

United Church of God, *an International Association*
Council of Elders Meeting Report
December 12, 2006 – Cincinnati, OH

At 9 a.m. Robert Dick convened the final day of this session of Council meetings, calling on Clyde Kilough to open with prayer. The Council started the day with a brief executive session. Upon reconvening open session, the Council undertook a review of the work and recommendations of the Committee Review Task Force. Jim Franks provided a report on the U.S. 2006 Feast of Tabernacles. The final item of business was a resolution regarding the *Anchor* publication.

Council Names Corporate Secretary

In the executive session at the beginning of today's meeting, the Council engaged in a final discussion and decision to appoint a corporate secretary. The Council selected David Johnson to serve in that capacity. Mr. Johnson is an elder, residing in Cincinnati. He assists Mr. Franks in Ministerial Services and also teaches classes at the Ambassador Bible Center. Mr. Johnson will work with outgoing secretary Gerald Seelig over the next few months and will participate in the next Council meetings in February-March 2007. Mr. Johnson will assume the role of secretary on May 1, 2007.

Committee Review Task Force

In the August 2006 meetings the Council established a task force consisting of Mr. Dick, Richard Thompson and Leon Walker. They were assigned to review the current Council committees and to make recommendations on how these committees may work more effectively.

The report started with a review of committee history since the inception of the Council in 1995-1996.

Mr. Dick commented that the UCG Council of Elders has tracked the standard three-stage evolution of a start-up organization. The description of these three stages is taken from a publication titled *Nonprofit Board Committees*. The "Board" referenced in the following summary is the publication's terminology and is equivalent to the UCG Council of Elders.

- Stage One: There is only the Board. The administration has not yet been selected and hired. The Board handles all administrative matters.
- Stage Two: The Board works in concert with a small staff and finds itself both governing and managing. In this stage the Board takes direct control of functions when it feels they are not going as they should.
- Stage Three: At this final level of development, most policies of the organization are written and in place and a staff is in place to care for the operation of the organization. At this point the Board has matured.

Mr. Dick summarized that in 2003, when the topic of committees was last discussed, the Council was at Stage Two. Now, as we approach 2007, the Council has arrived at Stage Three—a mature board.

The task force report listed the Council committees that had been established since 1996. In May 2000 a task force was assigned to address the issue of committees. Their study, presented to the Council in August 2000 was titled “Task Force on Committee Restructuring.” Among other recommendations, they suggested reducing the number of committees from 10 to six and also suggested rules regarding the selection of committee chairmen and members, the number of Council members on any given committee and the use of advisers to assist committee work.

Based on the efforts of this task force, the following committees were established: Doctrine, Education, Ethical Review, Executive, Media and Communication, Roles and Process, and Strategic Planning and Finance.

Mr. Dick then focused on the current situation. The following is quoted from the Committee Task Force Report, dated December 2006:

The task force was of one opinion when it came to the basis for our recommendations:

- We feel we are a mature board—a Stage Three Board, if we use such terminology to describe a board’s evolution.
- We feel that committees existed in our first stage to handle administrative tasks, and rightly so.
- We feel committees existed in our second stage to address issues and give the Council control of organizational direction.
- We feel as a mature board that neither of these reasons for having a committee is still valid.

The second basis for the task force’s conclusions comes from a statement in the December 2003 issue of *Board Member*. A sentence in a sidebar to an article titled “Confessions of a Committee Member” stated, “Don’t create board committees that duplicate the staff’s work.”

With that in mind, the task force made five recommendations.

1. Disband the Media and Education Committees. The functions of both of these committees are now under the direction of the administration.

After discussion, the Council unanimously passed a resolution to dissolve both of these committees.

2. Restructure the Doctrine Committee. The task force concluded that the work of the Doctrine Committee has changed over the years and that steps should be taken to formally revise its responsibilities.

The Council had already taken this step by passing a resolution on December 11, which changed the process for the review of study papers on doctrine and prophecy (see the Council Report for the December 11, 2006, meeting).

3. Due to the wide range of its responsibilities, the task force recommends that the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee be divided into two committees.
4. For similar reasons, the task force recommends that the Strategic Planning and Finance committee also be divided into two committees.
5. The task force urged the Council to clearly define the role of the newly designated Strategic Planning Committee, in order to more effectively provide strategic leadership for the Church.

The Council agreed with Mr. Dick's suggestion that time be set aside during the February-March 2007 meeting to consider recommendations 3, 4 and 5.

2006 and 2007 Feast of Tabernacles

Mr. Franks provided the Council with an overview of the 2006 Feast of Tabernacles. Highlights included many encouraging statistics:

- Worldwide attendance increased to 20,436—a 3.3 percent increase over 2005.
- Holy Day offerings increased by 12 percent.
- Top five U.S. sites for attendance for 2006:
 - Panama City Beach—1,420
 - Lancaster—1,372
 - Branson—1,337
 - Wisconsin Dells—1,312
 - Jekyll Island—1,245
- Planned U.S. Feast sites for 2007
 - Lancaster, Pennsylvania (new hotel location)
 - Anchorage, Alaska (2007 only)
 - Jekyll Island, Georgia
 - Panama City Beach, Florida
 - Cincinnati, Ohio/Northern Kentucky
 - Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin
 - Branson, Missouri
 - Escondido, California
 - Bend, Oregon
 - Steamboat Springs, Colorado
 - Kerrville, Texas

U.S. and Canadian Festival coordinators will meet in Dallas, Texas, in February 2007 to discuss plans for the 2007 Feast of Tabernacles.

Anchor Resolution

Based on discussions in executive session in a previous meeting, Mr. Kilough presented a resolution to end the Church's relationship with *Anchor* magazine and its related Web site. The resolution also stated the Church's intent to create and publish a new electronic magazine and related Web site to fit the master plan dealing with all areas of specialized education. The Council passed the resolution unanimously.

The Council completed its work for this session and adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Don Henson

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