

December 5, 2005

Greetings Fellow Elders,

We are only a few days away from the December Council meeting and midway through a year of transition.

Stop and think about it.

We celebrated our tenth anniversary in May. Midyear we had a change in the office of president. We are currently on track to pass a milestone by the end of the fiscal year reaching the \$20 million mark for income. We are ending regionally produced TV this year and consolidating our efforts at the Home Office. We have built a new TV studio and have begun program production.

It has been a transitional year within the Council also. I wrote to you prior to the August meeting outlining changes in the approach to business that would be placed before the Council for approval. The initial changes were as follows:

- Use the Operation Plan at each Council meeting as a yardstick against which we measure the accomplishments of operations.
- Have the President function as the chief executive officer of the organization with all Home Office reports brought to the Council by him thus removing any appearance of individual autonomous operations.
- Shift from sitting and listening to operational reports to questioning the President and staff on the content of their reports and the progress of the administration.
- Have all reports in the hands of the Council members in advance of our meetings so they can be reviewed prior to our arrival.

At the end of our August meetings I asked the Council's permission to make this our standard procedure and received full support.

The first obvious fruit of these changes was the ability to cut a full day out of our August meeting schedule and still handle all the business put before us. This is a highly visible fruit but not necessarily one of the more important ones.

I can't overemphasize that right now the most important task is to see that these changes and changes that will follow are not a flash in the pan.

In talking to the President and the operation managers in August about the desire to see the Council measure the operations' efforts against the Operation Plan, we all realized that would require a totally revamped Operation Plan. The Home Office team has been busy with this task and will give the Council its first look at the changed format this meeting.

What we want is an Operation Plan that tells us what the operation intends to accomplish, the priority they place on their tasks and how they plan to reach their objectives. After all, how can you tell if you're winning the game if you don't keep score? We want the President to provide the

GCE and the Council an operation plan that clearly sets out priorities and will allow us to use it as an organizational measurement tool.

Why so much focus on the Operation Plan? Simple. The Bible requires, to coin a phrase, that we be a “fruits-based” organization. Forget modern management jargon—the most basic understanding of the Parables of the Talents and Pounds makes it clear that God expects us to bear fruits. It couldn’t have been put more simply than it was at the final Passover when Christ said to His disciples, “By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit” (John 15:8).

It is inarguable that we have expended much energy in the last ten years doing the work God gave us. Our greatest desire is that we also see the fruits of all that spent energy. Speaking for myself, the most inspiring fruit so far is the ever growing base of donors and co-workers who now number just under 10,000 and who provide nearly 10% of the gross income of UCGia. I can’t help but be inspired in a forward-looking sense by the scriptural adage in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” As some of these men and women continue growing spiritually they will find their way into the Church of God.

But, I am getting ahead of myself. Where are we currently within the Council?

On the Council Front

I have been talking to several of the Council members leading up to the December meeting and there is a strong sense of need to continue building on our recent changes. August wasn’t the beginning of significant change. You could sense the determination within the Council to make significant changes even at the beginning of the year.

There is a legitimate time for a governing board to be involved in administration—when the organization is young, staff is small and experienced board members can step forward to provide skills that are needed in the absence of fulltime staff. That time has passed.

There is the sense that it’s time to let the President and his staff administer and the Council govern. To get there will take some additional steps. The December meeting will probably be a time when the Council begins defining the steps that are to follow. Let me explain briefly if I can.

When Clyde Kilough became President he asked the Council to define his role as it relates to the international areas. A questionnaire was sent to all international elders and when the results came back, it was clear that in defining the role of the President we may need to go all the way back to square one.

How the President relates to international areas isn’t an independent question. The answer springs from an understanding of what the role of the Council is, what the role of its committees is and what the role of the President is. How these more fundamental questions are answered will determine how we answer the one on the table.

It is becoming clearer that we organizationally use a common vocabulary but with different concepts of what the terms mean. Governance is a good example. It is inarguable that the Council, not the President governs the body. What does that mean? Ask ten elders and I guarantee you will get more than one answer. Another term that defines responsibility is oversight. The committees of the Council have oversight functions. What does that mean? There isn’t currently a unified answer to that question.

We will have discussions in the December meeting on the role of the President in working with international areas but I expect those discussions will lead to even more fundamental questions. If I read the mood correctly, the Council is ready to tackle the task.

In summary, December will be a time of building upon the principles adopted in August. We will be working toward the creation of an operation plan that will allow us to better measure the fruits of our efforts. We will be taking a first look at our new TV media efforts and assessing their focus. And, we will continue the discussion of the role of the President in working with international areas. I anticipate that discussion may lead us into a full review of the roles of Council and President resulting in more effective governance and administration.

Please pray for productive meetings and for safe travel,

On Behalf of the Council,
Bob Dick, Chairman