

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE/GENERAL COUNCIL LETTER

March, 1991

Dear Fellowship Members:

Our first quarter meeting of the Executive Committee was held in conjunction with the mid-year meeting of the General Council, a Society Delegate meeting, and a regional meeting of Area Coordinators, in Tampa, Florida over the weekend of February 14-17, 1991. My report will focus on the discussions and actions of the Executive Committee and General Council meetings and will summarize the resolutions reached at the society delegate meeting. In addition, we have included for your information summaries of the Area Coordinator meeting and of the strategic planning program which involved all participants.

SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS

1. Three new members-at-large were unanimously approved and welcomed into the Fellowship: Cecelia Ann Lampley, Reno, Nevada; Paul Krupa, Fall River, Massachusetts; and Conrad Sommer, St. Louis, Missouri.
2. Approval was given to sign the contract and place a deposit for the 1993 International Conference site, Auberge des Seigneurs, St. Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada.
3. The Executive Committee approved the selection of Harry McMullan (to replace Steve Dreier who was unable to attend) to facilitate the Society Delegate meeting. Harry's proposed meeting guidelines were also approved. Finally, it was the consensus of the Executive Committee that any resolutions generated by the Delegate meeting should be thoughtfully considered by the General Council. However, because all societies were not represented at this meeting, it was agreed that the resolutions should not have the same force and effect as those developed by the Triennial Delegate Assembly (TDA). Further, the resolutions should be forwarded to each society for review.
4. It was agreed that the Travel Policy Subcommittee would oversee the appropriate allocation of air tickets earned from American Airlines as a result of meeting travel by Fellowship members over the last two years.
5. A subcommittee of Marilyn Kulieke, Jim Johnston, and Brent St. Denis agreed to finalize a brochure describing the Fellowship and its services for use in mailings to interested persons inquiring about our organization.
6. Dennis Brodsky (southern Wisconsin), Katharine Harries (northern Georgia), and Alex Nagy (eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey) were approved as Area Coordinators with

thanks for their willingness to serve. Mo Siegel, chairman of Domestic Extension, was requested by the Executive Committee to ascertain Tom Burns' interest in continuing as an Area Coordinator in the southern Georgia area. Karl Anderson's resignation as an Area Coordinator for Maine was accepted with regret.

7. In response to Avi Dogim's report on the success by Urmas Lipand in distributing in Estonia 40 copies of The Urantia Book paid for by donations collected at Snowmass this past summer, it was agreed to provide Urmas with 40 additional copies when he visits the United States in March. These books will also be charged against the funds donated in Snowmass and will be taken from the declining quantity of books available for the Fellowship's use.

8. The Executive Committee, pursuant to the procedures outlined in the constitution, approved the transfer of monies from the Fellowship's restricted capital fund to cover the \$106,000 operating deficit for 1990. This deficit amount is subject to reduction based upon clarifying the gift-year intent of donors who contributed in January, 1991.

9. The Executive Committee approved the recommendation by Bob Bruyn that the Fellowship establish an archival library which would be built over the years by collected and donated materials. This library collection would be fully catalogued and procedures for its study and use by interested persons would be developed.

10. It was agreed that the Executive Committee would meet during the Friday evening portion of its April 26-27, 1991 meeting in informal mission-based groupings to discuss appropriate issues, and together as a committee of the whole on Saturday. The Purposes Group would include the chairs of Education, Domestic Extension, Fraternal Relations, and International Fellowship; the Support Group would include Charter, Publications, Special Projects, and Finance; the Administrative Group would include the Vice President, Secretary, Secretary-General, and the Treasurer. The Judicial Committee chair would serve in an advisory capacity to these groups, and the President would both coordinate the groups and serve as a resource.

11. It was further agreed that contingent upon the decisions made concerning the Fellowship's Strategic/Action Plan in the combined General Council, Society Delegate, and Area Coordinator meetings scheduled for the next two days, the strategies and plans identified for consideration would be delegated to the appropriate standing committee for development and implementation, subject to review by the Executive Committee.

12. The Executive Committee approved giving societies that portion of the Fellowship's mailing list appropriate for their area, with the responsibility for working out the logistics of this process with each society delegated to the Executive Director, Mike Painter.

13. In response to a proposal to cull the Fellowship's mailing list to eliminate disinterested people, the Executive Committee agreed to: (a) send a follow-up mailing to those persons who did not respond to the previous interest-request-letter sent over Jim Johnston's name, informing recipients that if they do not respond they will be dropped from our regular mailing list. (b) Non-respondents to this follow-up letter/card will then be sent once each year a Fellowship mailing to

maintain contact and to encourage their interest and response. The Executive Director will oversee this procedure.

14. The Executive Committee charged the Judicial Committee to consider and draft appropriate language for amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws affecting the organization's name as well as the corporation's name, society naming requirements, distribution of assets upon dissolution, the style of reference to The Urantia Book, and the use of gender-inclusive language. The Judicial Committee's amendment recommendations will be considered by the Executive Committee at its April, 1991 meeting so that those approved can be forwarded to the General Council for consideration at the June 27-29, 1991 Triennial Council Meeting.

REPORTS AND OTHER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Gard Jameson reported that our Fellowship has become the first group member of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions. This involvement is a part of the Fraternal Relations Committee's ongoing efforts to interface with other religionists around the world.
2. Berkeley Elliott reported that 86 readers from countries outside the United States attended the Snowmass International Conference for readers of The Urantia Book. The countries represented were: South Africa, Australia, Canada (British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec), Finland, France, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, Tahiti, England, Ireland, and Estonia.
3. Harry McMullan reported on the progress of our fundraising efforts to date. The campaign this year is designed to involve more people personally in the process with General Councilors making direct letter and telephone contact with persons on our mailing list. In addition to securing sufficient financial support for the activities of the Fellowship, Harry is hoping that the base of support will be expanded so that the Fellowship's dependence on the generosity of a few large donors can be reduced.
4. Marian Rowley, who served the Brotherhood/Fellowship unselfishly and without pay for so many years, wrote to thank us for the small retirement stipend we are so glad to be able to give her each month. She is doing well and sends her regards to all.
5. Jim Johnston (and Mo Siegel in his written report) reported that the inaugural issue of the Study Group Herald is nearing completion and should be mailed in April, 1991. Also, the next issue of the BULLETIN containing the annual reports of Executive Committee members should also be in the mail in April.
6. It was reported that FUSLA, the only society which has not yet finalized a vote on affiliation, is engaged in a thoughtful process of consideration of the issues, and is targeting a decision for April.

7. To date, there are not very many candidates for election to the General Council at the upcoming June 22-23, 1991 meeting of the Triennial Delegate Assembly. It is requested that any persons interested in serving contact John Hales at our Wrightwood office to obtain a resume form.

8. Mo Siegel reported that Domestic Extension is hard at work on several projects: the bookstore tear-pads requested by the Area Coordinators are nearing completion; a program to insure broad availability of The Urantia Book, despite the Foundation's termination of sales to distributors, is being developed for consideration by the Executive Committee; a series of book markers with quotations from The Urantia Book which can be used and distributed by members of the Fellowship, is being developed by Domestic Extension; and the first 1991 regional training program for Area Coordinators will be held in conjunction with Scientific Symposium II in Oklahoma City, May 17-19, 1991.

9. A small group of dedicated readers has contacted the Braille Institute which has agreed, fully within the laws governing copyright, to produce a single copy of The Urantia Book in braille for a blind reader. Urantia Foundation was contacted several times over the past year with requests for permission to produce more than one copy, but has never responded.

SUMMARY OF GENERAL COUNCIL ACTIONS

For the first time in the history of the Brotherhood/Fellowship, approximately 30 observers were present at the meeting of the General Council which was convened at 7:45 pm, Saturday, February 16, 1991. These welcomed observers were comprised of those persons who had attended the Society Delegates and Area Coordinators meetings held in conjunction with this mid-year meeting of the General Council, and were invited as a consequence of a vote to open this Council meeting taken last summer. Here is a summary of actions and reports they observed.

1. A review of the amendments to the Constitution which the Judicial Committee is considering and drafting language for was presented to the General Council (see above for details). It was also reported that it was the consensus of both the Society Delegates and Area Coordinators who met the previous day that the organization's name be changed to The Fellowship (with the descriptive phrase, for readers of The Urantia Book). It was also felt that there was merit in retaining Fifth Epochal Fellowship as the corporation name, rather than changing it again. The members of the General Council affirmed agreement to these name proposals by voting to require the Judicial Committee to draft the appropriate constitutional amendment language, and instructed that members of the Fellowship be informed of this weekend's action and be polled to obtain their response to this proposal. **NOTE TO MEMBERS NOT ATTENDING THE TAMPA MEETING: SEE THE ENCLOSED BALLOT FOR YOUR USE.**

2. A motion was made, seconded, and carried after discussion that meetings of the General Council of the Fellowship shall be open to observation by members, but that the General Council shall retain the option to close the meeting for discussion of subjects the members of the Council feel are of a sensitive nature (e.g., some legal matters, compensation/employee issues, etc.).

3. A motion was made, seconded, and carried that a letter be developed by the group leaders for the Strategic Plan program concluded just prior to the Council meeting, and that this letter be sent to the membership for the purposes of gathering member information and comments and soliciting their action commitments relative to the development of the Fellowship's strategic plan.

4. A further motion was made, seconded, and carried that the development of the strategic plan proceed with the incorporation of ideas resulting from the Tampa mid-year meetings as well as the input received in response to the letter developed and sent to members by the planning group leaders, with a report and revised plan to be presented to the General Council at its regular meeting in June.

5. The following set of resolutions, developed by the representatives of the 14 societies attending the Society Delegate meeting, were presented to the General Council as an expression of the sense of the delegates in attendance, and were not to be considered binding (the resolutions may be submitted as binding after due consideration by all delegates at this summer's TDA):

a. That the General Council, in close cooperation with the societies, develop a simple and effective mechanism for regular (at least annual) society participation in the deliberations of the General Council, including consideration of each society's direct election of a General Councilor, as well as all other relevant ideas that might be evaluated in developing such a mechanism.

b. That an amendment be made to the constitution to provide for direct representation by each society on the General Council.

c. That consideration be given to reducing the terms of office for General Councilors to six (6) years.

d. That with respect to members-at-large, the Judicial Committee study the matter of finding ways to bring members-at-large into the organizational process.

e. That the appropriate General Council committee look at the possibility of using teleconferencing as a way to reduce the cost of serving as a member of the General Council and the Executive Committee.

f. That copies of the minutes of the General Council, Executive Committee, and Area Coordinator meetings be circulated to the presidents and secretaries of societies.

g. That all organizational meetings of the Fellowship be open to observation by members and that each organizational group has the option of closing the meeting at its discretion.

h. That the General Council solicit input from societies before finalizing major decisions when possible and appropriate.

i. That a subcommittee be formed from among the 1991 delegates and alternates to begin the process of planning the format and procedures for the 1991 TDA in June (this plan would be for the voting and resolutions portions of the TDA the format for which is not mandated by the Constitution). The following persons volunteered to serve on this subcommittee: Marvin Gawryn, Michael Challis, Lila Dogim, Betty Teresso, and Scott Forsythe.

j. That the guidelines respecting the qualifications for nominees to the General Council be amended so that they are more comprehensive including skills, knowledge, and experience.

k. That the name of our organization be changed to "The Fellowship" (the descriptive phrase, "for readers of The Urantia Book," would always be used in conjunction with "The Fellowship" but for legal reasons would not be formally adopted as part of the name), and that the constitution be amended accordingly.

l. That the General Council consider the following ideas concerning an annual delegate assembly:

--That the Fellowship modify its constitution to provide for an annual delegate assembly of society representatives.

--That each society delegate and alternate serve for a three-year term culminating in the Triennial Delegate Assembly.

--That the first Annual Delegate Assembly take place in 1992.

--That the Annual Delegate Assembly consider resolutions to be submitted annually to the General Council.

--That delegates and alternates to the Annual Delegate Assembly be invited to attend meetings of the General Council as observers.

--That the General Council report back to the Assembly concerning the status of submitted resolutions.

m. That whereas today's [February 15, 1991] meeting is not a constitutionally-mandated TDA, and whereas this meeting does give us an opportunity to bring to our societies information and rationale regarding resolutions that may be introduced at the June, 1991 TDA, and whereas throughout our discussions today we have been extolling the virtues of society input, now therefore be it resolved that the votes taken today are not binding but are rather to give the sense of the group convening on this date.

6. A motion was made, seconded, and defeated that the Executive Committee be directed to draft appropriate constitutional language for submission to the General Council to provide that the number of seats on the General Council be increased by the number of societies in good

standing, and that each such extra seat be elected directly by each respective society, and that the term of all Councilors be reduced from 9 years to 6 years.

There being no further business, this mid-year meeting of the General Council was adjourned. Enclosed for the benefit of members is a summary of the respective meetings of the Society Delegates and Area Coordinators.

CLOSING COMMENTS

In a 1986 issue of UrantiaN NEWS from Urantia Foundation, the trustees wrote: "First, there has long been, and continues to be, a high value placed upon using commercial book distribution channels, i.e., retail bookstores and distributors. This is done to help prevent us from exhibiting the cultish behavior associated with groups who distribute their publications only through their members. Thus, this public availability of the book in thousands of bookstores and libraries helps prevent us from being perceived as a cult and is an important and efficient method of disseminating the book, for many people will be exposed to it while browsing in libraries and bookstores." In October, 1990, this same Urantia Foundation terminated all sales to distributors and began competing with bookstores by selling books direct to individuals at the bookstore purchase price (well below the retail price the bookstore has to charge). This change in policy is inexplicable and unsupportable to many readers, and the reasons for it can only be obtained from the trustees. Importantly, however, it forces us in the Fellowship to ask ourselves how this change affects the health and well-being of the revelation itself, and our ability to do the work we believe our organization has been given to do.

To date, approximately 200,000 copies of The Urantia Book have been sold. Since we have only about 8,000 names on our mailing list, it can be assumed that many of these books are gathering dust someplace. We are in contact with perhaps 3,000 active readers around the world. Only about 1,200 have felt moved to join any of the formally organized associations of readers, and although it may be understandable after the events of the last 10 years or so why there are not more, even if we doubled the number it isn't very many. In view of these statistics, it would seem that this revelation has but a meager foothold on the face of our planet at this time. Perhaps we are right on schedule. But, the recent curtailment of readily-available books suggests that the work of truly stabilizing the revelation on the planet by the achievement of broad and deep availability of books, in many languages, and the development of a network of tens of thousands of reader-believers, is in some jeopardy.

Unfortunately, history has shown us there is little we can do to encourage the trustees to reverse their chosen path. So, in the face of these obstacles, we must together seek more effective means to accomplish our mission of bringing these truths to the hearts and minds of the peoples of the planet. It will take more effort on our parts; it will require more faith in the ongoing work of our unseen companions; it will require more patience, planning, cooperation, and assumption of responsibility; and it will require deeper levels of commitment than we have been asked to make

before. But, in my view, there is a power in The Urantia Book and its teachings which many of us may have underestimated. That power is the underlying revelatory and religious nature of the truths it contains and the effect of this power on the motivation and dedication of those into whose hands it comes. Though there are some on the planet who believe that human law and human institutions are sufficient to control this power, they are wrong. The sheer depth, immensity, and scope of the truths expressed in The Urantia Book make our attempts at control seem pathetic. The love of a personal Father, the reassuring sense that we are surrounded by caring beings, the certainty of our cosmic citizenship in a friendly universe, all these truths and more tell us that we needn't worry much about attempts to control these teachings. These attempts will fail, and if we stay true to our individual and collective purposes, we will not.

May you walk with God.

In fellowship,

David N. Elders

President

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FIFTH EPOCHAL FELLOWSHIP

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

Tampa, Florida February 16, 1991

A meeting was held on Saturday, February 16, 1991 in Tampa, Florida to review the Fellowship's Strategic Plan. Approximately 80 participants attended this meeting including General Councilors, society representatives, Fellowship standing committee members, area coordinators, and spouses. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a broadbased critique of the plan as it was currently written and determine actions which participants considered to be important priorities for the Fellowship throughout the upcoming year.

The meeting began with a series of presentations. Jim Johnston spoke on why a modified strategic planning approach was chosen by the Fellowship and what the components of this approach were. This presentation was followed by a speech by David Elders who commented on the Fellowship's beliefs, missions, and purposes. The third presentation, given by Marilyn Kulieke, focused on an overview of the strategic parameters and goals which had previously been selected by the Executive Committee and General Council. The three speakers reminded

the group that all the elements of the working Strategic Plan had been derived from the efforts and input of readers over many years, beginning with the organization's purpose statement written by the Fellowship's founders and including the almost-annual discussions on organizational philosophy, goals, and programs conducted since 1955.

The purpose of the next segment of the meeting was to collect participant input on the plan, with the intent of making changes which were reflective of feedback from the group. Because of the limited amount of time available for this process, it was determined that dealing with the entire plan was too much for the time scheduled. Consequently, the plan's goals and strategies were chosen as the area of focus. Each participant in the workshop was asked to choose one of the four following groups to focus their work on:

Group 1: Material Purpose Group "...the study and dissemination of the teachings of The Urantia Book" (facilitated by Jim Johnston)

Group 2: Mindal Purpose Group "...the promotion, improvement, and expansion among the peoples of the world of the comprehension and understanding of Cosmology and the relation of the planet on which we live to the Universe, of the genesis and destiny of Man and his relation to God, and the teachings of Jesus Christ..." (facilitated by Dan Massey)

Group 3: Spiritual Purpose Group: "...the inculcation and encouragement of the realization and appreciation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man..." (facilitated by Gard Jameson)

Group 4: Supporting Goals Group: organizational goals which support the projects of the three purpose groups, such as organizational structure, finances, etc. (facilitated by Bob Bruyn and Harry McMullan)

Each of the four groups began its work by examining the current set of goals and strategies and then generating new ideas or agreeing with the former draft of the plan. At the end of several hours of effort, each of the four groups presented its work to the entire assembly with the purpose of allowing each group to have an opportunity to express its views on each purpose. After this large group meeting, some of the sub-groups reconvened for further work. A combination of goals, some strategies, and some ideas for specific action plans were generated. The results of the work that each group did on goals and strategies will be included in the strategic plan for distribution to the participants and further review by the General Council and Fellowship members.

Many thanks are owed to each individual who contributed his/her time and efforts to this program. It is anticipated that the strategic planning process is just one of the many processes which can be used to help the Fellowship articulate, organize, and implement its mission in support of The Urantia Book and its teachings, which the organization's founders, in 1955, stated this way:

The Mission of the Fellowship is: "...to increase and enhance the comfort, happiness, and well-being of Man, as an individual and as a member of society, by fostering a religion, a

philosophy and a cosmology which are commensurate with Man's intellectual and cultural development, through the medium of fraternal association...."

Sincerely,

Marilynn Kulieke

Vice President

FIFTH EPOCHAL FELLOWSHIP

REGIONAL AREA COORDINATOR MEETING SUMMARY

Tampa, Florida February 15, 1991

Michael Painter opened the meeting and made introductions. Those attending were:

Tom Allen Ticky Harries David Robertson

Dan Amyx Don Heinerikson George Sammis

Beth Bartley Alice Hoedemaker Stevie Shaefer

Dennis Brodsky Eef Hoedemaker Nick Stephero

Berkeley Elliott Gard Jameson Waldine Stump

Duane Faw Peggy Johnson Paula Thompson

Inez Finstad Joe Liszka Larry Watkins

Larry Geis Mike Painter Betty Zehr

Robin Jorgensen Ken Raveill Ralph Zehr

Peter Laurence spoke on "The Interfaith Movement." Peter talked about various interfaith groups and how they are organized and constituted. Thank you Peter.

Waldine Stump led a "round-the-room" discussion allowing each Area Coordinator to speak about what activities were going on in their areas.

Tom Allen gave an update on the activities of the Domestic Extension Committee including what we are not doing, library book placement. We cannot afford to buy books, which are not readily available anymore anyway, so we are putting the project on hold. Tom displayed a letter sent by Urantia Foundation to Area Coordinator Charles Lilly which outlines Foundation policy for library placement. We encourage any Area Coordinator who would like to work in library placement under the Foundation's terms to please do so.

We discussed if it is desirable to have periodic regional Area Coordinator meetings or only hold an annual meeting. The consensus of the Area Coordinators attending was that regional meetings are desirable. There will be a national Area Coordinator meeting at Lake Forest, Illinois during the Summer Seminars, June 24-27, 1991. More later on that subject.

Jo Liszka led a discussion on the "Tear Pad Project." The Area Coordinators feel it would be helpful to have these pads for all kinds of public display. They will be ready for distribution in a few weeks.

We discussed the value of producing book markers with quotations from The Urantia Book on various subjects. The Area Coordinators agreed that this was a good project for the Domestic Extension Committee.

The next program considered was the "Adopt a Bookstore" project. Since the Foundation has generally made the book unavailable to bookstores, we are encouraging individuals to adopt a bookstore and insure it has copies of The Urantia Book on the shelves. This can be done by providing consignment books, guarantee of sales for displaying, or by direct order from the Foundation--if the bookstore will do so. Paula Thompson (from Colorado) is setting up a pilot project for this program. Detailed how-to instructions for this program will be available at a later date. Both the tear-pads and book markers to direct new readers to local ACs will be of use in conjunction with this program.

The Area Coordinators agreed that a Study Group Directory is a valuable service to provide readers. They also agreed that Area Coordinators should be listed in the next edition. Michael Painter will notify all ACs in March to submit the names of all the study groups in their areas for inclusion.

The Area Coordinators discussed the phone project being pilot-tested in Colorado and Chicago. Several ACs spoke of their experiences with the phone program. When the pilots are completed and we have a good idea how to proceed, we will provide a how-to packet and encourage other groups to start their own programs. The Domestic Extension Committee hopes to be able to match funds to help with financing.

The balance of the Area Coordinator meeting was open to add items for general discussion. The following subjects were discussed:

1. Value of public meetings.
2. How to introduce The Urantia Book to the public through various resources, including video and speaker bureaus.
3. How to deal with personality conflicts in groups.
4. How to deal with troublesome people in groups.

Michael Painter led a discussion about the impending name change for Fifth Epochal Fellowship. There was consensus that the name "The Fellowship" with the descriptive phrase, "for readers of The Urantia Book," was a good name for the organization.

John Hyde closed the meeting by presenting a talk on "Building Momentum." John spoke of his experiences as an Area Coordinator in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. He also presented some good ideas on how to expand readership in your area. Thank you John.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Allen, Secretary

Domestic Extension Committee