

[DRAFT for Council Review 7/1/98] MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE FELLOWSHIP

February 6, 1998

A special meeting of the General Council was called to order at 7:18 P.M. on Friday, February 6, 1998 at the Westin Oklahoma City Hotel, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Sara Blackstock  
Matthew Block  
Robert Bruyn  
Robert Burns  
Gary Deinstadt  
Avi Dogim  
Lila Dogim  
Stephen Dreier  
Scott Forsythe  
Christel Garrick  
Marvin Gawryn  
Janet Farrington Graham  
Earlene Greene  
John W. Hales  
Eef Hoedemaker  
Gard Jameson  
Geri Johnson  
Richard E. Johnson  
David Kantor  
Michelle Klimesh  
Marilynn Kulieke  
John Lange  
Joseph Liszka  
L. Dan Massey  
Steve McIntosh  
Dolores Nice  
Charles Olivea  
Stephanie L. Shaefer  
Mo Siegel  
Paula Thompson  
Steven Zendt

Beth Bartley, Paul Knott, Harry McMullan, Brian Smith, and Lee Smith were absent. Harry McMullan joined the meeting the following day.

The meeting was called to order by the president, Janet Farrington Graham, with Michelle Klimesh acting as Secretary. She announced that proxies had been received from Paul Knott, Brian Smith, and Lee Smith held by Mo Siegel, and from Harry McMullan being held by David Kantor.

After a moment of silence a passage was read from The Urantia Book.

The tentative agenda was presented and approved.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously approving the minutes of the July 13, 1997 regular meeting of the General Council in Vancouver, BC, previously mailed to the members.

## Elections

The secretary reported receiving applications for organizational service in the General Council from the following Fellowship members, and by unanimous agreement they were placed in nomination to fill the two vacancies on the Council, one expiring in the year 2000, the other in 2003: Lawrence Bowman, Michael Challis, Lorrie Krasny, Richard Omura, Gerald Pando, Philip Shiffman, Waldine Stump.

Nominations from the floor were: Allison Gardner, Adrienne Jarnigan

The meeting went into closed session to discuss the candidates for General Councilor positions. Philip Shiffman was disqualified from consideration due to his statement that he had not fulfilled the requirement of a complete reading of The Urantia Book. The chair appointed two tellers who passed out the ballots. It was agreed that the candidate receiving the largest majority first would assume the term expiring in 2003. The tellers tallied the vote and reported:

Larry Bowman 2 for  
Michael Challis 3 for  
Alison Gardner 4 for  
Adrienne Jamigan 2 for  
Lorrie Krasny 14 for  
Richard Omura 7 for  
Gerald Pando 0 for  
Waldine Stump 1 for

No nominee garnered a majority vote. Members spoke for various candidates.

A second vote was taken, ballots collected and the tellers reported the results:

Larry Bowman 0 for  
Michael Challis 0 for  
Alison Gardner 4 for  
Adrienne Jarnigan 0 for  
Lorrie Krasny 23 for  
Richard Omura 6 for  
Gerald Pando 0 for

Waldine Stump 0 for

The President declared Lorrie Krasny elected to the vacancy expiring in the year 2003.

A third ballot was passed out, voted, collected and the results reported by the tellers:

Larry Bowman 0 for

Michael Challis 3 for

Alison Gardner 6 for

Adrienne Jarnigan 2 for

Richard Omura 21 for

Gerald Pando 0 for

Waldine Stump 1 for

The president declared Richard Omura elected to the vacancy expiring in the year 2000. He was notified by telephone of his election. As provided for by the constitution, those elected to fill vacancies on the General Council do so until the next meeting of the Triennial Delegate Assembly.

The secretary, Michelle Klimesh, presented the slate of candidates recommended by the sub-nominating committee -the Executive Committee to fill vacancies on the standing committees. There were no nominations from the floor. The ballots were distributed, voted, tallied and the tellers report the following results:

#### COMMITTEE NOMINEE(S) Vote

Judicial 3 year term Crystal Garrick 32 for

2 year term Richard Johnson 32 for

#### Domestic Extension

5 year term LuAnn Harney 32 for

6 year term Beth Bartley 32 for

Publications 3 year term Geri Johnson 33 for

Finance 4 year term Gerald Pando 32 for

The meeting returned to open session.

#### Committee Reports

Steve Dreier, chair of the education committee, announced the regional conference to be held at Mt. Vernon College in Washington DC. The conference dates are July 9-12. The conference theme will be

"The Art of Spiritual Living".

Fraternal Relations chair, Gard Jameson, reported his participation in an interfaith event in San Francisco. He also announced that the 1999 Parliament of World Religions will be held in South Africa.

Charter committee chair, Marvin Gawryn, presented the revised membership application form. He announced that a new member-at-large, Henry Funston, had been accepted. Readers in Denver, Colorado and Loveland, Colorado have expressed interest in forming a society or in associate status.

It was also reported that readers in Austin, TX expressed interest in society status. Some concerns were expressed by councilors about the process for starting a society. Some thought that the paperwork process is difficult and could be streamlined, that the constitution does not require such stringent society requirements and that we need to become an organization that people want to join.

A motion was made, seconded and carried (32 for, 0 against, 1 abstention) that the chair of the Charter Committee make a recommendation to simplify the process of forming a society. This recommendation will be submitted to the Executive Committee in April for a recommendation to the General Council in July.

An International Fellowship Committee report was made by John Lange, chair, who announced that there is an affiliate group in Korea. He reported that through Norman Ingram's mission to Asia that 120 Uversa Press books were distributed to libraries and universities. Ingrams plans to go to Africa next. Stephanie Shaefer and Earlene Green represented the Fellowship at the Urania meeting in Russia. John Lange plans to attend the International Urantia Association conference in Finland this year.

Avi Dogim, chair of the Publications Committee reported that three issues of the quarterly Mighty Messenger have been sent this past year and a fourth issue is due in a couple of weeks. The Fellowship Herald will be out in July with contributions for this 12-15 page publication being due by the end of May. Avi encouraged contributions to these publications from general councilors. The committee has focused on getting the publications out promptly. A focus on improved graphics will be the priority next year.

The Domestic Extension Committee report was made by chair, Paula Thompson, who reported that the area coordinator program has not received much positive feedback. Her committee recommends that study group leaders be supported directly by the Domestic Extension Committee, eliminating the need for the area coordinators. Some ideas for service to study groups include study group leader retreats, conference meetings, and web pages. Fourteen expos are scheduled for 1998, with more to be arranged. New cities hosting expo outreach this year are Baltimore, Minneapolis, Portland, and Phoenix. Kristen Maaherra has volunteered to format the study group directory this year.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried (31 for, 1 against, 1 abstain) to terminate the Area Coordinator program and replace it with direct services to study group leaders, or those hosting study

groups.

Paula Thompson will send letters within the next two weeks to area coordinators telling them of this action and thanking them for their service in this capacity to the Fellowship.

The meeting was recessed at 11:00 P.M., and reconvened at 9:10 A.M. the following morning. Harry McMullan joined the meeting. Marvin Gawryn arrived at 9:30 A.M.

Finance committee chair, Joe Liszka, reported that our contributions are low and our expenses are high. He introduced a guest, Kel Harris, who presented an idea for additional funding for our organization based on charitable remainder trusts. The budget report will be discussed later.

David Kantor, chair of the Special Project Committee discussed the status of the history project, secondary resources, and the conference coordinators manual.

Judicial Committee chair, Dan Massey, had no report.

#### TDA Resolutions

TDA Resolution #13: Petition to the General Council to "assume publication of the Spiritual Fellowship Journal which will initiate a platform for discussion of the theological, philosophical, and polity positions of religious groups germane to the Fifth Epochal Revelation. Avi Dogim reported that the Publications Committee recommends that we not publish the Spiritual Fellowship Journal. A motion was made, seconded and passed to accept the recommendation from the Publications Committee (31,0,2).

TDA Resolution # 9: "The Fellowship for Readers of The Urantia Book intends to support the emergence of clearly defined Urantia religious groups. Through this resolution we wish to give our blessings to all members of the Fellowship who so desire to openly distinguish themselves as religionists and Urantia Book believers, with a mission to live, teach and honor the high spiritual teachings and concepts within The Urantia Book. "

Dan Massey distributed a report on TDA resolution #9. He presented two resolutions for the Council's review. The first resolution, which was moved and seconded, states:

The General Council resolves that the Fellowship:

1. Shall henceforth utilize the word, derivatives and symbol in the conduct of its routine activities within the non-commercial limits established in the settlement of Foundation v Schaveland, and
2. Shall prepare a fact sheet, available to all readers, informally advising them of the significance of the settlement and its bearing on their now unquestionable rights to use the word and symbol as marks of "Urantian" identity and
3. Shall establish a subcommittee of the General Council to review the need for additional "safe harbors"

for "Urantian" identity, presenting these recommendations to the Executive Committee for consideration for further discussion and negotiation with Urantia Foundation, and

4. Shall express its appreciation to Urantia Foundation for taking steps to resolve this long-standing problem of movement socialization in a constructive manner. Resolution A was discussed and passed (32,1,0).

Resolution B was moved, seconded and discussed. Resolution B states:

The General Council resolves that the Fellowship encourages all believers in The Urantia Book to:

1. Participate in existing religious institutions that meet their personal needs for religious socialization, and
2. Experiment with new and varied forms of religious socialization to meet the needs of Urantia believers and
3. Publicly identify such new forms with the Urantia movement at the sole discretion of their members.

Points brought out in the discussion included: that the motion was not strong enough to conform to TDA constraints, that there were problems with the word "encourages", that the Book encourages group religious practice, that this is first step of a charge to foster a religion and that the original TDA wording contained the word "bless" which is not appropriate.

A motion to call the question, passed and resolution B passed (18,11,4).

TDA Resolution # 5 (Public Information Program) Mo Siegel reported that there is no formal proposal for a public information plan yet. He is putting together a team and deciding whether the committee's focus should be proactive or only to respond to negative media coverage. Other issues that need resolution include how to distribute the PR info, whether or not there should be coherency between Fellowship and the Foundation's coverage and whether or not media training is needed.

TDA Resolution # 2 (Study Group Consultants)

Paula's Thompson's motion to end the area coordinator program and implement a program to which focuses on study group leaders and hosts addresses this resolution.

Ad-Hoc Committee Reports

Family Life Committee: Dan Massey presented a resolution which included constitutional language that would make the Family Life Committee a regular standing committee of the Fellowship. The resolution and constitutional language was as follows:

Be it resolved that the Executive Committee of the Fellowship

1. Determines that it is advisable to create a Family Life Committee as a Standing Committee of the Fellowship;
2. Recommends to the General Council, at its meeting in Washington, D.C. on 12-13 July 1998 adoption of the following amendment to the Constitution of the Fellowship; and

3. Instructs the Secretary-General to forward copies of said resolution to each of the members of the General Council.

1. Amend Section 11.1 Names of Committees, to read: j. The Family Life Committee
2. Amend Section 11.18, Additional Departmental Committees, to be Section 1.19.
3. Insert a new Section 11. 18 reading: Section 11.18. The Family Life Committee: The Family Life Committee shall promote and support family focused programs and services which strengthen families, further the ability of families to cultivate the spiritual soil for their children's education, provide arenas to help families form a sense of spiritual community, to facilitate problem solving abilities within the full range of family experience, in order to enhance and enrich spiritual values and to improve human relations.

Discussion about this resolution ensued and the proposal was sent to the Executive Committee for review in April, and a report back to the General Council at their annual meeting.

Member Survey Report: Marilyn Kulieke, presented the results of a survey entitled "General Council Priorities and Issues Survey. A total of 32 out of the 34 current councilors completed the survey. John Hales and Matt Block worked with Marilyn to create a report which contained survey comments, ratings of potential goals, items on the Foundation/Fellowship relationship, items on translations, items on Urantia Book distribution and items on fraternal organizations and leadership. A copy of the report is on file.

Book Distribution Report: Michelle Klimesh reported that five societies have applied for books. Five non-society groups have also applied, but no program is in place for them yet. The Executive Committee will set the limits for domestic and international placement.

Translation Committee Report: Avi Dogirn reported that the Fellowship has not had direct involvement with translations since the copyright returned to Urantia Foundation. Golden Gate is continuing with the Serbo-Croatian and New York with the Russian and Korean translations. Although an item on the October'97 agreement between the Urantia Foundation and the Fellowship was an intention to cooperate on translations, there is no clear indication to date as to how such cooperation can actually occur.

Database Committee Report: Robert Burns gave a presentation on the current status of the website project for coordinating our mailing list and study group databases through the website. The new database will allow information to be easily accessed and updated by local societies.

Website Report: David Kantor reported that 67,780 documents were downloaded from the website in the past 10 weeks, for an average of 895 per day. Requests have come into the site from 80 different countries. We need to plan ahead to use this resource wisely in the years to come. David is also investigating the possibility of conferencing software, which he hopes will be something we use in the near future to replace expensive conference calls. He encouraged us to become familiar with our e-mail accounts, and distributed suggestions for "net-iquette".

Budget Report: Gard Jameson briefly reviewed the budget and noted that we need to be careful with our spending.

Office report: Janet Farrington Graham described the plan from the Executive Committee to begin the decentralization of the office. Financial administration will move to Oklahoma City, readers services will take place in Boulder, and the web site will be administrated from the San Francisco area. An ad hoc committee reporting to the Executive Committee has been formed to investigate the hiring of an executive director. In light of the reduced amount of work in the Chicago office, Matthew Block will be laid off as of May 1 st. Discussion about the reasons for these changes occurred.

## Strategic Planning Discussion

Situational Analysis - Many people don't want to belong to any organization. People don't know what we do or who we are. Each councilor stated the reason that they had chosen to work for the Fellowship. A summary of councilors reasons would be for the purpose of "dissemination and socialization of The Urantia Book".

There was an attempt to prioritize the top goals culled from General Councilors' responses to the "General Council Priorities and Issues Survey". Responses below include those goals which had an average rating of higher than 4.0 . A score of 5.0 indicates a unanimous vote of support from the General Council. List of Highly Rated Items from the Survey:

- 4.9 Support societies/study groups with reader names
- 4.8 Sponsor International Conferences
- 4.7 Build Website
- 4.6 Web forum for Urantia Book teachings
- 4.6 Disseminate teachings globally
- 4.6 Sponsor Regional Conferences
- 4.6 Improve communication with readers/central organization
- 4.4 Disseminate Urantia Book globally
- 4.4 Support translations
- 4.3 Support Whole Life Expos/Book Fairs
- 4.3 Create financial plan
- 4.3 Support societies with resources
- 4.2 Sponsor special interest Seminars
- 4.2 Strengthen family life
- 4.1 Increase members at large
- 4.1 Help study group Leaders leaders communicate teachings

External Issues Discussion: Janet Farrington, Mo Siegel, and Gard Jameson reported current status of contact with Urantia Foundation trustees. The Hansen, Maaherra, and Schaveland cases have been settled or resolved. The Arizona case is still pending. The Executive Committee has a tentative meeting scheduled with Urantia Foundation trustees on April 17, depending on whether or not they have a full

board of directors. At the request of Richard Keeler, licensing will not be discussed in April. It was moved, seconded and withdrawn that we consider the Urantia Foundation discussions separately from discussions about the International Urantia Association (IUA). We need to have a better understanding of the differences between the Foundation, IUA and the Coordinating Committee.

A resolution was passed out by Marvin Gawryn. It was moved and seconded that the Fellowship explore possibilities of integrating IUA and the Fellowship into one organization. The question of privilege was raised and accepted. A secondary motion was made and seconded to table the motion on the floor. The secondary motion passed.

The General council was recessed until 9:00 AM on February 8.

The General Council resumed at 9:20 on February 8.

In relation to external issues, a discussion of copyright and fair use issues was undertaken. A detailed discussion of the book that Family Life Committee is putting together was discussed in terms of whether or not to submit it to Urantia Foundation for copyright approval. The law is not fully understood by our organization right now in terms of copyright and fair use. Dan Massey and Crystal Garrick read from the 1976 copyright /fair use law. It was suggested that Sara not submit the committee's materials to the Foundation, as it is a Fellowship project and is consistent with interpretations of fair use.

A motion was made and seconded "to prepare a memorandum of understanding to be shared with the Foundation about publications". Clarification of the motion was requested and the wording of the motion was amended to "The Judicial Committee of the Fellowship will prepare a policy statement regarding guidelines for the creation of Fellowship publications." There was a motion and second to withdraw the motion on the floor. The motion to withdraw passed.

Moved, seconded and passed unanimously to adjourn. 1010 The meeting adjourned at 11:02 am.  
Secretary

Approved:  
Chair