Deinstadt, Larry Bowman, Alison Gardner, Matthew Block, Byron Belitsos, Gerald Dalton, and Larry Geis.

A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously that the Council move into closed session in order to consider the qualifications of the candidates. Observers left the meeting. Each of the candidates was discussed by the members of the General Council in turn prior to the voting process. The chairman appointed Gard Jameson and Marilyn Kulieke as tellers. Ballots were passed out, completed, collected and tallied by the tellers. Robert Burns joined the meeting at 8:15 p.m. but did not participate in the voting. The tellers reported the following vote counts:

Larry Geis (0); Gerald Dalton (0); Byron Belitsos (0); Gary Deinstadt (6); Matthew Block (6); Larry Bowman (8); Alison Gardner (12).

No candidate having received a majority, further discussion of the candidates took place. Ballots were distributed again. The Tellers reported the following results:

Larry Geis (0); Gerald Dalton(0);Byron Belitsos (0); Gary Deinstadt (1); Matthew Block (2); Larry Bowman (5); Alison Gardner (25). Based on the results of the second ballot, Alison Gardner was declared by the chairman to be elected to the vacant position on the General Council until the next meeting of the TDA. Election of Standing Committee members: The slate of proposed candidates, including those nominated from the floor, was discussed. Closed ballots were then cast. The tellers reported the following results: Judicial Committee 6 year Term David Owen 33 Domestic Extension 6 year term, Chair Ann Garner 33 5 year term Michelle Klimesh 4 Mary Ebben* 29 Publications Committee 6 Year term John Thiele 33 Charter Committee 6 year term Francyl Gawryn 33 International Fellowship 6 year term Douglas Fraser 33 5 year term David Kantor 33 Fraternal Relations 6 year term Eef Hoedemaker 33 Education 6 year ter- Stephen Zendt 33 Special Projects 6 year vacant Finance 6 year vacant *Nominated from the floor during the voting process.

Based on the ballot results, the chairman declared the following elected as indicated: Judicial Committee David Owen 6 year term Domestic Extension Ann Garner 6 year term Mary Ebben 5 year term Publications committee John Thiele 6 year term Charter Committee Francyl Gawryn 6 year term

International Fellowship Douglas Fraser 6 year term David Kantor 5 year term Fraternal Relations Eef Hoedemaker 6 year term Education Committee Stephen Zendt 6 year term Special Projects vacant 6 year term Finance Committee vacant 6 year term

Observers were invited to rejoin the meeting after the elections were concluded. Dick Johnson noted that by holding the vote in the initial part of the meeting, many visitors left and did not return. The chairman suggested that we provide the observers with a schedule for the voting portion of the meeting so that they can plan their attendance around it.

Stephen Dreier, President, handed out his annual report and summarized it verbally. It is included in the files of The Fellowship with the other annual reports submitted by the members of the Executive Committee.

He spoke about our plans to publish The Urantia Book, and the upcoming 1996 International Conference. Steve suggested we consider more outreach activities in order to generate more active participation both with the book and in our Fellowship. He spoke of growth in our Fellowship in the direction of more open and accepting of diversity. Members commented on the president's report.

Steve also noted the recent passing of two of our colleagues - Bill Hales and Berkeley Elliott. He commented on the depth and extent of their lifelong contributions to our work. Members were invited to comment on the reports of other officers and committee chairs. Harry McMullan noted that our income had, in fact, increased over the last several years.

Lee Smith asked about the viability of moving the summer seminars around the country. It was observed that attendance was moderate this year, but was one of the best held from many reports. It was noted that we have held more than 16 summer seminars since the inception of the program (every year except for the triennial year the international conference is held). Perhaps we need to consider a shorter, weekend program rather than a long, eight-day effort.

Avi Dogim commented that after he submitted his report, he received inquiries from people in the Wisconsin area who indicated that they may well file an application in September for society chartering.

Gard Jameson asked whether the Wrightwood Series was still active. Dan Massey reported that two of the sessions will publish reports soon and consideration will be given to continuing with the series.

It was agreed that the Area Coordinator reports would be made available on request; they were not printed for general distribution this year.

Marvin Gawryn suggested that in addition to the Urantial Internet address, we need to consider an electronic bulletin board of our own for the purpose of outreach. Dave Kantor commented that Mark Turrin has put together a Urantia Web Site. Beth observed that The Fellowship has not done a particularly good job of communicating to the readership. She said that the Foundation does

communicate on a regular basis. Bob Burns suggested that perhaps we can list our study groups on the Internet to encourage more communication among readers.

Sample copies of the proposed formatting for The Urantia Book were handed out for review in preparation for tomorrow's meeting. The meeting was recessed at 11:00 pm to be continued the following morning.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:14 a.m. by Stephen Dreier, Chairman. He read a passage from The Urantia Book. Paul Knott joined the meeting. There were seven observers at the start of the meeting.

John Hales gave the office manager's report. He summarized the activities of the office and office personnel John Hales, Matthew Block, and Carolyn Kendall and noted that the office is used on a regular basis for two local study groups. He mentioned that the 800-URANTIA phone line, which had been used increasingly by current readers for news and informational purposes, had been reclaimed by Dennis Brodsky. In response to a question concerning the 800 number, Steve Dreier reported on the status of the phone line and Dennis' current activities and recommended that we simply let it resolve itself. Publication of The Urantia Book was discussed next. The type-face has been changed from Times Roman to Gaillard and the text has been professionally reset by Nancy Johnson.

Harry McMullan described the two formats under consideration for the internal reference system. He noted that the two systems are identical for perhaps 98% of the book and vary only in the manner lists are treated. Discussion ensued ranging from the need for location precision to the need for simplicity which recognizes that the main use of internal referencing will be utilized orally. It was agreed that the sub-committee assigned to this issue was familiar with all the issues and, with the help of professional consultant, would make the final decision.

Harry McMullan detailed the rationale of the end-note committee in evaluating various approaches to identifying and explaining changes in the text over time. The discussion ranged from a very detailed appendix noting every change ever made to eliminating the end-notes altogether in the book with a note offering a brochure to those interested in better understanding those changes which have been made. A series of straw votes was taken on various elements of the issue:

--Make grammatical and spelling consistency changes -- 27 for, 0 against. --Include an appendix in the book documenting all spelling/grammatical changes -- 13 for, 17 against, 4 abstentions (although a full record will be kept) --Make factual changes in the 1955 text but do not make any changes that might affect meaning -- 23 for, 4 against, 4 abstentions. --Include an appendix documenting all changes made in the text after 1955 -- 29 for, 3 against, 1 abstain. --Identify problem areas by placing notes in the text itself--9 for, 16 against, 5 abstain.

The next item for discussion is an index which would be included as an appendix in the back of the book. Because the index is not complete yet, we have not decided whether to include it or not.

Mo Siegel next discussed the dust jacket project. He described the process of design, and testing. The test jackets were shown in several major markets around the US (including New York, Austin, TX, Denver) to people interested in religious books in bookstores. He is presenting the sub-committee's recommendation with the caveat that while the research used is not truly reliable and definitive, there was consistent response in every market so the results can be taken as at least indicative. Mo summarized the results, showed the dust covers tested, and presented the committee's recommendation. Discussion ranged from selecting a cover which included a picture of Jesus to selecting one which used the name in large type, set off by a graphic design and colors. The pros and cons about including a picture of Jesus included the fact that a predominance of the world's believers are Christian to the need to utilize a dust jacket with a broader, more universal appeal.

The cover committee recommends the three-picture cover. It was moved and seconded that we accept the committee's general recommendation and let them go forward with further design: 24 in favor, 4 against, and 4 abstain.

There was a brief discussion concerning the inclusion of maps and other items in the back of the book. It was duly noted that this issue had been voted upon and rejected. A straw vote was taken to set up a subcommittee to revisit this issue of including maps and pictures in the Fellowship's book: 25 in favor, 8 opposed, 1 abstain.

Mo reported that he had a discussion with Chris Hansen. Chris suggested that he might be willing to forego printing his book and cooperate with us under certain circumstances. Mo suggested that we consider discussing the matter with Chris to see what he has in mind.

Marvin Gawryn presented a proposal concerning resolution of the difficulties between the Foundation and Fellowship. Marvin's proposed arranging a joint meeting between the two groups at the Fellowship's mid-year General Council meeting. The planning and participation would include the Foundation's Trustees and IUA members. The object would be fostering organizational reconciliation based on the theme of "Toward Spiritual Unity in the Urantia Movement." Discussion followed.

President Steve Dreier reported what had been done in response to the resolution regarding attempts to dialogue with the Foundation. He had both sent a letter and spoken with Pat Mundelius, President of Urantia Foundation. Steve reported that Pat stated that Urantia Foundation's only immediate interest was preventing the Fellowship or anyone else from printing The Urantia Book until the appeals were exhausted. In response, Steve wrote to Pat discussing several matters which might lead the Fellowship to refrain from publishing The Urantia Book: These include lower book pricing, unhindered availability of The Urantia Book, and free access to new readers. Steve reported that after we had made the decision to print the book he called Pat to let her know of our decision. The conversation was brief. Pat's response was one of disappointment, and she indicated disinterest in any further discussion. Steve reported that he subsequently saw Pat at Bill Hale's memorial service. This provided an opportunity for face to face discussion during an afternoon reception, but Pat chose not to attend.

Further opinions were expressed ranging from full support for Marvin's initiative to abandoning further attempts to interact with the Foundation. It was suggested that we consider the separating the subject of interaction with the Foundation into distinct categories; spiritual (personal responsibility), joint study and socializing activities (both personal and organizational), and practical (direct inter-organizational negotiation of some of the issues). Marvin's initiative was placed on the floor and seconded in the following form:

WHEREAS the promotion of spiritual unity is desirable among Urantia Book readers with diverse views on controversial issues, and WHEREAS the Urantia Foundation and The Fellowship are responsible to lead in efforts to promote spiritual unity in the Urantia Movement," THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the theme of the informal portion of the mid-year General Council meeting in early 1996 be "Toward Spiritual Unity in the Urantia Movement," AND 2. That early in August, 1995, Urantia Foundation Trustees and International Urantia Association (IUA) leaders be invited to help plan for and participate with the General Council in this portion of our mid-year meeting, AND
3. That, if the Foundation/IUA accepts this invitation, a preliminary meeting(s) between the Trustees/IUA leaders and an ad hoc committee of General Councilors meet during the fall of 1995 to develop an agenda of topics and a format for our joint discussions on this theme, AND
4. That, if the Foundation/IUA accepts the invitation, by the end of September, 1995, the Fellowship and Foundation/IUA together choose a location for the mid-year meeting where both Fellowship and Foundation/IUA have a base of supportive readers.

The motion was defeated 13 for, 17 against, with 4 abstentions.

Discussion continued concerning the relationship between the Fellowship and Foundation. Many suggestions were made, including the assembly of a negotiating team to negotiate directly with the Foundation on specific issues. Some felt that the real issue was not really book publishing and availability but rather the control over the direction and experience of the readership. After this exploration was completed, the general consensus was that we simply proceed forward with our plans.

Marilynn Kulieke, chair of the Judicial Committee, presented a progress report on the plan for organizational restructuring. Marilyn first asked Avi Dogim, chair of the Charter Committee, to report on the comments on this issue made by the attendees to the society conclave.

Avi noted that 11 societies were represented officially and several other societies were represented unofficially by some of their members who attended. He commented that the issue of direct representation was discussed and that it was the sense of the meeting that direct representation was no longer a major issue among the societies inasmuch as most of the societies do, in fact, have members on the General Council and that the TDA had the ability to insure that by electing such members. Four attendees felt direct representation was still an important matter. One other suggestion made was to call

for an annual delegate assembly to make sure issues were brought before the Council on a regular basis. Eight of the attendees voted for that. Another suggestion was that some minor changes in the structure be made, particularly in the area of committee names, etc.

Marilynn Kulieke reported that some constitutional language has been drafted and indicated she would like to proceed as follows with the purpose of bringing these proposals and constitutional amendments to the Council for final vote:

1. Make the minor changes to committee names and responsibilities which have been suggested over the recent years.
2. Develop constitutional language for the annual delegate assembly,
3. Develop constitutional language for changing the General Council to provide for direct representation.

She indicated that she wanted to mature the issue sufficiently to require a vote at the mid-year meeting of the General Council either for or against to bring the issue to some level of finality which result in turn, would be reported back to the TDA either as a report or for action. She asked for the Council's approval to proceed as she proposed. It was so moved and seconded. Discussion ensued, including a brief review of the history giving origin to this project and its progress. It was suggested that the language, once developed, be sent to the societies for review and comment. The motion was approved by a vote of 34 for, 0 against, and 0 abstentions.

Marilynn asked for a straw vote on several issues:

1. Increase size of Council rather than keeping the number at 36 (24 in favor).
2. One representative per society, above the basic 36, rather than proportional representation based on society membership numbers. (24 in favor).
3. The 36 members' term lengths would stay at 9 years (24 in favor).
4. The directly elected society councilors would have a 3-year term (26 in favor).
5. Equity -- all Council members are of equal status (27 in favor).
6. Criteria - Should there be criteria for societies to qualify for a society direct representative (23 in favor)
7. Should the Fellowship have the criteria for societies to qualify for a direct representative in its constitution - (23 in favor).
8. Should there be 20 or more active members in order to have a representative with the definition of "active" to be set by the societies (9 in favor, 12 opposed, and 5 abstain).
9. Should there be 10 or more active members in order to have a representative with the definition of "active" to be set by the societies (21 in favor).
10. Should the status of active members be determined by each society (21 in favor).

Marilynn reported that enabling language based upon the above votes will be prepared and presented at the mid-year General Council meeting. It was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously that the prior straw votes on publication specifics shall be considered as binding, formal votes.

Gard Jameson, Eileen Laurence, and Mo Siegel left the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

It was agreed that the mid-year meeting of the General Council will take place on February 2, 3, and 4, 1996. It was agreed to hold the meeting in the San Francisco area. David Kantor, Lee Smith, and

Stephen Zendt will look for places which can accommodate us.

Janet Farrington presented the report for IC96 - The theme is "Living Faith." She reviewed the status and passed out the artwork/logo which the committee had planned to use. Cosmic family, local family, human family and faith family are the daily themes. Unlike previous conferences, this one will continue all day Thursday -- with closing ceremony in the afternoon and party at night. She passed out cards for council members to list at least 10 names for workshop speakers, and also additional suggestions for plenary session presenters. Plans are also being developed for various pre-conference retreats -- music, high altitude, creative writing, art, etc. Various questions were raised and responded to regarding the youth program and inter-generational activities.

The report of the Family Life Committee was distributed by Lee Smith. He went through the report, highlighting the activities undertaken by members of the reader community.

John Lange, chair of the International Fellowship Committee, reported on recent activities. John intends to establish the Elliott fund, in honor of Berkeley Elliott, in recognition of her years of tireless effort on behalf of international readers. A visit is being planned for 1997 to Greece and Turkey. John and other readers will be attending the Moscow Urania conference in September. John also plans to attend the Pacific Rim conference in New Zealand. John reported a planned trip to South America in early 1996. He encouraged all to consider attending such gatherings if at all possible.

Lila Dogim briefly described an effort to produce a Russian translation of The Urantia Book.

Steve Dreier reported on a recent critique of The Urantia Book, Martin Gardner's Urantia, The Great Cult Mystery. He recommended that it be read by members of the General Council.

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

David Elders