

United Church of God *an International Association*

Robert Dick
Chairman

Clyde Kilough
President

February 17, 2006

Dear Fellow Elders,

The Council will begin its most important meeting of the year in just one week. The reality of Council business is that everything moves toward February and the approval of the annual budget and Operation Plan. February is also the month when the Council signs off on all planning for the annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders in May.

In the course of all the ongoing planning it struck me that making changes in our structure is much like turning an ocean liner—some things don't happen quickly.

Last August I asked the Council's permission to make three substantive changes in the way we operate. One of the changes was made instantly because it was procedural. We created a President's Unified Report rather than have all the operation managers report to us independently. Being structural, it was a quick and easy task.

The second change I requested was part structural and part cultural. It was a request to change from sitting and listening to reports, to receiving the reports in advance, reviewing them and then engaging the administration in useful discussion. It is one thing to get the paperwork in advance, that is structural, but it is another thing to think in terms of engaging administration in dialogue that leads to meaningful changes—that is cultural and takes more time to change.

The last request I made knowing that it would take a year just to start—much like turning the *Queen Mary*. The best way to describe the problem is to give you an excerpt from the August letter to the Council asking that we use the Operation Plan as our critical assessment tool.

Operation Plan Based Reporting

“In theory the annual Operation Plan is a road map for the coming year. It tells the GCE and the COE exactly what will be accomplished during the upcoming fiscal year....

“It should be our Council ‘bible.’ How can you measure success or failure without a yardstick? The only tool that is supposed to be specifically designed for measuring achievement is the Operation Plan.

“The most significant change I am proposing is that each of us comes to each meeting with our Operation Plan and that we use it as an assessment tool. I have asked Clyde as president to gear all the reports from the home office to telling us what has been accomplished so far this fiscal year by each operation in the fulfillment of the Operation Plan.... we *need* to know how we are doing in fulfilling our promises to the GCE for the fiscal year.

“I believe there is a need to review the structure of the Operation Plan before the next fiscal year and seek ways to make it a better assessment tool. The best tools are concrete rather than abstract and set goals that are measurable.... we are best served by a good Operation Plan which is regularly used by the Council and administration in the performance of their work”
(emphasis added).

The president and operation managers have been working since last summer on changing the nature of the Operation Plan to fit the above request. While the request was straightforward, compliance wasn't possible until the next Operation Plan was produced and approved.

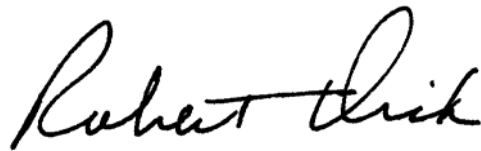
In a week we will take a final look at the Operation Plan before we submit it to you for approval. It contains metrics—ways of measuring whether we are succeeding or not at what we said we would do. And it contains dilemmas—how to measure some things that are intangible. This is not the end of the process—just the beginning.

God wants us as individuals and as an organization to go and bear much fruit. We cannot confuse work or effort expended with fruit produced, as they are not the same thing. We also have to have a way to measure what we produce. A farmer knows how many bushels of wheat to an acre he produces and whether this year's crop is better or worse than last year's. We already measure some things and have been from early on. Some things we still are trying to determine how to measure and what constitutes fruit borne. That challenge is ongoing.

It is our desire to produce an Operation Plan that is a practical and useful tool for measuring the work we do. This year is our first focused effort on that task, and we will be sharing the results with you soon.

Please keep the meetings in your prayers.

On behalf of the Council of Elders,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Dick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert Dick