

United Church of God, *an International Association*
Council of Elders Meeting Report
February 27 and 28, 2006 – San Antonio, Texas

Monday, February 27

Robert Dick called today's meeting to order shortly after 9 a.m. He outlined the day's agenda, stating that first of all Clyde Kilough would complete the Council review of the Operation Plan. For the balance of the day, Mr. Dick and Ken Giese, chairman of the General Conference of Elders advisory team, led the Council through a review of the plans for the 2006 meeting of the GCE. At the end of the afternoon Mr. Giese, also a member of the Conferencing Task Force, reviewed with the Council some of the conclusions of their recent report.

Completion of Operation Plan Review

Mr. Kilough reviewed the Media and Communications Services section of the Operation Plan, soliciting comments and questions from the Council as he read each section. There was discussion on the content and effectiveness of publications, the *Bible Study Course* and the *Beyond Today* radio program (formerly *Good News* radio). Mr. Kilough said he will incorporate the Council's suggestions and present a completed Operation Plan for their approval later in the week.

Plans for the 2006 GCE

Mr. Dick and Mr. Giese walked the Council through the proposed schedule for the business and fellowship activities for the upcoming annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders in May. The Council also assigned speakers for the Sabbath service on May 6, as well as the presenters for the seminars to be conducted on Monday, May 8.

The schedule and details of the conference will be sent to the members of the GCE by Gerald Seelig in March, as part of the official Call and Notice.

Conferencing Task Force Report

After discussing the conference, Mr. Giese provided the Council with copies of a report generated by the Conferencing Task Force. Members of the task force are Larry Greider, David Register and Mr. Giese. This presentation was the Council's first awareness of the task force, which was commissioned by Richard Pinelli and given three objectives:

1. Examine current methods of organizing, scheduling and funding the annual meeting of the GCE, recommending specific alternatives and options.

2. Examine current methods of offering continuing education, skill development and training to our ministry, making recommendations for improvements in efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Offer options for the effective recruitment and training of future ministers.

Since this was the first time the Council had seen the report, Mr. Dick stated that there could be some discussion on the first two of the three objectives, but the presentation would be a starting point and informational only. The Council is not in a position at this point to resolve any of the issues, but can make suggestions as to what further specific information the task force could provide the Council for further consideration.

Mr. Giese shared with the Council the task force's summary of observations regarding the annual meeting of the GCE and their suggested options regarding the annual GCE meeting. Council discussion primarily focused on two subjects:

- Attendance by salaried and non-salaried elders – approximately 50 percent of the elders attend.
- The inclusion of seminars for ministerial education along with the business meeting, which is required by the Constitution and Bylaws.

Jim Franks commented that the seminars given at the General Conference have had an impact on the education efforts of Ministerial Services. In 2005, for example, some of the same material given at the GCE meeting was also given in a regional ministerial conference just a few weeks later. Mr. Franks recalled that in the early years of the Church, the Council discussed whether the annual meeting was a business meeting or an educational conference.

He also noted that funding for the conference is an issue. Mr. Franks commented that he would like for all the elders to be able to attend, and employed elders are required to (unless excused by the Council) – yet all have to pay their own way. He acknowledged that the Council will not be able to do so today, but needs to resolve both the education coordination and funding issues.

Mr. Dick commented that Ministerial Services needs to determine if the seminar portion of the weekend should fall within the ministerial education program. Mr. Franks suggested that the question be taken under advisement and resolved within the master plan for the education program, which Mr. Register will be presenting to the Council in May.

Mr. Dick adjourned the meeting for the day at 5 p.m.

Tuesday, February 28

Much of the day was spent in executive and closed sessions. During the open session the Council completed its review of the Operation Plan, discussed the future of

the *Anchor* publication and considered the proposed outline for the sermon video for the 2006 Feast of Tabernacles.

Immediately after calling the meeting to order at 9 a.m., Mr. Dick introduced Mr. Kilough to complete the final paragraphs of the Media and Communications Services portion of the Operation Plan. Mr. Kilough commented that the final draft would be e-mailed to the Council members so they could review it in its final form before the meeting Wednesday.

Mr. Kilough then conducted a discussion of the *Anchor* publication. Developed through the focused education effort of the Church, *Anchor* and its related Web site were designed to provide an educational tool and help to individuals who are dealing with homosexuality.

Mr. Kilough read a resolution passed in March 2002, which granted Council approval of the publication and its Web site. He then presented a new resolution, calling on Ministerial Services and the director of education to consider how *Anchor* can fit into the master plan for education, in conjunction with all areas that are included in the area of “focused education.” The resolution passed by an 11-0 vote (Richard Thompson was not present).

The final matter of open session business was the discussion and approval of the outline for the video sermon for the 2006 Feast of Tabernacles, titled “Life Anew in a New Land.” The setting will be Australia and New Zealand, drawing on an analogy between the coming new civilization of God on earth, and the new civilization that early Australians forged as they sought to build a new country.

The video will focus on the brethren and work in Australia and New Zealand. It will include a sermon from an Australian minister, discussion of the challenges and successes of the work of the Church in each area, interviews of members and elders in both areas and a message from Mr. Kilough on the overall accomplishments of the Church in the past year and goals for the future.

The Council resolution to approve the outline and proceed with production passed by a vote of 11-0.

The Council spent the balance of the day in executive and closed sessions.

Don Henson

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