

United Church of God, *an International Association*
Council of Elders Meeting Report
Dec. 8 and 9, 2010—Cincinnati, Ohio

Chairman Melvin Rhodes opened the Dec. 8, 2010, Council meeting at 9:06 a.m. Eastern Time by asking Roy Holladay to open in prayer. The meeting was held at the Holiday Inn Eastgate.

All 10 sitting Council members were present, namely: Scott Ashley, Robert Berendt, Aaron Dean, Bill Eddington, Roy Holladay, Victor Kubik, Darris McNeely, Melvin Rhodes, Mario Seiglie and Robin Webber.

Also present were Dennis Luker, Gerald Seelig, Larry Darden, Peter Eddington, Charles Melear, Gary Antion, David Evans and other guests, including some of the Council members' wives.

The chairman asked Mr. Dean to give the Council a brief update on the status of the home office kitchen upgrade.

Kitchen Update by Aaron Dean

Mr. Dean explained that the advice given to us by the city inspector regarding the drainage piping, which included the installation of a commercial dishwasher, was incorrect, even though we had his signed-off plans. Therefore, when another building inspector came to approve the drainage piping work completed, the inspector admitted the inaccuracy of the original approval advice, and said it needed to be redone if we were to include the commercial dishwasher as per original plans. The additional cost to redo the drainage piping would come to \$26,000.

There is a legal requirement for an industrial-type kitchen to have either a commercial dishwasher or none at all. We cannot have a standard domestic dishwasher. Mr. Dean explained to the Council that due to excessive additional costs, it had been decided to go ahead without the commercial dishwasher. The kitchen upgrade is so far costing much more than originally budgeted for, and taking much longer.

Questions were then directed to the remodeling of the conference room and the TV studio upgrade. Mr. Dean explained the point of wisdom of waiting a bit before committing the funds to the project.

Gary Antion mentioned to the Council his appreciation for Ina McLemore's work in having to purchase breakfasts and lunch for the students during the construction period.

GCE Conference Planning Report by Peter Eddington

The chairman then called upon Peter Eddington, GCE Planning Task Force chairman, to report on the next GCE planning, and specifically on theme suggestions.

Mr. Eddington started by mentioning that a consistent request is to have the local congregations attend services with the General Conference in the same hall. The Eastgate Holiday Inn facility has a constraint due to the size of the largest hall. A possibility was discussed to use alternative venues for the Sabbath, and/or the GCE, such as the Sharonville Conference Center. Mr. Melear then mentioned that the Holiday Inn venue had already been secured, because the season of the conference is a high activity season. He booked it while it was available.

Mr. Eddington then proceeded to give detailed handouts about the five theme suggestions for the GCE, namely, “Serving as Christ Served,” “Let This Mind Be in You,” “What Is the Church?—The Foundational Principles,” “Generational Dynamics” and “Biblical Eldership: The Foundation of Church Governance.” After a discussion of the various themes, “Serving as Christ Served,” received the most support.

Mr. Luker added that it is very important that our emphasis should be on Christ, His example and His attitude. He made reference to how the apostle Paul, in his epistles, is Christ-centered, how we fall short, and how we need to mature to become more like Christ. In the past, he said, we didn’t talk much about Christ. He said that the more we honor Christ and follow His example, the more we will be blessed in using the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the Council unanimously agreed on slightly changing the title to the present tense. The theme will be “Serving as Christ Serves.” The Council also decided to have more plenary sessions and to include some of the other subjects in the workshops.

Activities for the evening hours were discussed, and even though the International Expo was a success last year, Peter Eddington felt that we should skip a year before we do it again. Charles Melear pointed out that the hotel management raised some concerns about food and drinks being brought in to the hotel by some international teams. However, due to our good relationship with the hotel management, no unpleasant situations occurred, but we should avoid that in the future. Peter Eddington asked for input and ideas in the next two weeks, for the two evenings (Saturday night and Sunday night) during the GCE.

The Council also discussed the pros and cons of having the GCE Question & Answer Session before or after the ballot. The consensus was to keep it after the ballot. The online GCE Q&A forum would now appear within the Elders Forum, as the software we use has the capabilities to add various topics to it.

The Council also felt that it is important under the current situation to encourage maximum attendance at the GCE. Therefore it was moved that the possibility of financial sponsorship for some elders’ travel costs to attend the GCE should be revisited. As this is a budget matter, Mr. Dean and Mr. Eddington will review a previous study and update costs and options for the Council’s consideration.

Council Committees Restructure and Council Operations Till the Next GCE

After a brief break, the chairman called on Bill Eddington, who started his discussion reviewing the Council committees’ membership in light of the changed composition of Council members. The conclusion of the discussion was that the committees will be populated as follows:

- ***Doctrine Committee***: Bob Berendt (chair—elected before the Council resignations of Tuesday morning came in), Roy Holladay and Vic Kubik.
- ***Employment Committee***: Scott Ashley (in the process of structuring scope and responsibilities).
- ***Ethics Committee***: Mario Seiglie (chair), Scott Ashley, Darris McNeely and Robin Webber.
- ***Executive Committee***: Melvin Rhodes (chair), Aaron Dean, Vic Kubik and Darris McNeely.
- ***Media Committee***: Darris McNeely (chair), Bill Eddington, Scott Ashley and Mario Seiglie.
- ***Roles and Rules Committee***: Bill Eddington (chair), Bob Berendt, Aaron Dean and Roy Holladay.
- ***Strategic Planning and Finance***: Robin Webber (chair), Scott Ashley, Vic Kubik and Aaron Dean.

Bill Eddington addressed the subject of how we are going to operate from here on, as far as the number of Council members is concerned. He mentioned that “currently we have two vacant positions, one of which (the international position) has been offered to Joel Meeker, and as yet we have not yet heard whether he will take up that position.”

“The normal way that vacancies are filled,” Mr. Eddington continued, “is that those that were on the ballot, but were not successful at the most recent election at the GCE, come on in accordance with the number of votes they receive during that balloting process. That is how Roy Holladay came on, and that is how Vic Kubik came on. But we have used up all of the people who were included in the six people that were considered for Council positions at the May GCE. We do not have a recognized way at appointing a 12th member at this time.”

Mr. Eddington added that we have two options:

- Option one is to operate till the May 2011 GCE with either 10 or 11 Council members. There is “no restriction within our documentation,” he added, “to operate with less than 12. As long as we have a quorum of eight, we can operate as a Council.”
- Option two is “for the Council to propose an amendment to clause 8.4.3 of the Bylaws which sets the process for filling vacancies.” The Council has the authority within the Bylaws not to wait for the next GCE meeting to propose an amendment to the Bylaws for approval by the General Conference. That would automatically require no less than 90 days to accomplish and would take us past our February Council meeting. The Council member elected if the amendment passes would have to be reconfirmed at the May meeting, meaning that he potentially could only be on the Council for one meeting, unless reconfirmed.

After discussion the Council unanimously supported the first option, that is, to operate with 10 or 11 members till the next selection process, and to offer an amendment to that particular clause for balloting at the next GCE.

In conclusion, Mr. Eddington suggested that a brief résumé or questionnaire be included at the first stage of nomination, that is, when the request goes out to determine who is prepared and willing to serve if elected to the Council. That would better inform many elders about who they would like to ballot for in the initial nomination round. The discussion also included the selection of international members, considering including senior pastors of international areas to be classified as “international”

Council members. It was agreed that Mr. Eddington would analyze the first stage of the nomination process and work with the secretary to determine what would be required to get this additional “brief résumé” information out before the next nomination process.

The Council at 11:26 a.m. shifted to executive session for the rest of the day. This concluded the open sessions for this set of Council meetings.

At 3:30 p.m. the Council had a Question and Answer session with Ambassador Bible Center students. The session addressed numerous questions and concerns of the students. After the Q&A concluded, small groups of students engaged numerous of the Council members in face-to-face, impromptu discussions for almost an hour.

On Thursday, Dec. 9, the Council sessions were executive sessions.

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Jorge de Campos
Stand-in Council Reporter

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