**SOCIETY CONCLAVE**

**2019**

**Techny Towers**

**Minutes**

Daniel Amyx, Membership Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:14 a.m. Larry Bowman volunteered to be secretary.

[Don’t have list of attendees.]

**Status of TDA resolutions:**

**Resolution #1 GC Report to Membership : New York Society (USGNY)**

BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Council email a draft of their meeting minutes to the Fellowship's membership, no later than 4 weeks following each meeting.

**Response:**  The GC reviewed the resolution and referred it to the EC for discussion, implementation, and reporting back to the GC.   Then, the EC reviewed the resolution and made a recommendation to not carry the motion as written and attempt to address the spirit of the motion in the following ways:

First, the following motion was passed by the EC:

The President or Secretary or other EC designated person shall prepare a summary of each meeting of the GC which shall be emailed to Fellowship members two weeks after the meeting. This summary shall also be posted on the Fellowship website.

Second, an amendment was made and approved to amend the Fellowship By-Laws by the GC as follows:

Paragraph 4.6. h) Within four weeks of any meeting of the General Council, the Secretary of THE URANTIA BOOK FELLOWSHIP shall by regular mail, email, or other electronic means, forward the draft minutes to all Society officers. Within four weeks of any subsequent proposed correction to the draft minutes and the final approval of General Council minutes shall likewise be forwarded to Society officers.

We hope that these changes will help improve our communication as an organization and have adequately addressed the spirit of TDA Resolution #1.

**Resolution #2 Jointly Sponsored UB Center : New England (UBSCNE)**

Be It Resolved, that the Fellowship explore with the UAI the option of supporting such a center(s) to build spiritual unity in the movement, further common objectives, and actively serve our spiritual family.

**Response:**  The GC reviewed the resolution and it did not carry the majority.  However, the value of the intention of this motion was acknowledged and we have recommitted to focus on coordinated working harmony of our Urantia organizations including the furthering of common objectives and finding ways to collaboratively serve our spiritual family.

There are too many instances to list, but a handful of examples of initiatives that are being actively coordinated between the UAI and UBF are the Urantia Global Experience conference in 2020 in Vancouver, quarterly presidents' meetings, the Urantia Book Study Group Directory, a combined young adult program at the UAI Europe Estonia conference in 2019, a collaborative program developing programs and resources for families, and so many others. Our hope is that these and the many other collaborative programs are evidence that working together with the UAI for the furtherance of common goals is a priority for this organization.

**Resolution #3 Society IT Support : Grand Canyon Society (GCS)**

WHEREAS; there appears to be a need for a number of societies to have an in-house mentor

with website designer experience who could be available from the Fellowship to make a one day visit to the societies who request it; and

Whereas such a POC (Point of Contact) from the Fellowship enhances the success of societies to have updated and/or new websites.

Be it Resolved, that the Fellowship explore the feasibility of creating such a position for on call

as requested by societies who meet the requirements to be set by the Fellowship. Airfare expense to be addressed by the Fellowship.

**Response:**  The GC reviewed the resolution and referred it to the EC for discussion, implementation, and reporting back to the GC. The EC subsequently reviewed the motion and it did not carry as written, but acknowledged the value of the request and committed to finding other alternatives to support the IT needs of societies. This is especially the case for building out tools to support societies during the current website migration that the Fellowship is undergoing. Society web-support on the new Fellowship website will be forthcoming likely in the next year. More information will follow at that time.

**Resolution #4 - Area Coordinator Program : Northern Light Society of Alaska**

Be it resolved that the Society representation of the 2018 TDA want to encourage the General

Council to take up the feasibility of re-creating the Area Coordinator Program, or similar model, that would place qualified Fellowship representatives in regional positions worldwide to help facilitate our mission on a more local, visible, and approachable level.

**Response:**  The GC reviewed the resolution and referred it to the EC for discussion, implementation, and reporting back to the GC.  The EC subsequently reviewed the resolution, accepted it unanimously, and assigned it to the Membership committee to begin a feasibility study for implementation.  We will provide further updates as we progress in this investigation.

**Resolution #5 Yearly TDA Updates : Wisconsin Society**

Be it resolved the 2018 TDA request the Fellowship president to communicate the results of each resolution to the societies' officers yearly until the start of the next TDA. And further requests the General Council to direct the Judicial Committee to write such a communication into The Urantia Book Fellowship’s constitution.

**Response:** The GC reviewed the resolution and it did not carry by majority vote. However, the value of the motion was recognized and a subsequent motion was made and passed by the GC which follows:

Whereas the Societies desire to know the results of the TDA resolutions:

Be it resolved the Fellowship adopts a policy that the Fellowship president communicate the status of each resolution to the society officers and to the delegates within sixty days of the adjournment of the TDA and yearly until actions triggered by the resolutions are completed.

**2018 TDA RESOLUTION 6: First Society**

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED That the Fellowship central organization actively support local communities' strength and development through the work of such committees as Outreach, Membership, and Education by providing personal help, encouragement, and reinforcement with workshops and assistance to such groups to strengthen study in their areas and provide outreach dissemination of Urantia Book teachings in each local area.

**Response:**The GC reviewed the resolution and referred it to the EC for discussion and implementation, and reporting back to the GC. The EC’s recommendation was unanimous to approve the resolution.

Our 2019 budget included resources to support a collaborative effort between Outreach, Education, and Membership Committees to support the very purpose of this resolution. The first year of programs associated with this effort will be in Texas and Florida communities after which the program will be re-assessed for further potential implementation in other areas.

**Presentation on Mentorship:** Ted Blaney

Societies are not addressing new members adequately. Some kind of mentoring needs to be done for new readers. Marian Rowley started such a program for new persons in the Forum. Many new readers are Members at Large. Ted made attempts to hook up new readers with seasoned readers. We need an attractive place on the website for new readers to ask questions to other readers in their area.

Karen Larsen: Facebook is busy with new Urantia Book readers asking questions. Many new readers are not familiar with the Fellowship website.

Dolores Nice: Are MALs widespread? Yes, they are. There are several new readers in Nigeria.

Marvin Gawryn: Many new readers have trouble with meanings of UB terms. New readers can be at several different spiritual levels.

David Kulieke: Person to person contact with readers is still the most effective method. This is not to denigrate electronic means of communication.

Claudia Ayers asked how one joins an online study group.

Dan Amyx: Ted, this is all about training mentors, isn’t it?

Ted: There are books on mentoring.

Cecelia Lampley: Urantia University is also a source for mentoring.

Marvin: It’s difficult to match up geographically a qualified mentor with a new reader of similar interests. Zoom can handle some of this.

David asked Ted to keep us informed of the progress of mentorship. He can report on Society Officers.

Lara Amyx: The Society Officers list should only be the current four officers of any Society. This information should be sent annually to Fellowship office. No decision has been made to move this list as a forum on Wild Apricot.

Claudia was confused about various lists such as Society Officers and SocAdmin. These are email lists that are separate from the Fellowship website.

**Area Coordinator Program:**

Proposal for EC to approve Area Coordinators every three years. Preferably there would be a male and female to work together in a region and collaborate with UAI and other Urantia organizations.

Dan wants to know what worked and did not work when this program existed.

Tom Allen was on Domestic Extension Committee when this existed. There was lots of enthusiasm, mainly used phones. The program faded away after Mo Siegel took over the committee. Tom says worked better under Harry McMullan.

Steve Sawyer said he and George Thornberry shared Tennessee and thought it didn’t work well. Steve had a small cluster of people in his area. He is not sure face-to-face encounters would appeal to young readers, who are used to online interactions.

Tom said the Fellowship office should let states know there are new readers in their area who want to get in touch with others.

Cecelia was AC for Nevada, didn’t think it worked very well. She was not aware of Society Conclaves during her time.

Claudia was AC in Sacramento area during the whole time. She had 40 names on her list, and they had potluck get-togethers. She thinks it was a success and should work much better with electronic methods.

Ted was never an AC, but when he joined Membership Committee, he contacted readers in Kentucky, and it was a laborious effort to update the list. He worked with George Thornberry on this. He found a lot of duplicate names, incorrect addresses, etc. He thinks an AC could help update records.

Tim Young was an AC for Iowa. He never had many readers. He thinks things would work better with current communication methods.

David was also on Domestic Extension at the time of the AC program but was not an AC himself. He is supportive of reenergizing the program. We need to clarify the areas covered. Six years ago David proposed the Zone Initiative, which contains much smaller areas. He suggested that an ad hoc committee rather than the office staff should handle this program. A lot of people don’t want to be contacted. If there is a Society in the area, then don’t have an AC; let the Society handle this work.

Bob and Vicki Arkens were living in Austin, TX, when they were recipients of Berkeley Elliott’s actions as an AC. They became acquainted with many other readers before they left Texas to return to Wisconsin. Bob thinks face to face is still worthwhile, especially among younger readers.

Linda Huff talked about the stability of a study group in her area, which has lasted for years. Many people have come and gone over the years, but the group is still there.

Albert Lassiter thinks the term, Area Coordinator, carries baggage and suggested something like “Urantia Book Champion” instead.

Dan enjoined his experience as an AC in Florida. He attended a meeting in Oklahoma with Harry and Berkeley. More recent experiences have proven that the Urantia movement is growing quietly. He has encountered people who knew the UB decades ago. People have read it quietly.

Janet Kratzat of Fort Wayne said there probably are many people in town who have the Urantia Book on their shelves because of Meredith Sprunger who have not read it. She says there are only two active readers in the area; we need to know how to reach out. Marvin said to publicize topics that would be of general interest.

David feels that by now well over a million people have had some kind of experience with the UB. He doesn’t think the majority of people all over the world TODAY will ever read the book but it will probably become better known in the future.

Dolores says JJ Benetiz has helped make Latin American readers aware of the UB. We would love to see his works translated into English.

**Society Conclaves Historical Summary**: David Kulieke

Distributed list compiled by Ken Keyser. It appears there have been 15 Society Conclaves since 1981, the 25th anniversary of First Society. David would like to see these held every three years (separate from TDAs and conferences).

Recessed at 11:53 a.m.

Resumed at 1:41 p.m.

**Roundtable discussion:**

Dan asked how many Societies are growing, how many are losing members, how many are stagnant? Hands raised appeared to represent about equal amounts.

Kurt Cira said Agondonter Boot Camp had a one-day mini conference in Florida, and eight people came whom he had never seen before. They are conducting meetings by Zoom.

Bob Arkins asked how you answer the question of why one should join a Society.

David said a one-day conference is popular with a lot of people.

Claudia reported on activities of Golden Gate Society. They are sponsoring a Croatian translation that appears on the New York Society website and continue to sponsor at least one retreat a year. Dolores has served as program chair for years. Some programs have spiritual aspects, which many appreciate.

Wisconsin: Bob said that members are from all over the state, and distances are creating problems, especially among older people. Many are not willing to go to Chicago or elsewhere to meet other readers at conferences. Thinks it would be nice for Societies to be under an umbrella insurance policy for conferences. They don’t do library placement programs anymore. Keeping study groups alive is a feat. Bob mentioned two projects his daughter, Alice Arkins Wood, is involved in: Urantia Life Lessons, which are videos she has created; and *Pervaded Space*, an online newsletter she edits. These are examples of personal activities that Societies could help with.

Dan: Do we want to ask what the Fellowship can do for Societies? Do Societies reach out to the Fellowship?

Karen Larsen: There continues to be a communication problem. Study groups should be connected with Societies. Janet from Fort Wayne said the same thing.

Larry said the Fellowship should remind Societies at the beginning of the year about the census and the annual tithe. Janet said, “Yeah, if the email addresses are right.” Albert said maybe such reminders should be sent quarterly as appropriate.

Cecelia: Could Societies go online on Wild Apricot to update their information?

**Wild Apricot demonstration:** Jena Lassiter

Website platform (Adobe Business Catalyst) is being obsoleted. Fellowship is shifting to a new database-driven platform called Wild Apricot.

It can keep track of Society members, study group members, new reader contacts, and Society officers.

The platform offers opportunity for a Society website, which includes managing event registration and Society minutes. Have an email address for your Society that uses @urantiabook.org. Dan asked if Societies can collect funds for registration; Jena needs to ask.

We have a $40,000 monthly grant from Google Adwords but are only using $2,000 a month.

Melchizedek: 27,000 searches a month.

Adjourned 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Bowman