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# FIFTH EPOCHAL FELLOWSHIP

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for readers of *The Urantia Book*

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## GENERAL COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE LETTER

July, 1990

Dear Members of Fifth Epochal Fellowship:

The regular annual meeting of the General Council took place on Thursday and Friday, July 5-6, 1990 at the conference center in Snowmass, Colorado immediately after the Fellowship's International Conference. An Executive Committee meeting was held thereafter on Saturday, July 7, 1990. This report will provide you with a summary of both these meetings.

### SUMMARY OF GENERAL COUNCIL ACTIONS

1. The following people were elected to positions either on the General Council or on the respective Departmental Committees:

<b>General Council:</b>	Lee F. S. Smith	1 Year (until 1991 TDA)
<b>Judicial Committee:</b>	Steve McIntosh	6 Years
<b>Charter Committee:</b>	Cindy Hopper Geri Johnson*	6 Years 1 Year
<b>Fraternal Relations Committee:</b>	Gard Jameson Marvin Gawryn	6 Years, Chairman 1 Year
<b>Domestic Extension Committee:</b>	Mo Siegel Paula Thompson	6 Years, Chairman 1 Year
<b>International Fellowship Committee:</b>	John Hales Larry Bowman	6 Years 3 Years
<b>Education Committee:</b>	Joan Neumann	6 Years
<b>Publications Committee:</b>	George Sammis Byron Belitsos	6 Years 3 Years
<b>Finance Committee:</b>	Harry McMullan John Lange Paul Knott	3 Years, Chairman 6 Years 4 Years
<b>Special Projects Committee:</b>	Barbara Kulieke	6 Years

\* Appointed by Executive Committee since nominee had not given permission by the time of election.

2. The General Council voted to invite Society Delegates and Alternates and Area Coordinators to observe the February 16-17, 1991 meeting of the General Council, except for those agenda items which require confidentiality in the judgment of the Council (e.g., elections). This mid-year meeting of the General Council will be held in Tampa, Florida and will immediately follow a Society Delegate Conclave and an Area Coordinators meeting which will be held concurrently on Friday, February 15, 1991.

3. The General Council also agreed to charge the Executive Committee with the responsibility to establish and facilitate a committee to study the broader issue of opening all General Council meetings to observers.

It was the clear intention of the General Council that this committee include Fellowship members from Societies, members-at-large, non-United States participants, and even non-members. This subject will be included in the responsibilities of the ad hoc committee discussed in number 12 below.

4. The proposed mailing list policy developed by an ad hoc committee comprised of Marilyn Kulieke, Brent St. Denis, John Hay, and Michael Painter was passed unanimously by the Council. This policy details the procedures to be followed by the organization in a broadened use of the mailing list held and maintained in trust centrally. This policy will enable the use by Societies and Area Coordinators of that portion of the list in their areas; it will facilitate regular list maintenance services centrally for Societies; and it will provide for limited access to mailing services by other groups. The Council recognized in approving this policy that there are now many mailing lists of readers of *The Urantia Book* available (from conference activity and newsletters, for example) and that as a consequence, the final choice of whether to remain on a particular list must be left to each reader. This approved policy will be made available to interested persons in a pamphlet format to be published under the supervision of the Publications Committee.

5. It was agreed that approved minutes of General Council meetings would be available to Fellowship members on request. It was agreed that this action would not place an onerous burden on office services inasmuch as the *General Council and Executive Committee Letters* published on a regular basis were a more detailed account of the deliberations, reports, and actions at these meetings and would therefore usually be sufficient.

6. The packet of commentaries gathered in response to the Foundation's 'Special Report' was approved by the General Council for mailing to Society officers and Area Coordinators for their reference and files, and to others on request only. It was further agreed that any additional commentary materials proposed for inclusion in the packet or later mailing will be sent to Council members for prior approval.

7. After deliberation, the Council voted to approve the adoption of "Guidelines Concerning Councilor Responsibility" which was proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee on Councilor Responsibility (ethics), chaired by Brent St. Denis. Compliance with these "Guidelines" is wholly voluntary; they are meant simply to codify those principles of ethical behavior which the General Council agrees should generally guide its elected members in dealing with ethical issues such as conflicts-of-interest, appropriate confidentiality considerations, openness, sharing of information of value to the Council as well as with other elected bodies and the membership, voting, attendance at meetings, and commitment to the work of the organization. Once printed, these guidelines will be made available to the membership so that there will be broad awareness of the levels of ethical responsibility assumed voluntarily by the members of the General Council.

8. A proposal to establish a separate and independent ethics committee to evaluate and comment upon (in non-binding manner) any decisions and/or actions taken by individuals, groups, Societies, Departmental Committees, the Executive Committee, and General Council, was defeated by Council vote.

9. The Council accepted the report of the Subcommittee on Name Change, chaired by Steve Dreier, and asked this committee to continue the name selection process, including work with Societies and members-at-large, and report to the General Council at its February, 1991 meeting. There was general consensus that until a final name selection has been made by the members of the organization, we should focus on the "Fellowship" portion of our provisional Fifth Epochal Fellowship Corporation name when referring to our association of readers of *The Urantia Book*.

10. The General Council voted by acclamation to thank John Hay and his Conference Committee for the outstanding job of designing and implementing the 1990 International Conference. It was noted that this was the largest single gathering of readers of *The Urantia Book* since publication in 1955, with over 1,000 attenders.

11. The General Council approved as a starting place the Strategic Plan presented by the Subcommittee on Programs and Services, chaired by Marilyn Kulieke. The Council instructed the Executive Committee to work out the next stage of a broadly interactive planning process involving Fellowship members.

12. The General Council approved a resolution establishing a subcommittee comprised of the chairpersons of Judicial (chair), Charter, International Fellowship, and Domestic Extension Committees to facilitate dialogue between society representatives, members-at-large, and others (non-members and non-United States readers) for the purpose of beginning the process of discussing our organization in the future. This resolution was stimulated both by (a) a motion to initiate this process passed by Society representatives at the Society Conclave held on Wednesday, July 4, 1990 at Snowmass and (b) by a consensus desire on the part of General Council members to undertake such a study of the Fellowship's Constitution to consider appropriate changes to this document based upon the wisdom of experience, the Fellowship's current organizational affiliations, and members' desire that the organizational mechanism be more open, participatory, and responsive to members' needs.

13. The General Council approved a recommendation by Berkeley Elliott for the International Fellowship Committee to empower the Executive Committee to waive in certain cases the membership requirement for appointment as an Area Coordinator serving outside the United States. This will insure that the primary qualification for participation in this program is the willingness to serve and not simply membership. It was felt that this is extremely important outside the United States since it enables us to be responsive to non-U.S. readers' attitude that the organization at this time is primarily "American."

#### SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS/REPORTS

1. Bob DeMatteis of Grass Valley, California and Eric Dittmer of Green Bay, Wisconsin were approved as members-at-large of the Fellowship. Welcome!

2. Berkeley Elliott reported that Neil Francey and Kathleen Swadling had turned down appointment as Area Coordinators in Australia. [The last *Executive Committee Letter* erroneously reported their acceptance.]

3. The Executive Committee approved the purchase of 1,000 copies of *The Urantia Book* from URANTIA Foundation if the latter will honor the 50% discount offered at the American Booksellers Convention (ABA). These books would be used to service book order requests from readers and Societies, and for the Library Placement Program being implemented by Domestic Extension. If the discount is not available, we will obtain books from regular sources to provide this service to our readership.

4. A subcommittee of Marilyn Kulieke, Brent St. Denis, Mo Siegel, and Harry McMullan will structure a book sales policy proposal and report to the Executive Committee at its September, 1990 meeting. This proposal will also consider the question of the sale of other related books and materials.

5. The Executive Committee approved our forwarding to URANTIA Foundation another request to meet to dialogue with the Trustees. It was agreed that this request would include reference to the recent initiatives by the Connecticut and Ontario Societies calling for a reconciliation process. The chairman was asked to draft a letter for review and approval by the Executive Committee.

6. It was agreed that there was a need to provide a reader forum for the expression of ideas, suggestions, and criticisms concerning the organization and other issues related thereto. In response to a proposal to establish a printed vehicle for this interchange of organizational commentary, it was agreed that the Publications Committee would develop a prototype for such a reader forum and a proposal for implementation including editorial purpose, budgetary, staffing, timing, and related considerations. A report is due at the September meeting of the Executive Committee.

7. The Executive Committee appointed Geri Johnson from Phoenix, Arizona to the vacant one-year position on the Charter Committee. The General Council directed the Executive Committee to make this appointment since at the time of election Geri had not been contacted to give her consent.

8. The issue of location and timing for the 1993 International Conference was re-opened based upon the late August timing and participant number limitations at the previously selected Victoria, British Columbia

site. The Site Selection committee chaired by Berkeley Elliott will review the situation and consider selection of alternate sites for Executive Committee review. The number of attenders at Snowmass--nearly 1,100--suggests that any future conference site needs to accommodate at least 1,200-plus participants.

#### SOCIETY CONCLAVE AND AREA COORDINATORS MEETINGS

During the week of the Snowmass Conference, meetings of both Society representatives and Area Coordinators were held to discuss issues related to the concerns, opportunities, and services of each group. A separate report of each of these meetings will be sent to each participant and will be available to any interested member of the Fellowship on request.

#### CLOSING COMMENTS

In my view the recent successful Conference for readers of *The Urantia Book* which took place at Snowmass this summer is a living model for what our Fellowship is about. On the material level, it was necessarily organized to insure that those factors which brought over 1,000 readers together at the same time, which scheduled more than 45 speakers, which enabled the coordination of creative talent and expression, which provided accommodations and sustenance, and which pooled the skills, resources, and effort of 100 volunteers, were all focused in a manner sufficient to actualize the potential from which this conference was born. On the mindal level, the sharing of ideas, understanding, creative input, like-minded interaction, constructive criticism, coordinated overcontrol of material factors, and communication were properly brought to consciousness, sorted, and acted upon in necessary individual and group decision-making and expression. Spiritually, there was an extraordinary and simultaneous blending of diversity and unity, an uplifting expression of real love between people committed to a deeper realization of the God within and the God in others, and finally, a consistent dedication to unselfish sharing and soul-building interactions with fellow perSONS of our common Father.

The notion of *fellowship* is a compelling concept. This inclusive word symbol seems representative of our journey together as it was experienced by many at the Snowmass Conference. It was and is fellowship which was manifest in Colorado. It is now and will be fellowship which, if we so choose, can characterize our association of readers and believers dedicated to the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. Fellowship is an experience which requires the presence of at least two persons. In the case of our association, based as it is upon the Fifth Epochal Revelation of religious truth, fellowship also contains a sense of communion with a common Father. Reflective of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*, fellowship in our association of readers and believers combines, as demonstrated in the Snowmass Conference, experience with matter, mind, and spirit unified by perSONality uniqueness and will. In effect, if we choose to see and act upon it in this way, fellowship is the experience of Supremacy.

Understandably, disappointment with the events of the last months might be sufficient to raise the temptation of non-involvement as an antidote to organizational difficulty. However, it may well be that the experience of Snowmass clearly demonstrates the fruits which are possible to actualize by deepening the commitment to achieve a sense of unity with our fellows in the very jaws of severe difficulty. Certainly we know that it is easy to feel friendly when the load of responsibility is light (a week in the Rockies), and when difficulty seems to inhabit another world. But, the real test of our commitment to fellowship with each other comes when our struggles deepen in conflict, disagreement, and strife. Perhaps that is why the real achievement of fellowship between us is a Supreme endeavor, requiring the best we have to give. Perhaps that is why the Snowmass Conference, coming as it did after a year of organizational strife, shows that the vein of underlying commitment to the principle of fellowship with both divine and human personalities, is increasingly a living part of our expression of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*. Perhaps this experience will replace non-involvement as the true antidote to difficulty, and will move us into the future with a compelling vision and living philosophy for our association, true fellowship among us.

In the spirit of fellowship,

David N. Elders, President