Notes: Society Conclave—2025-05-04

Societies are part of the Urantia Book Fellowship whose purpose is to connect people together as brothers and sisters to share the truths of The Urantia Book teachings to promote our personal and spiritual growth.

Societies have a similar goal and have been a critical part of the organization of the Fellowship since its inception.

Society members automatically become members of the Fellowship.

There are many benefits that Societies can receive from the Fellowship.

In turn, the Societies help the Fellowship by electing General Council members and by helping people in their societies achieve the purpose of the Fellowship.

Societies are the next best way to bring people together person-to-person.

Bruce Wenger:

* Lack of mechanism for societies working together.
* Society activity is diminishing: How do we support one another to invigorate the activities of the societies?
* Possible to have a society study group that society members are invited to on a quarterly basis to share activities, ideas, dreams, hopes, schemes to inspire our growth? We have so much in common: dissemination, living the teachings. What do we do about the societies? And what do we do with the Fellowship? How do we connect with that?

DaleAnne Lugrin:

Agree with most of what Bruce said. Our society is struggling with our officer roles. Coming together on regular basis: inspire, support one another. We need each other’s support spiritually and technically; how to participate with the GC. Get together quarterly. Want to see societies participate in everything.

Cece Forester

Focus of the Fellowship has shifted away from supporting the Societies. Even not supporting their responsibilities to the Societies.

With no more TDA; what happens to the ability of the Societies to shift focus from GC to Societies?

Concern: We are not getting enough new people who are prospective members. There is a role for the Fellowship to play; they’ve dropped the ball. When a reader contacts the Fellowship; they should be referred to a society. Is there something that we can do? How do we get new contacts? (Jena’s note: Later, Ruth mentioned that she recently did get a referral from the Fellowship.)

Diane Bishop

There was a time when the Brotherhood was working to get people together socially in regional areas. Consider branch offices of a corporation:

* Provide training for field members of how to recruit
* Provide help in how to organize activities
* Provide help in how to make these branch offices successful

Societies have different software programs; we could work together better; no communication between us.

There is a central role needed to coordinate and support Society activities.

There was a push by Societies to be autonomous; they don't want to be told what to do. There are certain ground rules when accepting an affiliation. Societies could be an incredible tool for the Fellowship.

Beth Wenger:
It’s up to us to do coordination. Importance of person-to-person contact.

* Focus on regional conferences

Ken Keyser

Is there a way we can participate more actively; to take advantage of what the Fellowship has to offer.

For example, First Society has problems creating a website.

Use of study group directory.

Do we have the will now to take on some of the networking activities that are needed to move the Societies forward?

Brad Garner

We need a digital presence we can trust.

Marilyn Kulike

SSS allowed Societies to get together.

We don’t have a lot of young people.

Need to see the models and what is successful. Everyone here knows that young people are our destiny. Big on education.

Ruthie Wenger

There is a need to update UB-Society Officers mailing list.

How can we network more together? Both top down support and bottom up support needs to come from us.

What are some of the problems we could work on together with society members and the Fellowship?

Claire Miller

Societies are where the real Fellowship happens. Central organization has taken the best from the Societies. It appears the societies are not valued by the organization. Society members have worked so hard to share the revelation. We are here to love one another.

Linda Huff

Have 3-4 new members. It’s very slow.

Training for new leaders; there is hope.

Planned something in late august, where presidents will share their ideas to enable people to share.

Paul Anderson:

We are members; why are there people who are members and those who won’t join?

Phil Calabrese

Need to be more actionable rather than organizational.

Invited people from his church and from the study group to a potluck where they were sharing information about the UB.

Lee Smith:
Are people willing to extend discussion and eventually make a statement about Society membership voting vis-a-vis MAL voting?

Would like to see us create a guide book for other groups; how to grow study groups, how to impact organizations in other countries, how to create a guidebook.

Claudia

What is the Urantia Book pamphlet that you could put your name on?

Douglas

What does autonomous mean?

Jena send society officers’ email addresses.

Consider organizing training for technology help.

Ensure that the Fellowship refers people to societies when appropriate.

SocAdmin was originally a place where society officers would share ideas. What can we use now?

Talking sharing; newsletter? Something that worked in the past.

Sharing those fresh ideas coming from other societies.

Need a society membership list that shows society name.

Data base is the same regardless of the platform as the Fellowship transitions to the new platform.

ACTION: Jena will work on the database item.

* Ability to sign up to opt in to receive society contact.
* Ability at officer level to use a directory (Douglas suggestion).
* Ken, Douglas, Ginny, Eileen, Jena to work on this together

Need to develop requirements for the project of getting a database we can trust that has correct officer members and correct emails for those officers. Additional requirements questions:

What exactly will we allow the list to be used for?

Just current officers? Do we want them to stay on the list?

Do we need to allow Societies to see all members? Need rationale
Why are there problems with having an accurate list? How do we prevent them in the future?

If we use the list to send a newsletter, how will that operate?

What security do we need to have in place to protect the list?

Who can access the list? How do we keep it so that it is shared with discretion or so that it is not shared?

How do we ensure the list can be found?

ACTION: Societies networking and working with each other and meeting quarterly.

New England Society offered to work with First Society to set up the next meeting.