

United Church of God, an International Association
Council of Elders Meeting Report
May 6, 2009 – Milford, Ohio

Chairman Robert Dick opened today's meeting by once again setting the agenda priorities. It was determined that the Council would first hear the update from the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee about "where do we go from here."

Next discussed was the proposed outside speaking guidelines document and then the Council reviewed a working paper on how to deal with violations of the Elders Forum. The remaining agenda items for today included the disability assistance policy revision, legacy costs and the new Good Works proposal. Later, the Council discussed two other agenda items from the Roles and Rules Committee and then finished the day in an executive session to discuss ordinations and credentialings.

Update: "Where Do We Go From Here?"

Roy Holladay mentioned that the "perfect economic storm" the Church is now facing—with the current economic crisis, rising legacy and health care costs, and an aging ministry and membership—will impact our decisions on where we go from here.

Mr. Holladay said that the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee had two teleconferences since the February meetings to discuss this matter. The committee reviewed all the documentation that the administration had presented and analyzed the material. He said that the committee is not recommending any action in today's meeting, but that on Friday of this week there will be a committee meeting with the administration in order to begin discussion of the following issues:

1. Give equal consideration to having a training center located away from the home office, as well as one based at the same location in a campus setting.
2. Seek an independent appraisal of the Denton property.
3. Hire a professional consultant in space utilization for the present facility.
4. Provide an updated projection of space needs in the current facility for three, five and seven years.
5. Discuss residential component for immersion education and project realistic ABC enrollment figures for the next five years.
6. Evaluate the premise that a nine-month (or possibly a two-year) ABC program will achieve the principal purpose of "character development."

7. Curtail the bringing in of experienced pastors to be trained, and use those funds for training new pastors and for specialized training for all ministers.

Mr. Holladay concluded his discussion by noting that the committee had presented the rationale to these seven issues in a handout and that these issues will be the basis for discussions with the administration.

Guidelines Regarding Elders Speaking in Other Religious Organizations

Bill Eddington presented the Council with an edited version of what has been called the “Outside Speaking Guidelines” document which had been remanded to the Roles and Rules Committee in February. He said that the committee is still working on the document and asked for Council input.

After a lengthy discussion, especially over a section regarding an elder’s invitation to speak in another organization and whether he needs approval to do so, considering that an elder should be wise enough to make those decisions, three things were presented that called for further review:

1. Richard Thompson had handed out a copy of the “Conflict of Interest Policy” which is found in the Pastor’s Policy Manual. He asked if some of what is in the revised Outside Speaker’s Guidelines could contradict established policies.
2. Richard Pinelli recommended that one phrase could be removed from the revised document to assure compliance with the “Conflict of Interest Policy.”
3. Clyde Kilough asked for an executive session so that he could discuss potential issues that the proposed revised guidelines could engender.

The Council did go into executive session for the remainder of the morning and into the early afternoon to discuss these items. The discussion of this document is to continue again in tomorrow’s open session.

Elder’s Forum Violations

On behalf of the Ethics Committee, Aaron Dean presented a working paper on dealing with violations on the Elder’s Forum, as some elders have not followed the policies established for Elder’s Forum. Mr. Dean read through the draft copy and solicited comments and suggestions from the Council.

There was much discussion, particularly on what actions should be taken when an elder’s motive or character is attacked. This includes those who send offensive private e-mails to those who post EF messages.

Mr. Dick noted that one should have the ability to disagree with an issue, but to call someone’s character into question would be wrong. Mr. Kubik noted that once a post

is sent, it stays on the Web for years, so elders need to be wise prior to sending their public or private messages.

The proposed document in dealing with violations is a work in progress, and Mr. Dean mentioned that this is just the first stage in producing a paper for Council approval.

Legacy Costs

Jason Lovelady had presented some material in his report to the GCE about the rising “legacy costs” for the Church. These costs can be defined as anything having to do with insurance, health care and discretionary retirement assistance.

Mr. Lovelady presented the Council with the possible rise of those costs over the next 15 years. He noted that these were preliminary figures, but that they could increase to over \$2 million. As ministers age, health-care costs also increase.

Mr. Lovelady also mentioned that in August he will present further discussion regarding the retirement policy and the estate fund. He noted that it is the desire of the Church to present a sustainable program of benefits so that each group of retirees can receive the same benefits.

Disability Assistance Policy Revision

In presenting the revisions to the Disability Assistance Policy, Mr. Lovelady noted that a section was added to the policy that defined the eligibility requirements for early retirement and linked the disability policy to that of our retirement policy. The revisions were explained and the revised policy was unanimously approved.

The Good Works Proposal

As mandated by the Council resolution of Feb. 26, 2009, Clyde Kilough, Jim Franks, Jason Lovelady, Victor Kubik and Roy Holladay met at the home office on Wednesday, April 1, 2009, “to develop the parameters for the new program” for Good Works. Mr. Kilough noted that some very productive discussion led to the following proposal, which not only addressed an expanded role for United’s Good Works program, but also more clearly defined the relationship with LifeNets.

Mr. Kilough presented the following background information and the proposal. Mr. Holladay also mentioned that both he and Mr. Kubik helped to write the document.

History of Good Works and LifeNets

The Good Works program began in August of 2003 with the intent of helping members who were in need. Good Works was founded primarily to help members with the basic necessities of life. Over the years since its inception money has been collected for a van in Ghana, water wells in Kenya, church buildings in Kenya and Zambia, food

during times of famine, monetary aid for the victims of Hurricane Katrina and other such items.

LifeNets began in 1999 as a 501(c) (3) public charity. Its first projects were helping Chernobyl victims and Sabbatarians in Ukraine. In 2000 it started helping United Church of God brethren in Malawi, Zambia and Central America. LifeNets has registered affiliates in Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Kenya and Ukraine plus two chapters in the United States.

It is important that LifeNets and Good Works work cooperatively since they both support United Church of God members. Some areas of work have overlapped and will continue to do so under this new proposal.

It is the desire of the administration to restructure Good Works, clarify its mission and its relationship to LifeNets. The proposed structure will focus on the following three areas of service for the brethren of the United Church of God:

1. International Scholarships. There is a desperate need in developing countries to fund education. Without an education, members are doomed to a life of poverty. By funding these scholarships, the United Church of God will directly benefit by the ability of individuals to obtain jobs and become stable, tithe-paying members of the Church, as opposed to those who must come to the Church for regular assistance.
2. Youth Corps Projects. The United Church of God has developed a growing list of Youth Corps projects. These projects are developed to provide opportunities for qualified young people to serve in youth and humanitarian projects around the world. Funding these activities has become an ever-growing challenge for the Church.
3. Church/Member Needs. There are always situations involving congregations or individual members that cannot be anticipated. It is the desire of the Church to develop fund-raising to assist in these needs.

Structure of New Good Works Program

The new program will be structured to accomplish the three goals listed above. It is the desire of the administration to appoint a coordinator for Good Works who would be responsible for the following duties:

1. Develop a program of fund-raising that would address international scholarships, Youth Corps projects and church/member needs as they are proposed by the administration for funding.
2. Act as liaison with LifeNets and the administration to determine who will handle each project as it is proposed.

3. Work directly with those responsible for international scholarships, Youth Corps projects and church/member needs to determine the level of need that each area requires on an annual basis.

The coordinator of Good Works will be appointed by the president and may be replaced by the president at any time with or without cause. The president will discuss his choice with the Council and get input from the Council. The coordinator of Good Works will report to the administrative team of the president, treasurer and operation manager for Ministerial Services on a regular basis.

Relationship With LifeNets

LifeNets will continue as an independent identity. It will continue to support young people, including young people of the United Church of God through its Developing Nations Scholarship Program in the areas it currently works in and partner with Good Works regarding Church members' needs.

LifeNets is not limited to serving only the needs of the United Church of God. However, one of its missions is to help United Church of God members and to encourage them to help others. This is done through current programs that are providing scholarships, agricultural support, water, habitat, livelihood development and more.

Since there are various areas that need help and can benefit from aid, both will coordinate their efforts to benefit as many as possible in the best manner for all concerned. The Good Works coordinator will work closely with and communicate with LifeNets for the benefit of all concerned.

All Good Works programs will continue as careful consideration is given for long-term planning. Currently UCG is sponsoring scholarships in Latin America, the Philippines and Kenya. These will continue under the new Good Works program. LifeNets is involved with scholarships in Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Ghana. These will continue under LifeNets.

Since Youth Corps projects are outside the scope and mission of LifeNets, the Good Works program will manage fund-raising for these projects.

Both LifeNets and Good Works will mutually support one another and actively seek projects where there can be a combined effort. LifeNets and Good Works will both maintain their individual integrity as separate organizations.

The coordinator for Good Works will communicate to and meet with the coordinator of LifeNets projects on a regular basis to compare notes and determine how future projects will be organized and funded.

The United Church of God recognizes LifeNets as a viable means that can assist Church members around the world. LifeNets recognizes the new Good Works program as a viable structure within the United Church of God to distribute funds for needy projects throughout the world. Any areas of overlap will be discussed and resolved by a cooperative effort between the two entities.

A lengthy discussion followed in which a number of questions were asked about the coordinator, costs and what kind of fundraising will be involved.

Mr. Kilough responded that a full-time salaried coordinator would not be needed and that a person could do that job in addition to any other work the employee was already doing. A suggestion Melvin Rhodes gave was that the individual selected should have some experience regarding disbursement of funds to international areas. Mr. Kilough said that international disbursements would go through the senior pastors.

Mr. Kilough also mentioned that ABC and various church areas have had fundraising events in the past for the Good Works program and that could continue. In the international areas, Mr. Kilough said that there is not a mandate to shift LifeNets fundraising to the Good Works program.

The Council adopted the following resolution by 10 in favor. Two abstained: Darris McNeely and Robin Webber.

Resolution for Good Works Proposal

“Whereas the Council of Elders wishes to approve the development of new and expanded parameters for the Good Works program, and

“Whereas the Council of Elders wishes to clearly define the relationship between the United Church of God, *an International Association*, and LifeNets,

“Therefore it approves the ‘Good Works Proposal’ as presented to the Council of Elders on May 6, 2009 (a copy of which is attached to and made a part of this resolution).”

Roles and Rules Committee Business

Assessment of Secretary and Treasurer

Mr. Eddington proposed a method for the completing and consolidating of the individual assessment forms and the procedures for conducting the assessments of the secretary and treasurer. The Council approved the procedures and how the assessments would occur, which are scheduled to take place during the August meetings. The process will be similar to the President’s assessment procedures.

Censure Policy

Mr. Eddington presented a quote from Mr. Dick that he made during the August meetings on the need to formalize censure. Mr. Dick further stated in today's discussion that not every case is worthy of severe discipline such as the removal of credentials, and therefore there is the need to have an opportunity to use a less severe form of discipline, "a middle ground," such as public censure.

Mr. Thompson pointed out that the policy in question refers to the suspension and expulsion from the GCE. Mr. Dick mentioned that we need to look at all of our documents and consider that this "middle ground" of censure be made available.

In consent without resolution, the Council remanded this issue to the Roles and Rules Committee to propose a policy or statement on public censure and provide any proposed revisions to existing documents that could include the option for public censure.

Other Business

Mr. Kilough asked that the Facilities Fund discussion be removed from the agenda until a future Council meeting.

John Foster
Council Reporter

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