

**United Church of God, an International Association**  
**Council of Elders Meeting Report**  
**May 7, 2009 – Milford, Ohio**

On the last day of the May meetings Chairman Robert Dick reviewed the final agenda, which included a further discussion on the “Outside Speaking Guidelines,” a proposed amendment to the Bylaws and two minor business items. In the concluding proceedings of the day, in an executive session, the assessment of the president took place; and later, in open session, a new Council chairman was selected.

**Outside Speaking Guidelines**

Bill Eddington once again reviewed a set of revisions that the committee had made to the document. During the discussion, Jim Franks noted that the document doesn’t address what will happen when an elder doesn’t accept the advice or consultation from a supervisory elder regarding an invitation to speak to an outside religious group.

The newly-revised document still no longer requires an elder to seek permission, but rather requires one only to seek counsel and advice from a supervisory elder. A lengthy discussion ensued. Mr. Dick mentioned that he is very concerned if an elder comes into his area, rejects the advice given and speaks to a group, which then results in confusion and offenses to his members. He said that a pastor’s first priority must be to protect his members.

Victor Kubik also noted that he is personally concerned about his congregation as well, and echoed Mr. Dick’s sentiments that sometimes a pastor has to be a “sheep dog” in order to protect the members.

Roy Holladay mentioned that we have always believed that we can’t allow for division and that Church pastors function under what is stated in Article 3.2.2.2 of the Constitution. He said it is the pastor who has control over the congregation and that the pastor has the authority by Scripture to deal with division. He recommended that we follow the “Jethro principle” (Exodus 18) and deal with issues at the lowest level first.

Richard Thompson also stated that pastors have the right to protect the whole congregation. He said that if any of the sheep could be offended over an elder speaking to an outside religious group, then that offense should be taken into consideration.

Mr. Franks asked about a situation in which an elder says, “I didn’t cause division or offense”; yet in the opinion of the pastor and some members, he did. We could be inconsistent in our approach. In one area an elder could be advised to speak, but in another area he could be advised not to do so and yet say he was following policy, even though he was advised not to speak. This would lead to questions down the road as to who was right and who was wrong. Further, how many members need be offended before action is taken?

Darris McNeely mentioned that we have all offended people by things we have said, and we just have to be wise in how we handle some issues. Aaron Dean remarked that there is a fine line between control and opportunities for growth. Paul Kieffer noted that this policy only affects elders and asked if it also covers others such as deacons. Robin Webber said that this issue can be a growing experience for both pastors and elders. It could be a minefield or an opportunity.

At this point in the meetings, Mr. Eddington was given approval to suspend the discussion and asked for time with the Roles and Rules Committee to consider further revisions to the document.

After a break, Mr. Eddington presented another revised edition of the documentation. Some questions once again arose: If an elder rejects the advice of his supervisory elder and speaks to a group, are there any consequences? Mr. Eddington responded that Article 3.2.2.2 would come into play. However, Mr. Dick mentioned that there is no provision in that article to deal with those who refuse to accept consultation or advice.

Mr. Eddington also said that Scripture empowers the pastor to protect his flock, and Mr. Dick again pointed out again that a pastor with a shepherd's heart will protect his congregation.

The document, which will be sent to the GCE later, was approved by eight Council members. Clyde Kilough, Richard Pinelli and Richard Thompson voted No; and Robert Dick abstained.

### **Balloting Amendment**

Mr. Eddington also presented an amendment to the Bylaws that would allow certain items for ballot by the GCE to be declared "extraordinary issues" requiring more than a simple majority to pass. This amendment was supported by eight Council members last year and was forwarded to the Amendment Committee for comment. The Committee recommended some wording changes to clarify the intent of the proposed amendment.

The amendment was held back while this was done and, as a consequence, its inclusion on the GCE ballot was deferred until 2010. The proposed amendment, in its reworded form, was resubmitted for Council support. A process for its implementation will be also included.

The Council, by eight members, supported the amendment going forward. It will now be sent to the Amendment Committee, with the intention of placing it on the ballot for the 2010 General Conference of Elders.

## **Other Business**

### The 2010 GCE Meeting

The Council, in consent without resolution, gave Charles Melear the authority to enter into contractual agreements for the May 2010 GCE annual meeting to be held once again at the Eastgate Holiday Inn.

### The Ethics Retreat

Mr. Kubik, chairman of the Ethics Committee, reviewed the details of the ethics retreat that the Council members will be attending in Indiana for three days beginning on May 10. He said this will be a retreat to discuss the ethics issues that have been facing the Council and Church for the last number of years. He looks forward to a statement coming out of these meetings defining outcomes and solutions.

## **New Chairman**

Secretary David Johnson presided over the balloting for the next Council chairman, which required a two-thirds majority. The Council, on the second ballot, chose Roy Holladay to be the next chairman. His term, which will last for the next two years, begins in July 2009.

Mr. Dick, in introducing Mr. Holladay, pointed out that one of the most pleasing things about being on the Council has been the orderly transition of responsibilities with dignity, respect and honor.

Mr. Holladay thanked Robert and Dyanne Dick for their faithful work over the years on the Council. He said that he will be calling Mr. Dick as he has always been a fountain of information. Mr. Holladay mentioned that one of his goals is to bring more harmony and peace between the Council and administration.

## **Recognition of Departing Council Members**

In recognizing the service of Richard and Mary Pinelli, Mr. Dick expressed the Council's appreciation for Richard's many years of service in Ministerial Services, one of the most difficult jobs in the ministry, and for his faithful service on the Council. He (and Mary, who was absent) were presented with gifts and a plaque.

In recognizing the service of Robert and Dyanne Dick, Mr. Kilough also thanked them for their many years of faithful service on the Council. They, too, were presented with gifts and a plaque. With that, the May meetings were adjourned.

John Foster  
*Council Reporter*

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