

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF
THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP**

February 5, 1999

A mid year meeting of the General Council was held at 7:30 P.M., Friday, February 5, 1999, at Olympic Spa & Resort, Carlsbad, CA, USA.

The following members were present, constituting a quorum:

Robert Arkens
Claudia Ayers (late)
Beth Bartley
Sara Blackstock
Matthew Block
Robert Bruyn
Robert Burns
Gary Deinstadt
Avi Dogim
Lila Dogim
Stephen Dreier
Scott Forsythe
Marvin Gawryn
Janet Farrington Graham
Phil Geiger
John W. Hales
Eef Hoedemaker
Adrienne Jarnagin
Richard Johnson
David Kantor
Lorrie Krasny
Marilynn Kulieke
L. Dan Massey
Harry McMullan III
Dolores Nice
Charles Olivea
Richard Omura
Stephanie Shaefer
Brian Smith
Paula Thompson

Absent: Christel Garrick, Michelle Klimesh, John Lange, Joe Liszka, and Stephen Zendts
Claudia Ayers arrived at 8:14 p.m.

The meeting began with a moment of silence and readings from *The Urantia Book*

The meeting was called to order in by Janet Farrington Graham, President, with Lorrie Krasny acting as Secretary. She reported that proxies had been received for Christel Garrick, Michelle Klimesh, John Lange, Joe Liszka and Stephen Zendts. They were being held by David Kantor, Harry McMullan III, David Kantor, Harry McMullan III, and John Hales, respectively.

Following words of welcome for the new General Councilors from the President, there was a time of silence followed by readings from *The Urantia Book*.

The Tentative Agenda was reviewed, the Millennium Initiative was added for discussion, and the revised agenda was approved unanimously.

Corrections of minutes of last meeting: Change all of Zents to Zendts, remove "get from email" from last page. Minutes unanimously approved as amended.

Office Update: Janet gave a review of the work of the officers and the Executive Committee. We are trying to integrate the web with office procedures. This would include a database, which David Kantor is working on with a team. In addition we are exploring options of using electronic media for information flow among the General Council. It should take another 6 months to bring the office on line. In addition, we've hired a part-time person to work 15 hours a week to help with the administrative and conference related work. At the Executive Committee in October we explored integrating the web and our standing committee structure by asking each standing committee to add a web liaison. We would also like every General Councilor to be on an ad hoc or standing committee. We agreed upon a "web dispatch" person, who would be responsible for taking input from the web and delegating it out to standing committees.

Opening General Council Meeting: Should we make it possible for non-members to come and observe General Council meetings. Scott Forsythe moves that we open General Council meeting to the entire community for observation. Seconded. 33 in favor. Passes unanimously.

Discussion of General Council Prayer Practices: Charles Olivea gives background on the idea. The Council should pray more and more effectively. Only good would come from it. The discussion that ensued included the following points: We shouldn't legislate prayer. We already have quiet reflection time and could add that to moments during the meeting. It would be a nice tradition to establish a prayer before a meeting. How can we pray without being disruptive? Just begin with a prayer, and pause when we're in deep conflict. It's a personal, inner thing, but the group needs to learn to practice the presence of the Divine. We should create a cultural sense that we are seeking the greatest good. We need some way to remind each other that we are doing that. We shouldn't be ordered to pray. From *The Urantia Book*: "They learned to differ, to debate to contend to pray and to compromise . . ." We should experiment to get the right format. But we can't really order people to pray. We can just set aside a time to exercise that option. It is important to pray while we deliberate, but it shouldn't be a ritualistic aspect of our business. But we could set something aside. We take care of business the way we should and dovetail prayer into the discussion. One member did a study and found a quote that shows that prayer can be isolating unless it's tempered by group prayer. We could use Robert Rules of Order to call a recess for prayer purposes. We need to make it okay to pray, and maybe that's what this is about – letting the group – in the moment – ask for prayer on an issue. If the purpose is to bind us together, or get rid of conflict – if it is anything other than a clearer sense of God's will, then we shouldn't do it. But if we want to sit together and acknowledge that we don't know the answers, but would like help seeing the Divine answers, that would be okay. Remember the conditions of effective prayer. . . exhaust all human possibilities. Use it sparingly. How do we implement this – call a recess for prayer. We do this already. We should do it for ourselves. Some of us love being led in prayer and think it's a good thing. We always spend too much time on the first thing on the agenda. Prayer means different things to different people. Some people don't like to be led in prayer. We shouldn't ritualize any of this. Leave when to pray to the spirit. This discussion itself is a prayer, because it's non-artificial. We should exercise our option to call for recesses.

Discussion of GC/EC nomination procedures: This was brought up by Gary Deinstadt. He feels that people shouldn't be promoted to the Executive Committee unless they've served from the bottom up. He feels we should be sensitive to moving the same people around to different chairs after having no experience serving on that committee. He just wanted to raise that point. One member notes that the concern gets expressed, we go round and round with it, and although we don't formalize it, we become sensitive

to it. We play musical chairs. We should always go for the best. No one volunteered for the openings.

Ad Hoc Committee Reports:

IC'99: Steve Dreier: The early registration efforts have produced 188 registration forms, approximately 450 individuals, of which 20 – 25% are children. This is a large proportion. We may have over 200 children present. That's going well. Plenary speakers, morning breakouts, worship and entertainment are good. Children's programs are well under way, toddlers, children, teens. Please register. The more we know and the earlier we know it, the better we can plan. We are looking for people to do afternoon workshops. We have about 22 workshops. We need more than that. IUA has advertised our conference in their journal. Marvin adds that we have more diversity in the program and planning of this conference than ever before. Have many study groups submitted proposals.

PR Report: See attached, plus new projects picked up in EC meeting – working with FLC and Domestic Extension on 17 to 24 year olds, and the study group. Phil asks about the photo. We are re-shooting it at IC'99

Web Site: General. Report on file. One third of all our documents are Spanish. www.librourantia.org. Domain name is now: urantiabook.org, not ubfellowship.org. Any society has a web page. NY society has a good web page. Administrative info on the web via the new database. We are serving people from 80 different countries. Introductory info in many languages. We're getting Portuguese, Croatia, German, Russian – David wants to stream video from the conference. Dolores asks if we're getting groups of readers from our internet outreach.

Family Life Committee: Report attached. Sara reads Mission Statement of the Family Life Committee. Parent Education, Secondary Works and Summer Camp are the key issues for FLC, based on a survey of needs and wants. She needs more members for her committee – for people to build an interactive kid's web page, researchers to find out what other religions are doing with their children and what works, what is already available in bible book stores and on the web, to present two interactive workshops to societies.

Flowers Program: Marilyn Kulieke. We had a successful year. We spent all of our money. Supported Norman Ingram's work. Distributed Uversa press books – probably over 476 to societies, 17 to prisons, 299 Flowers, 196

through web site and international. At the EC we decided where to go with Uversa Book program. We've got 2000 books left. We will curtail the Flowers piece of the distribution effort in lieu of the youth program and international. Flowers is going to take on the IC'99 scholarship fund for – raising money and distributing it. We would use societies to sponsor foreign people to come to the conferences. We already have about 5 people who have applied. We only have the funds to bring two of those people. These funds would be partially matched. There will be a process of prioritizing. We would continue our relationships with these people after the conference, and cross-fertilize as much as possible. Phil suggest we adopt sister societies. One caution is that we don't talk about these opportunities until we've raised some of the funds.

Harry explains why John Lange cannot attend. He has not missed a meeting since 1984. Joe is in bed with a bad case of the flu, near pneumonia.

Meeting recessed at 9:45 p.m.

February 6, 1999

The meeting was re-convened at 9:15 a.m. by the President with Lorrie Krasny as secretary. We started with a moment of silence, followed by a reading from *The Urantia Book*.

Party at Brian Smith's tonight. Lunch will be \$13.00.

The President introduced Saskia Raevouri and her book, "How I Found The Urantia Book". She's selling them here. Every penny goes to Norman Ingram's African Mission.

Sunday: If we get through all of our business today, we can sleep in and have an informal meeting at 10:00 a.m., with the community. This would be a good time to have discussion with Dave Elders.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Education Committee (Presented by Alison Gardner in Michelle Klimesh's absence). There was a meeting scheduled on Sunday afternoon that has been cancelled. Summer Study Session in 2000 is going to be in Chicago, coordinated by First Society. The following year, San Francisco. Michelle is planning a pro-active talent search at IC'99 with the goal of developing a Speakers Bureau. The Wrightwood Series: Cult is well underway. There

was a roundtable in January. Full text will be published after the conference. Two more Wrightwood proposals are with the Education Committee. One on parables, headed by Steven Zendts and Charles Olivea. Another proposal submitted by Dan Massey and Sioux Harvey on the history of our community. Race and *The Urantia Book* will be published this spring. Two ideas around Training Teachers and Leaders: 1) A distance learning program; and 2) a School. Charles has prepared 4 pages of questions regarding what a school needs. The Fellowship is supposed to train teachers – produce a school.

Finance: Harry makes report in Joe Liszka's absence. We raised \$293,000 in contributions. Our budget was \$294,000. We ended up the year with an excess \$76,284.

Fraternal Relations: Richard Omura joining as an adjunct and is web liaison for the committee. Marvin has an excellent committee. The committee is doing an afternoon workshop at IC'99 on UB students who are active in organized religions as a way of networking – with the hopes of developing an ongoing email discussion group. Rebecca Kantor went to the American Academy of Religion (AAR) meeting. She is participating in the new religious movements group. World Parliaments of Religion meeting in November 1999. We are co-sponsoring a booth with the Foundation, and they will be doing a presentation on *The Urantia Book* there.

Publication: We have been able to publish 4 "Mighty Messengers" a year. The next one will be out in March. "The Fellowship Herald" is published twice a year. The next one is due out in May. It's a very active committee. Nancy Johnson does all the MM layout. Sage Waitts does the same for the Herald. Carolyn Kendall does the editorial work on the Herald. Avi does the editorial work for the MM. Linda Buscelli will do the editorial effort on the next Herald. Gary has just joined publications. It's a well-coordinated group effort. Avi encourages newsworthy items to be forwarded to him – any events coming up from April on.

Charter: Trying to make an efficient committee. Working on exploring the needs of groups outside of the US. Their web liaison is Mike Rayl from LA. Working on an email list for society officers – with some link to the GC. Help societies have a voice and an influence. Charter for the VIP Society is being drafted and designed and ready. Robert will fly up there to participate in an installation ceremony.

Domestic Extension: Creation of new 800 number. 877-335-5669. A

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dedicated line. Doreen Heyne is trying to list our number in phone directories. It's not free. Out of state, you can't. Societies could list it. It is in the 800 phone directory. They cut back a little on expos this year because one of the main promoters went out of business. This year we'll do 12 – 15. New cities are Denver and Ft. Lauderdale. Portland readers are 100% IUA, and they loved being served by The Fellowship in this way. PR will create a bookmark for sending out with every book. We will be targeting young people. We should identify the young people in the movement and send them Fellowship books (17 –24). We'll involve them in project. Web liaison for DE is Larry Watkins. Trying to create a web site for study groups. If we have anything for that web site, please send it to Paula. In the survey – under 35 year olds are totally unrepresented. Steve makes a pitch for bringing younger people in. Charles feels that there's a reason that we're older. Dolores says that most major religious groups are facing the same problem. Except for Africa, S.A. and Asia. We are developing an ad for the college newspapers. Lila says we have to evaluate where the youth is in this country. People 20 –35 are more cynical, more disillusioned with organizations. They may be reading on their own. At the present time, it is unrealistic to expect them to join movements. Marvin says that sociologists of religion recognize waves of interest. Generation X and Generation Y are very different. Y are more like the boomer generation. Phil says we have to capture the imagination of youth. Harry says that study groups and societies are obsolete. The unspiritual controversies have sucked the spirit out of the whole movement. Paula reminds us that we all found the book at young ages. That's when we need it the most. Scott says this is a chronic problem regarding the Urantia institutions. But we need the community on a local level. It's a paradox because on one hand we don't want to be institutionalized. Robert Burns makes the point that we started reading early, but didn't become active until after 30. There may be people reading behind the scenes, ready to be pulled in. Lila says kids don't go because they believe in the religions – they go for a social event with their friends. What we want from the young people is inner commitment to God. We have to be clear what our mission is. Are we trying to grow numbers or spread the revelation.

International Fellowship Committee: John Lange is absent. This is a transition time for John, so we have decided to move forward on a couple of things. Flowers is handling the International Scholarship fund. David's web activity is phenomenal – with the international community. There's a trickle in French. A good amount of German. Portuguese is bigger than German. Western Europe is very slow spiritually. People in other countries manage

portions of their own web pages. The activity is beginning, but it is in the early stages. Dolores suggested a frequent flyer mileage contribution program. Adrienne will follow up. Paula mentioned Rosey Lieske's report.

Special Projects: Web stuff already discussed. Tony Finstad doing secondary resource guide.

Judicial: Draft constitution for new societies has been developed. Societies must have 7 active voting members in order to send a delegate to the TDA. This was used for the VIP society in Vancouver. Many people believe that the constitution is a barrier to forming societies. An article on fair use will be coming out in MM soon.

Discussion of Foundation Issues:

Letter from Mo Siegel re copyright. They've requested that we accept one of 3 options. Last summer we agreed to comply with the Foundation, but not to formalize it in any way. Mo called Janet and said we needed to accept a license. They've been discussing it. He claims that until we had "accepted" this policy, the situation was not resolved in their minds. Since the Fellowship would not consider accepting a license, he's offered us a third option of just sending a letter acknowledging that we are in compliance. (SEE ATTACHED LETTER FROM MO). Option 1 – Click-wrap license. (They can't implement this approach, technically); Option 2 – Shrink-Wrap License – same as what's on most software. Option 3 – Send a letter that we will abide by three terms. The Executive Committee recommends #3. Keep letter brief and say we have been in compliance since _____. Adrienne asks for a link on their website back to the Fellowship. We are specifically not agreeing to their internet copyright policy in total, because it includes some translation limitations. We will make a limited statement of agreement. Harry thinks this deal is good enough as is. We shouldn't ask for more. They have the only Urantia web site that doesn't link to us. They have targeted the Fellowship for persecution, and since we're not willing to litigate, we should comply. Mo worked very hard on finding a satisfactory solution for the Fellowship. We will not state we are complying with their copyright policy, but we will list the compliance points. Will the letter be circulated to the General Council? The council asks to see the letter before it goes out. Steve makes the point that it should go out as information only. The feedback process will greatly delay action on this. The Foundation considers this issue the central one they have with us. The Fellowship doesn't. Marvin thinks that we should have the tone of the letter be glad. The Council should simply agree that the Judicial Committee answer the letter appropriately.

Motion: The General Council authorizes the President to work with the chair of the Judicial Committee to respond to the letter from the Foundation. Seconded. 32 in favor, 2 opposed. Motion passes.

Motion: Have the chair of the Judicial Committee bring the letter to the General Council for approval. 32 in favor, 2 opposed. Motion carried.

Lunch recess.

Meeting resumes at 1:10 p.m. with a moment of silence.

Membership Discussion: Presentation by Marilyn Kulieke.

Current Fellowship Philosophy: From the brochure – our image statement. We're a fraternal association. We support study, dissemination and reader services. We embrace individual diversity while striving for spiritual unity. We support the ideal of cosmic citizenship.

Our fundamental assumptions are changing. (SEE MARILYNN'S PROPOSAL)

All society members are lifetime members. No Fellowship dues. That is strictly a society function. Members-At-Large ("MALs") are in two categories. Lifetime (people who are willing to commit for the long haul), and an annual MAL – individuals who commit for the short term. In the future MAL's who want lifetime membership pay lifetime dues. Annual members pay annual dues. This would be people who are trying us out. What are the membership benefits? We need to build a membership package, including priority access to resources (website, grants), free participation in our interest group program, discounts on publications and conferences.

Applications for membership should be widely available. We need to revamp how we go about forming societies. Our MAL's need to work to form societies. The membership approval process needs to be revamped. There should be no turn-downs. Society charters need to be aligned with an inclusive membership philosophy.

Interest groups (replace the study groups) Groups of individuals who have common passions would work under the auspices of a moderator or chair.. Like the theology group, the web site group, the teaching mission.

The 3 Proposals would be:

Set up an interest group program

Develop an inclusive membership policy

Work with the Foundation now that study groups are not associated with any organization

What would representation look like? We should take a look at other organizations like AAR and how they addressed the representation issue. But we are not a membership organization. Our organization is built on the goal of spreading the revelation. He would love to have our membership base grow, but not to focus on getting more members. Dues are counter-productive. How can we make the eternal message attractive to the younger people. Membership changes don't have a lot to do with this. Some think membership dues gives people an ownership in something. The book itself says we need something to belong to. The choices are good. We have a number of options. Only people who are enfranchised are society members. MAL lifetime doesn't get to vote. Interest groups don't get to vote. What about a standard annual fee for everyone? The deeper issues for the movement are that the revelation identifies us and how it has transformed us. Our destiny is predicated on only that. The IUA makes it very easy to become a member. Our membership process is extremely complicated. We need a sense of community and belonging. We need to provide enough variety in our activities. We should have evels of membership. Use the new membership kit – and introduce the levels of membership there. We should not be comparing ourselves to professional organizations. It's self-serving. We're not interested in attracting members who want something from us, but who want to give. That would eat up our resources. Community is on the local level – geographically delimited. You have to associate with your community members. We can transcend that view and remember that we are members of the kingdom. Spiritual community is totally different. It's important to decide whether we're a club or a group of commitment. Some can't relate to this because the purpose is to propagate the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. Once we get enough people to realize that, then they will want to come on line. Some day there may be many organizations like The Fellowship. Do we need this proposal because we have so many people who want to join us? Would this proposal make us more of a community. We are not a membership organization, but a service organization. Urantia Brotherhood was a club, but the Fellowship is a service organization. The IUA has aggressively started to build membership, and we're feeling

competitive. We should evolve the socialization of it so it can work its way into other areas of life. We need to find the qualities in Marilyn's proposal that we would like to see brought into the membership process. We do need to increase the volume of our public. Then we can discuss self-selection and elimination. Certain principles are key. The membership process should be as simple as possible. As should the selection process. We should have an orderly path from first association, and then get brought into activities. There should be a progression of involvement. The process should be open to anyone who wants to get involved. We should break out of this legacy of control of participation. We can't do this without changing the constitution in a major way. We should simply change the spirit of the constitution to the spirit of inclusion, from the spirit of exclusion. We should take the initiative to form societies. Regional societies of members at large and charter them. Society at Large.

How do we get special interest groups to become members? We already have that as Associations. Levels of membership should depend on people's level of involvement. We should simplify.

Marvin Gawryn suggested the following:

We already have the levels we need except for mailing list only.

Mailing list, no fee annual signup

Annual member – minimal fee paying, annual sign up

Associate group or special interest group (geographic and activity based respectively)

Society involvement – join to serve and be leaders. The only level with political enfranchisement. All groups have the same fee basis, except mailing list.

We should invite people to come serve with us, but we're not allowing you to do that. We should add a benefit for membership. We need to divorce the spiritual from the fraternal. Brian had a hard time getting a group together tonight, because there was no way to get it together. The mailing list is key.

A lot of people tithe and donate organizations that nurture them spiritually. Do we want to provide a student fee for student members? What do we do internationally? What about basing it on the U.S. economy. We have to

adjust it internationally. Associate membership might be right for some groups.

We're both a membership group and a service group. We need to remove the bar to membership. Let people come in on whatever level they're comfortable with. You can serve at any level.

We need to be effective in the short term and the long term. One of the things we can do is to simplify the application. We come up with a quick and easy application. No process. They sign and get a thank you back. What is our real goal? Are we that interested in achieving members or spreading the revelation. We don't need members as much as we need servers, supporters, volunteers and advocates. We need to link the officers of all the societies. Donations – we can grandfather it in – but every new MAL has minimum dues. The Charter committee needs to take a proactive role in forming societies and associations.

We need to keep it simple. We need to have people get to know us. Everyone has a misconception of the Fellowship. We can be both service and membership. Trying to include people in the organizational structure is counter to what we are trying to do. It would be an administrative nightmare. What will we do when someone doesn't pay? Are they disenfranchised? We should offer people an option of society membership. How do we encourage societies to do the work at the local level? Everyone should be a member. Mailing list member. Study group member. Special interest group member. Associate member. Society member. Let's try this before we add the dues.

We consistently come to a halt because we're not going to do the perfect thing. We've been given a palette of options. Let's pull all these ideas together, and prioritize them and give them a try.

Progressive levels of membership are fraternal. We have a new line of truth. When we talk about membership, our heart's craving is to have an increase in members and service. What type of person is attracted to this movement? The one commonality is the type of person who is intellectually open-minded and the spiritual certainty that faith provides - someone who appreciates value, fact and meaning.

It isn't important that we have members. We have to bring people to the kingdom. Jesus prayed for more laborers (not members). How do we do that? By the life we live and Bringing those truths that we live to the world. 3 constraints to this. 1. Freedom to act. (we have that now) 2. Creative, dedicated leadership and a pool of volunteers. 3. Financial means – this is the one we don't have.

Recommendation on the next step from the President. We need to be sure that its simple to become volunteers and contribute. The impression in the community should be that we are open, diverse, and encourage all efforts of volunteers and leadership that come our way. Janet recommends the following committee: Marilyn Kulieke, Chair, Phil Geiger, Claudia Ayers, Dan Massey, Brian Smith and Robert Burns in an advisory capacity

Maybe this should go to the Charter Committee. We don't make the best use of the existing structure. By setting up another committee, we are disenfranchising Charter.

Presentation by ex-President Dave Elders on The Millennium Initiative:

The idea for this came about in conversation with Lyn Lear, in discussing the need to talk about what's been taking place for the last 50 years, and the next. The current organizations are scaffolding. They will be replaced or evolve into a worldwide community. Evaluating his own experience in organizations, he felt there was a lot of fear. The revelation asks us to do a lot. What would be the best community we can envision? How can we facilitate people into the fifth epoc?. How do we help people understand the reconnecting of the circuits?

_____ Secretary: Lorrie Krasny

APPROVED: _____

Chairman

