

**United Church of God, *an International Association***  
**Council of Elders Meeting Report**  
**August 25, 2005 – Cincinnati, OH**

The opening session of the Council of Elders for the 2005-2006 fiscal year was called to order by Chairman Robert Dick at 1 p.m. today. Mr. Dick welcomed Larry Salyer, who is attending his first meeting as a newly elected Council member.

In his opening comments, Mr. Dick asked the Council to consider one of the great lessons in history—timing is critical. As Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose...” Mr. Dick commented that it is now time to implement certain important changes in our processes. Mr. Dick reminded the Council of the major components listed in the agenda letter to the Council and GCE. Now is the time to move to a unified report from the home office, led by the president. Now is the time to engage the administration in lively dialogue on important issues. And now is the time to begin work on a major restructuring of our operation planning system with an emphasis on presenting material in a way that allows us to accurately measure whether we have achieved our stated goals.

Mr. Dick announced that three committee chairmanships were determined during the day and a half of committee meetings that preceded the Council session. Aaron Dean will continue as chairman of the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee. Leon Walker will become chairman of the Doctrine Committee. And Joel Meeker assumes the chairmanship of the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee.

After Mr. Dick’s opening comments, the first order of business was approval of meeting minutes of teleconferences held on May 4 and July 28 and face-to-face meetings on May 17 and 18.

As chairman of the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee, Joel Meeker fulfilled the requirement established by resolution of the reading of the Council of Elders Code of Ethics at the first meeting of the fiscal year.

The balance of the afternoon included Mr. Kilough’s report and an update from Church counsel Larry Darden on legal matters.

**President’s Report**

Mr. Kilough commented that he has appreciated the welcome and the level of support he has received from home office employees since his arrival on July 1. He stated that his report to the Council would begin with a discussion of results from last fiscal year and then move on to plans for the future.

The three operation managers submitted year-end reports to the Council two weeks ago to allow them time to analyze the results and prepare any questions. All three areas reported accomplishing their proposed tasks in nearly all areas of the operation plan. The floor was opened for Council questions or concerns.

No questions were directed toward Ministerial Services.

In regard to Treasurer Tom Kirkpatrick's report on finances for fiscal year 2004-2005, Les McCullough pointed out that while overall the budget was balanced, some areas were over budget. He questioned whether it might be possible for operation managers to plan and manage more carefully to avoid intrabudget overruns. Dr. Kirkpatrick stated that the administration has and needs some budgetary flexibility as income trends develop and that the Church has done well by staying within the overall budget. Dr. Kirkpatrick explained, as an example, that a portion of the media budget was expanded in the second half of the fiscal year because additional money became available due to strong income trends. Richard Pinelli, Ministerial Services operation manager, commented that in some cases money is shifted within an operation's area based on need, but that the overall spending for the function remains within budget.

In discussing the Media and Communications Services portion of the report, Mr. Dick asked operation manager Peter Eddington what the leading indicators of organizational progress or growth that measure the effectiveness of media efforts are. Mr. Eddington cited a number of indicators:

- Number of coworkers and donors, which currently stand at about 3,800 and 6,500 respectively. The number of donors and coworkers has grown at a steady pace every year since 2000.
- Number of U.S. households receiving *The Good News*, which increased from 293,000 in 2004 to more than 340,000 in 2005.
- Donation mail (envelopes containing donations), which, at approximately 5,000 pieces per month, is slightly off the pace of 2003 and 2004.

Though not directly related to media efforts, Mr. Eddington pointed out that important leading indicators of growth also include:

- Number of baptisms (187 in 2004), which has remained steady for the last several years.
- Feast of Tabernacles attendance, which has increased an average of 4 percent each year.

Moving on to a discussion about the Ambassador Bible Center, Mr. Kilough explained that organizationally, ABC will now be under the direction of the education coordinator within the function of Ministerial Services. He summarized that there are now 231 ABC graduates, and the seventh class is now being selected. Some 40 students have already been accepted for the 2006 class. Interest seems to be heightened this year, probably due to the ABC video that was sent to the congregations earlier this year.

Faculty member Ralph Levy emphasized that the class of 2005 was very serious about their studies and students were quite involved in service activities. With 41 graduates, this was the second largest class so far. Dr. Levy also commented that over the years the pace of the classes has been adjusted, providing half-day sessions on occasion and allowing more time for studying and reading.

Mr. Darden gave the Council a brief overview of some of the legal matters he is dealing with on behalf of the Church and members, including:

- Estate settlements of properties donated to the Church.
- Copyright issues.
- Residency requirements of U.S. citizens serving the Church in international areas.
- Contracts for Feast sites and youth camp facilities.
- Sabbath and Holy Day discrimination matters involving members.
- Jury duty exemption requests from members.
- Selective service information.
- Immunization exemption requests.

### **Plans for the Immediate Future**

After reviewing the results of last fiscal year, Mr. Kilough led the Council in a discussion of current developments and plans for the future. He commented that the two most significant events in the last two months were the conferences with the Ministerial Services team and with the media center planning committee. A presentation on the developments in media efforts will be included in a separate presentation later during these meetings.

Mr. Kilough summarized some of the transfers and changes that were determined during recent meetings with Ministerial Services.

- Jim Franks will replace Richard Pinelli as director of Ministerial Services.
- Mr. Pinelli will direct leadership development programs for potential elders, elders and pastors.
- David Register will move to the home office and coordinate the education programs.
- David Johnson will move to the home office to assist Mr. Franks in Ministerial Services and teach ABC classes.
- Lyle Welty will become the pastor of the Cincinnati East congregation, which has been designated as a center for development of ministers. Mr. Welty will provide one-on-one mentoring for elders who are being trained to serve in the field ministry.

These steps will help address leadership training needs in both the short and long terms. There have been efforts in this area, but these positions will help streamline the process and address the Church's needs.

Mr. Kilough also described a meeting that will be held September 6 and 7 involving U.S. church pastors who are also senior pastors serving congregations in Africa—John Elliott (East Africa), Melvin Rhodes (Ghana) and Fred Kellers (Nigeria). Attendees will also include many other individuals who are involved in or who have experience in serving international areas in general and African brethren in particular. The purpose of the meeting is to help coordinate and standardize efforts and pool ideas in areas such as developing and training local members, ordinations, budgeting, developing Web sites, doctrinal issues, clarifying concepts about evangelizing and proclaiming the gospel, literature fulfillment, how the pastors' commitment to Africa affects their local congregations, how to prepare for successors to their responsibilities and administration issues such as organizing the Feast of Tabernacles and youth camps.

In the final portion of his presentation, Mr. Kilough emphasized the need for the home office administration to take a fresh approach to developing the Church's Strategic and Operation Plans. He stressed that a great deal of effort has gone into the development of those documents in the last 10 years, but that this is a good time to revisit, restructure and rebuild them. He pointed out that what has been missing from the plans is clear standards for accountability and for measuring the effectiveness of our efforts. The current Strategic and Operation Plans do a good job of describing what we ought to do, but they also need to provide a way to measure how successful we are—which is much more difficult.

Mr. Kilough will work with the Media and Communications Services, Ministerial Services and Financial Services operations in an effort to set goals by mission, rather than by department. He emphasized that the effort to fulfill the mission of the Church weaves together all three of these functional areas of the home office. By developing the Operation Plan together, the three areas will be better able to understand, cooperate, prioritize and coordinate their efforts. The resulting Operation Plan should identify what the Church plans to do—but also why, when, by whom, who is accountable, why they are accountable and how success will be measured.

Mr. Kilough acknowledged that measuring success is difficult. For example, he asked how does one measure the effectiveness of a Sabbath school program, Bible Reading Program, education programs or the spiritual development of a congregation? He suggested that the solution is to ask many questions about the results of the efforts.

### **Miscellaneous Decisions and Wrap-Up**

By unanimous resolution, the Council selected Ken Giese to be chairman of the GCE Planning Task Force, replacing Mr. Register who is stepping down from that responsibility.

The Council also unanimously passed a resolution rescinding two previous resolutions that had established and defined the role of a Council parliamentarian. In discussion, it was agreed that Larry Darden and Diane Bailey would work together to provide technical and background material to the Council that would give them context in making decisions. The Council chairman will be responsible for maintaining rules of order during the meetings.

Mr. Dick concluded today's meeting with a discussion of the agenda for the rest of the meetings for this session. He emphasized his goal that the Council tackle the most challenging topics early to be sure they are given sufficient time. The agenda for Friday, August 26, will be highlighted by a more detailed report on a recent two-day meeting with media personnel and a tour of the new media center.

The Council concluded its business for the day at 4:45 p.m.

Don Henson

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