

[draft] MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE FELLOWSHIP

February 24, 1996

A special meeting of the General Council was held at 7:23 P.M., Friday February 2,1996, at the Crown Sterling Suites, South San Francisco, California.

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Beth Bartley
Scott Forsythe
Marilynn Kulieke
Sara Blackstock
Alison Gardner
John Lange
Robert Bruyn
Ann Garner Eileen Laurence
Robert Burns
Marvin Gawryn
Joseph Liszka
*Michael Challis
John W. Hales
L. Dan Massey
Avi Dogim
Janice Heinberg
Steve McIntosh
Lila Dogim
Eef Hoedemaker
Harry McMullan III
Stephen Dreier
Gard Jameson
Mo Siegel
*David N. Elders
Geri Johnson
Lee Smith
Janet Farrington
Richard E. Johnson
Paula Thompson
Lucile Faw
David Kantor
Steven Zendt
* Arrived after the meeting started.

Absent were Paul Knott and Melissa Wells.

The meeting was called to order by Steve Dreier, president. Lee Smith read from page 2089 of 7he Urantia Book - "The Faith of Jesus". Beth Bartley recorded minutes until the secretary, Dave Elders, arrived.

Minutes of the General Council meeting of July 27-28, 1995 (previously mailed) were reviewed. Harry McMullan asked for clarification on the decisions concerning endnotes to Ae Urantia Book. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The chairman announced the resignation of John Hay from the General Council and as chairperson of the Special Projects committee. The General Council unanimously directed the president to send a note of appreciation to John for all his work over the years.

ELECTIONS. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to close the meeting for elections.

An election was held to fill a vacant seat on the General Council. The nominating committee presented are Gary Deinstadt, Larry Bowman Cecelia Lampley and Brian Smith. There were no nominations were from the floor. Discussion of the candidates followed.

Michael Challis arrived at 7:55 P.M.

The chairman appointed Marilyn Kulieke and Gard Jameson as tellers. First ballot results: Lampley 9 ; Bowman 5; Deinstadt 9; Smith 10 Second ballot results: Lampley 8 ; Bowman 0 ; Deinstadt 5; Smith 20. The chairman declared Brian Smith elected to the General Council.

David Kantor was nominated for chairperson of the Special Projects committee (5 year term). There were no other nominations. Ballot results: David Kantor 29

The chairman declared David Kantor elected as the chairperson of the Special Projects committee for the 5 year term.

Lila Dogirn resigned from the Education Committee and was nominated to fill a position (5 yr term) on the International Fellowship Committee. There were no other nominations. Ballot results: Lila Dogim. 31.

The chairman declared Lila Dogim elected to the International Fellowship Committee for the 5 year term.

Steve Dreier announced that we are considering an open meeting of the General Council on Thursday, August 8, 1996 during International Conference 1996 for interaction with society representatives and members.

A recess was taken from 8:20 to 8:30 P.M.

Visitors were re-admitted to the meeting. The chairman announced the results of the balloting.

Organizational restructuring - Marilyn Kulieke presented the report of the Judicial Committee concerning an amendment to the Fellowship

Constitution to allow societies to elect a member to the General Council. Discussion followed.

The question of whether the amendment involved a local autonomy issue was discussed. The societies have the right to determine how the "active member" is defined and therefore whether they have 10 active members.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried (27 yes, 3 no, 1 abstention) to accept the Judicial Committee report to amend the constitution.

Societies will be polled to determine whether they want the proposed amendment enacted this summer by the General Council, or by the Triennial Delegate Assembly in 1997.

PUBLICATION OF THE URANTIA BOOK. The current state of the publication project was discussed. Mo Siegel recommended printing a paperback and hard back version. The soft back will cost about \$8 and the hardback around \$10 to \$12. Size would be 7 x 10 in for both versions. Two different designs were proposed for the soft covers and a simple conservative design for the hard cover.

After further consideration, the Executive Committee recommends that endnotes documenting changes to the text not be bound into the book but made available on request. The index will not be finished in time to include with this printing. It can be printed separately when complete, or included in subsequent printing.

Current plans are to print 15,000 books; 4,000 hard back, and 11,000 as soft back. 2,000 of the hard back are on contract to an individual. The hard cover can be retailed at about \$24.95 and the soft cover at about \$17.95.

It was moved and seconded to approve the recommendations as to the physical facts of the book printing. Discussion followed.

A motion to call the question passed (25 yes) and the vote was called.

The motion passed (29 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention).

A straw vote was taken on the color of the hard cover - blue - 15, burgundy 10.

A recess was taken from 10:03 - 10:15 P.M. Dave Elders joined the meeting.

The Executive Committee recommends using Good Cheer Press for distribution and order fulfillment on a contract basis. Paula Thompson presented the Good Cheer Press proposal. The contract would involve all daily work involved with the distribution of the books; cost on a declining scale starting at about \$1.50 per book. Good Cheer Press will maintain a phone line which will be answered in the name of the

Fellowship.

A show of hands showed a clear majority approve of having Good Cheer Press do the distribution.

A number of members suggested that we encourage bookstores to carry the book, and not compete with bookstores by offering direct discounts that would discourage people from buying at bookstores.

The meeting recessed at 11:03 P.M.

The chairman reconvened the meeting at 9:20 A.M. Dave Elders, Secretary, took over the recording of the minutes from Beth Bartley.

Discussion continued on subject of book pricing. A straw vote was taken on the issue of offering some level of discount to members. The vote was in favor. Another vote was taken on the issue of providing quantity discounts and the group favored that as well, assuming that the minimum of 10 books was required consistent with the way in which the books will be packaged when shipped to us.

It was agreed that we would offer a discount to everyone (not just members) based on a minimum purchase of 10 books.

The following pricing policy was approved in principle with final price structure determined by a sub-committee appointed by the President in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

Channel Hard Cover Soft Cover

Low High

Retail Price \$29.95 \$17.95 \$19.95

Mail Order (55%) \$13.48 \$8.08 \$8.98

Distributors (55%) \$13.48 \$8.08 \$8.98

Stores (40%) \$17.97 \$10.77 \$11.97

Quantity Discounts@ 10 (20%) \$23.95 \$14.36 \$15.96

The size of the book was discussed briefly and it was agreed to go ahead with the current size and consider other options at a later date.

It was agreed that the graphic cover design (title only) be used as the basis for the hard cover book.

Steve Dreier announced that The Fellowship will establish a subsidiary corporation to be named Uversa Press, which will handle the business details of book publishing.

Amicus Brief in the Foundation/Mahherra case. The question of filing an amicus brief in the Mahherra/ Foundation appeal was discussed. Steve Dreier gave some background information. An amicus brief is filed by an interested third party. In this case The Fellowship would inform the Court that it is an interested party in the issue of not overturning on appeal the decision of the circuit court that The Urantia Book is in the public domain. Steve Dreier explained that the procedure is to ask the opposing party (in this case, Urantia Foundation) for permission to file such a brief. We have done that and the Foundation has denied the request. The next step is to request permission of the Court to file such a brief. We will need to do that no later than February 15, 1996.

Steve Dreier noted that the Council had previously passed resolutions stating that the Fellowship would remain uninvolved in the legal action between Urantia Foundation and Kristen Maaherra. Filing an amicus brief would change that decision. In our going forward, we would need to take a position which argues on the side of the defendant.

Harry McMullan continued the background discussion. He stated that the purpose of our filing the brief included (a) letting the court know that there is a large Urantia Book social organization, The Fellowship, which has an interest in not having the court's decision overturned on appeal, and (b) enabling The Fellowship to comment on the evidence on which the Foundation claims were based which represent hearsay and religious belief rather than legal fact.

Mr. McMullan noted that one of the pieces of evidence used by the Foundation is a paper purportedly written by William Sadler, called "A I-Estory of the Urantia Movement." In filing our brief we have the opportunity to comment on this document as both authenticity and hearsay status. In addition, virtually all of the other evidence (not all admissible) on which Urantia Foundation bases its claims falls either into realm of hearsay or lacking in substantive fact supportive of their position.

Urantia Foundation has taken the position that they represent a group having a long history of involvement in the book, while Maaherra represents only herself. The court is unaware of the interest that others may have in this matter. A Fellowship brief might help remedy that situation. During discussion many Councilors expressed various views in favor of or against Fellowship involvement in the case at this time. Views ranged from our simply not "going to law among ourselves," to the need for us to take a stand to be sure that the decision is not overturned. It was also pointed out that since we have already determined to print the book, our actions in this matter are clear to everyone and that our filing the Amicus brief only reaffirms that decision. Another comment made focused on the fact that The Fellowship is composed of many points of view, both for and against the filing; as such, it would not be appropriate for the General Council to file a brief on behalf of a group of people reflecting a variety of viewpoints. In that context, one Councilor proposed that the brief be filed only by those in favor and that it not represent people who are against filing. It was noted that our filing this brief not only gives us a chance to stand up for what we believe to be true but also for the Council of the Fellowship to demonstrate leadership in the face of the Urantia Foundation's apparent shading of the truth in order to accomplish their purpose of overturning the court's decision.

Upon the conclusion of discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and failed (8 yes, 22 no, 3 abstentions) to vote by secret ballot.

The question was called by a vote of 30 in favor, 1 opposed, 3 abstentions.

A motion was then made, seconded, and carried (18 yes, 15 no) to have the Fellowship file the Amicus brief as outlined earlier in the minutes.

International Conference 1996. Janet Farrington gave an update on IC96. Janet said that interest by return card has been received from about 1,000 people. She asked that several of the committee participants speak briefly about the elements of the program in which they are involved. John Lange spoke on the basic program and noted that there were four levels of focus--Cosmic Family, Global

Family, Human Family, and the Faith Family.

John also outlined plans for the Berkeley Elliott international lounge to help encourage the interaction of global readers, including video tapes of some of each day's presentations. The afternoon program will be a combination of volunteer, interactive, open sessions to involve as many people as possible. Lee Smith said his committee's basic principle is "let those who want to come, come." This will be a varied format program featuring subjects from electronics to art, translations, etc. Gard then spoke about ongoing worship opportunities coupled with a joint evening shared, worship track-Urantia and Interfaith Communities. Gary Deinstadt is responsible for the Club-UB music program populated by professional musicians. In addition, Janet spoke about the preconference retreat program which will be a bit different than in years previous. At this conference the retreats will focus on people with like talents-music, art, writers, etc., who want to come together to share like creative ideas. She also spoke about the Altitude Adjustment preconference program designed to help acclimatize people who may otherwise have had health reactions to the climate and altitude. Sara Blackstock spoke about the children's program which will include activities associated with Jesus' time on the planet.

Paula Thompson also noted that there would be a store at the conference at which artistic items will be sold with The Fellowship receiving 20% of the gross income.

Contact with Urantia Foundation. Steve Dreier reported that he had met with Georges DuPont, trustee of Urantia Foundation, several times. After the third of these meetings, Georges wrote Steve a long letter and Steve replied. Georges has not responded since (October). Others also indicated that they had similar experiences with individual trustees. Attempts have been made to rekindle personal relationships which have been met with refusal on the trustees' parts.

Communication with Members. It was asked that Steve Dreier send a letter to at least Society Presidents to address some of the issues we discussed and decided upon at this meeting of the General Council. It was also suggested that there be a general communication sent to the members after each Council and Executive Committee meeting summarizing the discussion and deliberations. It was agreed that the President once again assume that responsibility.

Internet. Internet considerations were discussed. It was agreed that the Special Projects committee would continue efforts in this area.

International Conference 1999 Site Selection. Suggestions were made for a location for International Conference 1999. Ideas included the north-west, Alaska, a cruise ship, Vancouver, Lake Geneva, mid-Atlantic and southeast.

International Activities. John Lange gave a brief summary of international activities. He indicated that Joan and Crystalline Biek spent some time in Ghana with a large and growing study group there. John Lange, John Thiel, and Geri Johnson took a trip to India and met with several readers there. They left some books with one of the readers there and had some interesting meetings. John noted that the fourth Urania Conference was held in Russia on a cruise ship up the Volga River. David Kantor presented a

talk on the crisis in theology and Avi Dogim gave a paper on Supremacy. John also indicated that a man in South America has on his own translated the book into Spanish and has contacted us to help him get it published. A translation has also been going on in Lithuania. The New York society is working on Russian and Korean translations, and the San Francisco society has sponsored a Serbo-Croatian translation.

Steve Dreier indicated that it is likely that we will experience significant international growth in coming years which will provide the opportunity for readers to become involved in exciting outreach activities around the world. This will also mean that there will be required a significant amount of resources to be applied to that effort. Harry McMullan commented that he believed that we would be able to fund these activities if the group decides to move forward there, especially doing translations.

Paula Thompson gave a report on expo activities and plans for the coming years. Also under consideration is upgrading the expo booths.

Charter Committee. Avi Dogim commented that a group of readers in Wisconsin has applied for society status. Their application is in order and has approved it with the target schedule date for chartering would be September. The Charter Committee has also considered ways in which other groups can become affiliated with The Fellowship in ways other than full society chartering.

Education Committee. Dan Massey noted that his committee was considering some kind of meeting in 1997 in association with a Council meeting which would be scheduled for the summer period. Dan asked for suggestions as to a place and subject matter. Seattle was one possibility for consideration. Gard Jameson asked that the committee re-evaluate the model for the summer seminars, and introduce new features. One idea suggested is that we cease the summer seminars and that the education committee consider working with local groups to put on educational activities. It was agreed to discuss the matter at the April 1996 meeting of the Executive Committee.

Alison Gardner asked if there is a committee overseeing the family activities at conferences and if any group provides oversight to make sure that the teachings to children are consistent with the teachings of The Urantia Book. Sara Blackstock responded that the ad hoc Family Life

Committee does some of that and that they would be glad to help assemble a group of parents who might act as an advisory resource for that purpose. Sara also noted several of the activities in which her committee is engaged at this time including publishing, video, and other publications. Gard Jameson asked if it was time to consider the Family Life Committee should be considered for Standing Committee status in the Fellowship.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Steve Dreier, President, at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

David N. Elders Secretary

APPROVED: Chairman