

United Church of God, *an International Association*
Council of Elders Meeting Report
Teleconference – June 24, 2003

The Council of Elders met in teleconference to discuss four items of business: the proposed name for the Church's youth-oriented magazine, elders to serve on the Evangelism Task Force, the confirmation of Roc Corbett as a member of the Amendment Committee and the time line for the President's annual job performance appraisal.

Ten council members were present at the start of the meeting (Joel Meeker Aaron Dean were unable to participate due to other commitments.)

***Vertical Thought* – a magazine of understanding for tomorrow's leaders**

Dave Treybig, Randy Stiver and Larry Greider joined the council to propose a name for the Church's youth-oriented magazine. *Youth United* has been published as an e-magazine for three years and is scheduled to begin publication in a print version in the first quarter of the 2003-04 fiscal year.

In providing background information to explain the proposed change, Mr. Treybig, managing editor, commented that producing the e-magazine has been an education for the staff. They've learned that it takes a different approach to appeal to our younger audience. He pointed out that many of our youth don't read *The Good News* and our booklets because the traditional writing style doesn't naturally appeal to a younger audience. Just as the Apostle Paul was "all things to all men," a great deal of effort has gone into establishing a fresh and more innovative writing style that will carry our message to the youth.

Serious discussion of changing the name gained momentum as a result of a series of focus group discussions led by Randy Stiver at United summer camps, the Feast of Tabernacles in Bend OR, with teens and young adults at the home office congregation in Cincinnati and with teens and young adults in the congregations he pastors in Oregon. Further surveys and discussions with teens and young adults led by Mr. Treybig, Larry Greider and Doug Horchak yielded similar comments and input.

One conclusion drawn from the discussions was that a publication titled *Youth United* didn't appeal to the teens and young adults. Our older teens (17+) and 20-somethings consider themselves "young adults," not "youth" which they feel refers to younger teens. Including the word "youth" in the title of the publication would not attract the "young adult" audience.

Mr. Treybig stressed that a change in the name of the magazine is not a change from the mission statement nor a change to any of its objectives. The intent is to more effectively provide spiritual direction for this age group in the Church.

Mr. Stiver started with over 30 titles that were suggested in brainstorming sessions and finally narrowed it down to the final proposal: *Vertical Thought*. He gave several reasons for the proposed name. *Vertical Thought* sounds fresh, interesting, challenging. It isn't immediately identified as a religious title. It connotes an upward, positive direction; implies morality, good character. It is a word that is familiar to the younger generation and brings to mind rock climbing, computers and high technology. It automatically triggers a thinking reaction – and what the publication will offer will challenge young people to think.

Mr. Stiver also mentioned that the proposed subtitle is “a magazine of understanding for tomorrow’s leaders.” That phrase connects *VT* to *The Good News*, with its similar subtitle: “a magazine of understanding.” Without using the word “youth,” it’s immediately obvious that this is a magazine for younger readers and that it offers something of substance.

Mr. Treybig concluded by assuring the Council that a great deal of effort has gone into consideration of this change. Every group discussion with teens and young adults has reached the same conclusion: the title *Vertical Thought* is a great improvement over *Youth United*.

The Council had a few questions. Jim Franks asked why the focus group discussions were with older teens and young adults when the target audience for the youth publication those under the age of 20. Mr. Treybig replied that the youth publication’s mission statement targets mid-teens through 20. In general, writers have aimed for the older readers. He said that we can invite younger teens to “read up” to a higher level, but we can’t expect older teens and young adults to “read down” to a lower level. Furthermore, he stated that we hope that some older than 20 will continue to receive the publication.

Richard Thompson asked what the initial circulation number will be and the demographics of the initial mailing. Mr. Treybig responded that the first print run will be 5,000. There are currently 2,000 youth aged 12-20 in the Church’s data base. When the magazine is offered, some who aren’t currently in the data base will be added and it will also be offered to young adults into their 20’s. Mr. Treybig expressed confidence that the circulation list will grow whether the magazine is advertised or not. There have already been a number of requests for a printed version. The current online edition will generate some 4,000 hits on its Web site and many of those readers are not associated with the Church.

Mr. Thompson suggested the need for a cover letter accompanying the first issue to explain the title, the magazine’s purpose, etc. Mr. Treybig said that an introduction and explanation will be offered in both a cover letter and an editorial in the first issue.

Victor Kubik commented that until he heard an explanation of the title it seemed mysterious and alien. But the subtitle (“a magazine of understanding for tomorrow’s leaders”) is helpful and the explanation given today makes the title understandable. He agreed that a more traditional or common name like *Youth United* would have less appeal. The title *Vertical Thought* may be a bit of a “risk” but it seems carefully calculated and reasonable.

Doug Horchak, who in addition to being a Council member also works on the youth publication staff, emphasized that everything *Youth United* did online will be maintained in the printed version of *Vertical Thought*. He emphasized, as Mr. Treybig said earlier, that the change in title does not represent any change in editorial policy. Mr. Horchak also discussed the title with teens and young adults in his congregation and all immediately connected with it and understood it. They also agreed that it would be a more appealing title to younger readers outside the Church.

Peter Eddington stated he also had been working with and analyzing results from target group discussions for the last several months. He feels comfortable with the direction and is pleased with magazine layout and Web site ideas. He suggested the title be accepted and that we move forward.

Clyde Kilough commented that this will be a subjective decision, some will feel comfortable with the title and others won’t. But since it’s subjective, he favored accepting the suggestions of our own in-house experts who have done a great deal of research and put much effort into their proposal.

Mr. Horchak put forward a resolution that the Council approve the name of the Church’s youth-oriented publication be changed to “*Vertical Thought* – a magazine of understanding for tomorrow’s leaders.” The resolution was approved unanimously. (Mr. Meeker and Mr. Dean were not present for the vote.)

At this point in the meeting Mr. Franks had to leave due to another commitment.

Evangelism Task Force Membership

In the Council meetings in May, 2003 Mr. Horchak was asked to chair a task force on the subject of evangelism. In today’s meeting he proposed a list of primary and alternate candidates to serve on the task force. Mr. Horchak reminded the Council that that the purpose of the task force is to study how the term “evangelism” is used in scripture and how it should be applied in the work of the Church today. He stated that his list of proposed candidates is a cross section of elders with professional skills, educational background and interest that will enable the task force to fulfill its purpose.

Based on input from the Council, Mr. Horchak made a couple of additions to the list of primary and alternate candidates.

Mr. Horchak put forward a resolution that the Council approve the edited list of primary and alternate candidates to serve on the evangelism task force. The resolution was approved unanimously (Mr. Meeker, Mr. Dean and Mr. Franks were not present for the vote.)

Having secured Council approval of the list, Mr. Horchak will assemble the task force, making selections from the approved list, starting with the primary candidates and moving to the alternates if any of the primaries are not available.

At this point in the meeting Mr. Thompson had to leave due to another commitment.

Amendment Committee

Robert Dick, chairman of the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee, pointed out that Roc Corbett's term as chairman of the Amendment Committee expires at the end of June, 2003. Since the Amendment Committee in the past has chosen its own chairman, it is necessary to reconfirm Mr. Corbett as a member of the Amendment Committee or select another elder to take his place. The Amendment Committee will then be responsible to again select its own chairman.

Mr. Dick put forward a resolution that Roc Corbett be reconfirmed to serve another term as a member of the Amendment Committee. The resolution passed unanimously. (Mr. Meeker, Mr. Dean, Mr. Franks and Mr. Thompson were absent.)

President's annual appraisal

Mr. Kilough reviewed a Council resolution passed on November 19, 1997 which stated that the president of the Church would receive a job performance evaluation each year at the Council's January meetings. Mr. Kilough asked whether in the past the president had received a job performance review based on the timeline established in the resolution or if it had been based on when he was selected to serve.

Les McCullough became the President in March, 1998. He received reviews in the month of December in 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Leon Walker proposed a new, thorough resolution that would specifically establish a timeline and process for the president's annual performance evaluation. However, it was difficult for some Council members to understand him due to his telephone connection. Mr. Antion suggested that for now the Council could simply rescind the time line established in the November, 1997 resolution and proceed with an evaluation of the president at the August, 2003 Council meetings. During the course of

the August meetings the Council would have the time to more carefully consider a resolution regarding the annual review process.

Mr. Walker put forward a resolution that the Council rescind the resolution of November 19, 1997 which established a time line for the annual evaluation of the President. The resolution passed unanimously. (Mr. Meeker, Mr. Dean, Mr. Franks and Mr. Thompson were absent.)

Mr. Kilough directed the Ethics, Roles and Rules committee to bring forward a resolution at the August meetings to establish the time line for the annual evaluation process for the Church President.

The Council went into executive session to conclude its business.

-Don Henson

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