

United Church of God, *an International Association*
Council of Elders Meeting Report
December 13, 2005 – Cincinnati, OH

The final day of this session of Council meetings was called to order at 9 a.m. by the chairman, Robert Dick. In the morning the Council completed its final review of a doctrinal paper and a doctrinal policy statement. Following the doctrinal discussions, the Council went into executive session to discuss ordinations, credentialings and personnel matters. In the afternoon the Council teleconferenced with Ken Giese, during which initial plans were put into motion for the 2006 annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders. The Council concluded its executive session business following the discussion of the 2006 GCE. Tuesday's session ended with the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee business and planning for the February Council meeting.

Review of Study Paper and Policy Statement

Leon Walker, chairman of the Doctrine Committee, reviewed portions of the study paper, "The Biblical Role of Women." This paper has been approved by the Council and was posted on the ministerial Web site for a 30-day review by elders, which expired on December 11. The Doctrine Committee had prepared edits based on the elders' input. Mr. Walker led the Council through each of the proposed edits. After discussion, appropriate edits were incorporated into the paper. By resolution the Council unanimously agreed that the paper is ready for publication.

Mr. Walker then read to the Council a document titled "Polygamy – Policy and Administrative Statement." This statement was prepared due to a need to deal with the issue in areas where polygamy is part of the culture. Jim Franks reviewed the Church's historical approach to this issue. The purpose of this statement is to clarify and standardize procedure in administering the Church's teaching. After reviewing the document thoroughly and discussing proposed modifications, the Council voted unanimously to approve the statement as edited.

Mr. Walker stated that there had been a letter provided by the Church's Personal Correspondence Department and an article in *Vertical Thought* that had slightly different explanations of a scripture in regard to the question of tattoos. Mr. Walker said that he would write a letter on behalf of the Doctrine Committee to the individuals concerned to clarify the correct application of the scripture.

Planning for the Annual Meeting of the GCE

The Council spoke via telephone with Ken Giese, chairman of the GCE annual conference planning task force. Mr. Giese had provided the Council with a document that included the planning timeline and an overview of three proposed themes for the conference.

Mr. Dick polled each Council member as to his preference for the theme of the conference. All agreed that the theme “Effective Leadership – Mentoring Leaders for the Future” was relevant and motivating. The Council also agreed that elements from other proposed themes could also be combined with the subject of leadership.

Mr. Giese suggested that David Register, director of education programs, and Richard Pinelli, ministerial development coordinator, become involved in planning the workshops to be offered during the conference, as this is the largest gathering of elders during the year. Jim Franks, Ministerial Services operation manager, agreed – stating that coordination and communication would be key to taking full advantage of this educational opportunity for the elders. The task force will work with Ministerial Services in the area of seminar topics, while continuing to be responsible for the rest of the conference planning.

Mr. Dick requested that Mr. Giese refine the plans for the theme and conference objectives and communicate them to him approximately one month before the Council’s next scheduled meetings in February 2006.

Statements of Concern and ERR Resolutions

Three resolutions, which the Council had left pending, needed to be resolved during this session. Joel Meeker read Statements of Concern generated by the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee on proposed amendments to the Rules of Association and Bylaws that the Council in its meeting on December 12 had chosen not to support. Each statement was reviewed to see if edits were needed. In both cases, the vote to accept the statements was passed 11-0, with Aaron Dean abstaining.

Mr. Walker then proposed a resolution assigning the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee the task of working on the subject of the relationship between the Council of Elders, the president and National Councils. The ERR committee is to report its progress to the Council during the February meetings. The resolution passed unanimously.

Plans for February 2006 Session

Mr. Dick asked each committee chairman to submit a list of possible agenda items for the February meetings.

The last item of business was to discuss the location for the February meeting. Charles Melear was asked to look at the feasibility of San Antonio, Texas, again for this year’s February meeting. The Council calendar calls for a meeting from February 22 – March 1, 2006. Mr. Dick adjourned this session of the Council of Elders at 3:45 p.m.

Don Henson

-end-