

**United Church of God, *an International Association***  
**Council of Elders Meeting Report**  
**May 9-10, 2006 – Cincinnati, OH**

**Tuesday, May 9**

Immediately following the 2006 General Conference of Elders meeting, Robert Dick called the Council of Elders to order shortly after 10 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Eastgate. Jim Franks and Victor Kubik were not present due to involvement in other meetings. Richard Thompson arrived after completing his presentation of an Ambassador Bible Center class. Bill Eddington, who will begin to serve on the Council in July, was also present.

Mr. Dick provided an overview of the agenda for the three days of meetings.

The minutes of the Council's last meetings, in San Antonio, Texas, from February 27 to March 1, 2006, were approved.

Today's meeting included a discussion of the schedule for proposed amendments to the Church's bylaws and constitution to be considered at next year's GCE, minor edits to the Church's official statement on third tithe, the assessment process for Church officers and a summary of the exit survey taken at the conclusion of this year's GCE.

**2007 Amendment Schedule**

Mr. Dick asked Council secretary Gerald Seelig to review a proposed schedule for the development of proposed amendments to the constitution and bylaws to be voted on by the General Conference of Elders in the 2007 meeting. The Council has latitude in establishing some of the milestones in the process while others are specified in the bylaws. There are some inevitable complications in working the schedule around the fall Holy Days. After discussion, the Council decided to take time to consider the proposed schedule and return to the topic later in the meetings to make a decision.

**Edits to Statement on Third Tithe**

Doctrine Committee chairman Leon Walker discussed with the Council suggested edits to the Church's official statement on third tithe. The edits were put forward to make it clearer that the United Church of God believes in and teaches the doctrine of third tithe. The suggested edits were approved unanimously by the Council.

**Assessment Process for Officers**

Joel Meeker, chairman of the Ethics, Roles and Rules Committee, led the Council in a discussion of the assessment process for UCG officers (president, treasurer and secretary). Bylaw 9.1 requires the Council to reaffirm the continuance of each officer on

a three-year cycle. The Council is also required to give each officer a performance review on an annual basis. The Council discussed the timing of the reaffirmation for the treasurer and secretary and the performance review for the president. They also discussed the form used to compile the Council's assessment and the manner in which the review results will be summarized and communicated to each officer.

Based on the discussion, Mr. Dick requested that Mr. Meeker provide the Council with a redesigned form later in these meetings. At that time the Council will review the form and discuss the specific questions on it.

### **General Conference of Elders Exit Survey Results**

Ken Giese, chairman of the GCE Planning Task Force, gave the Council an overview of exit survey results compiled after the conclusion of this year's conference, which concluded the previous day, May 8. Total attendance at the conference was 370 (210 elders and 160 elders' wives). Approximately 100 elders and 68 wives responded to the survey.

- Primary reasons for attending the GCE are fellowship opportunities, the business meeting, workshops and lectures. In addition, many stated that they attended for "all" of the conference activities.
- Similarly, the areas of most value included fellowship opportunities, keynote address by the president, workshops and lectures, business meeting and international reports.
- Of those who completed the survey, 96 percent of the elders and 91 percent of the wives indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the conference.
- 92 percent said that they plan to attend next year (down 3 percent from last year).
- 84 percent of those responding planned to attend the workshops and lectures on Monday, May 8.

Areas of opportunity for improving the conference include attracting more elders and wives to participate, continuing to improve fellowship aspects of the weekend and maintaining the level of attention to wives at the meeting.

The Council offered suggestions for changes to some of the social events and modifications to the exit survey form to help gather additional helpful feedback from those attending.

- On the survey form, indicate whether or not the attendee is employed by the Church, distance traveled and expense of attending.
- Structure the survey to rate the importance and value of each activity separately instead of rating each in comparison to the other.
- Consider combining the two question-and-answer sessions into one.
- Consider expanding the international reports to 12-15 minutes (from 12 minutes) and providing a handout containing a summary of statistics for each of the areas.
- Continue the effort to locate a larger hall so more can attend the Sabbath service.

Mr. Giese and the Council agreed that the conference once again this year was very positive and successful.

### **Wednesday, May 10**

Mr. Dick called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. in the conference room of the home office building. Eleven Council members were present at the beginning of the meeting (Richard Thompson joined when he finished teaching his ABC class). Also in attendance were Bill Eddington and Richard Pinelli, who will begin serving on the Council in July. Mr. Dick introduced Mr. Kilough for the presentation of the president's unified report.

### **President's Unified Report**

Mr. Kilough gave the Council an update on the new hymnal project. It is not likely that the hymnal will be ready prior to this year's Feast of Tabernacles, as hoped. He emphasized that the goal is to "get it right," not to get it fast. A number of elements of the task remain, including reviewing the 250 hymns submitted by members, correcting mistakes in the current hymnal, reviewing the doctrinal accuracy of all the proposed hymns and producing pianist and song leader editions and an accompanist CD of the new hymnal. A further update will be provided to the Council in its meetings in August.

Mr. Kilough summarized progress in the development of a comprehensive plan for the Church's education programs. He listed 12 activities that the education programs area has accomplished or initiated in the past six months:

1. Reorganized the administration of Ambassador Bible Center into a team approach. Director of education programs Dave Register meets on a monthly basis with Mr. Franks, Dave Johnson, Gary Antion, Ralph Levy, Lyle Welty and Mr. Kilough to review progress and proposals for the program.
2. Mr. Register oversees the curriculum and activities of the Ambassador Bible Center. This year 54 students are enrolled in the seven-month program, ranging in age from 18 to 80. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Register report that the class is young, inquisitive and very active. Mr. Register stated that ABC is becoming a kind of "rite of passage" for the Church's young adults. After they have completed the United Youth Camps program, many come to ABC after a year or so of college and then return to their college studies after ABC. Although there are also some older students, the majority of this year's class is young (mid-20s or younger). So far 24 applicants for 2007 have been accepted, most of whom are also younger students.
3. Efforts continue to bring all education programs targeted at Church membership under the umbrella of Ministerial Services education programs.
4. U.S. pastors were surveyed to assess their familiarity with and their perception of the effectiveness of current education programs.
5. A meeting of all education module chairmen was held to evaluate progress over the last 10 years and suggest improvements to the programs.

6. The education programs area continues to oversee eight teen camps, two Challenger II programs and eight preteen camps that will serve over 1,000 teens and staff and 400 preteens this coming year.
7. The education programs area developed and oversees ABC Continuing Education Seminars and *World News and Prophecy* Seminars. This coming year six ABC and four *WNP* seminars are scheduled.
8. Mr. Register has established an Education Programs Task Force, made up of UCG members who have professional background and experience in public and corporate education programs. Their responsibility will be to help develop an outcome-based criteria for measuring the effectiveness of education programs in the future. Members of the task force are:
  - Andy Burnett—Elder, teacher, former school principal, church pastor.
  - Eileen Clark—Director of quality control, excellence evaluator.
  - Scott Delamater—Web designer for youth Web sites.
  - Michelle Delamater—Preschool/elementary teacher.
  - Glen Doig—Elder, counselor, PhD candidate in family studies.
  - John Karlik—Deacon, PhD, professor and mentor.
  - Kay Schreiber—Pastor’s wife, curriculum coordinator Arizona schools.
  - Judy Servidio—Pastor’s wife, women’s education coordinator.
  - Keith Tomes—Elementary school principal, PhD.
  - Julie Zutz—Director of marketing, promotions writer and editor.
9. Mr. Register is evaluating suggestions for new or expanded educational programs in a number of areas such as a preschool program, an improved teen program and local leadership clubs.
10. Mr. Register continues to collect information and suggestions for improving and updating current programs.
11. The education programs area has launched a Youth Corps project in Ghana for six young adults, providing leadership and spiritual development through their experience and service.
12. The education programs area is developing an overall proposal outlining outcome-based educational programs that will be presented to the Council in August of this year.

Mr. Kilough then provided an update on the Ministerial Development Program, which targets the Church’s immediate need for pastoral development. Richard Pinelli, in conjunction with Ministerial Services, is developing the program, which is intended to help pastors identify and help prepare those God is calling into the pastoral ministry. There will be nine workshops in the United States, two in Canada and several in other international areas. Workshops have been held so far in Denver, Colorado, and in Calgary, Alberta.

Mr. Kilough participated in the conference in Denver and reported that it was very successful. There is a high level of interest among and response from the pastors. Council member Larry Salyer, who pastors in that region, agreed, saying that it was one of the most practical and useful conferences he has participated in.

Mr. Kilough asked Mr. Franks to review some of the highlights of his recent trip to visit churches in Nigeria. Mr. Franks said there are three U.S. pastors who also serve as senior pastors in Africa—Fred Kellers in Nigeria, Melvin Rhodes in Ghana and John Elliott in eastern Africa (Kenya).

The Church in Nigeria has weathered many challenges, but now has good leadership, and Mr. Franks said that he anticipates growth in the region. From time to time another Sabbath-keeping church will make contact and express interest in becoming part of United. For example, United was contacted some time ago by an independent group, which finds its origins in the Church of God 7<sup>th</sup> Day. Ultimately, about 70 people began attending and have continued as part of United.

Dave Baker is the senior pastor serving the Church in the Philippines. In July of this year he will begin focusing on administrative oversight of all of Asia. Mr. Pinelli commented that in mid-July he will offer a leadership workshop in the Philippines for some 20 pastors and local leaders.

Mr. Register visited the brethren in Jamaica for part of the Days of Unleavened Bread. He stated that there are two congregations (Kingston and Ocho Rios) with a total attendance of about 100. There were 40 baptized members in Kingston for the Passover service that he conducted and 84 attended the first day of Unleavened Bread services.

In the final business of the morning, Tom Kirkpatrick gave the Council a brief overview of preliminary research by a task force into the feasibility and advisability of using an electronic system for contributions to the Church. The Council asked Dr. Kirkpatrick to provide more detailed information at the meetings in August.

The Council spent the balance of the day in executive session.

Don Henson

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