

United Church of God, *an International Association*

Council of Elders Quarterly Meeting Report

Milford, Ohio

Tuesday, December 6, 2022

Chairman Len Martin called the morning session to order at 9 a.m. Eastern and the meeting was opened with prayer. All 12 Council of Elders (Council) members were present. Scott Ashley was online via Zoom.

After the opening prayer, the Council immediately went into a planned Executive session.

During the executive session, the following resolutions were made concerning the edits to Appendix B, Section 2 of the Hebrew Calendar Paper and the withdrawal of all prior Hebrew Calendar papers:

Len Martin moved, John Miller seconded and Council unanimously approved The Hebrew Calendar paper, Appendix B, Section 2, as amended.

Len Martin moved, Rex Sexton seconded, and Council unanimously approved the withdrawal of all Hebrew Calendar papers previous to the current one.

At 12:05 p.m. the Council took a break for lunch.

At 1 p.m. Chairman Martin called the Council to order and immediately went into a planned executive session.

At 2:40 p.m. the planned executive session ended.

Mr. de Campos presented an update on the situation in Angola. He began by giving a brief history of the actions taken by the Angolan government that has impacted the Church. Mr. de Campos then explained the actions taken by the Angolan Church with the assistance of the *UCGIA*. He explained the conditions he presented to the Angolan elders that *UCGIA* would require if *UCGIA* were to move forward with this partnership request. These conditions included the following three mandates:

- Every elder must sign and comply with the Fundamental Beliefs, Constitution, and Bylaws of *UCGIA*.
- Every elder must sign and comply with the *UCGIA*'s Ordinances of Ministers and Ethical Conduct Guidelines.
- Every elder must sign and comply with *UCGIA*'s Policy on Sexual Misconduct.

Along with the above three mandates, *UCGIA* also required the elders to adhere to the *UCGIA*'s Form of Administrative Organization and other administrative documents applicable to *UCGIA*'s National Councils.

These conditions were presented to the Angolan elders and during their recent General Conference of Elders that took place the first week of December 2022, they agreed to the terms and accepted the partnership. They immediately changed their name to the United Church of God Angola and instituted a structure similar to that of the *UCGIA*: Council, Chairman, Vice Chairman, MMS, and Administration.

At this point, the Angolan elders must submit a new application to the Government to be recognized as a Church by the Republic of Angola. They must also apply to change their name from the Worldwide Church of God to the United Church of God. The process has been started and meetings have been scheduled to identify and determine any further needs to continue the process.

The Angolan elders have sent a letter with an official request for initiating a partnership with the UCGIA. Mr. de Campos asked the Council and the Administration to respond to the Angolan elders with our own official letter accepting them in a partnership.

It was proposed that a detailed letter be crafted and presented during tomorrow's meeting concerning UCGIA's official response for approval. Mr. de Campos also requested that the Council and Administration produce an official document/diploma to be created so that the Angolan Church can post it in their home office.

On behalf of the Strategic Planning and Finance Committee (SPFC) Mr. John Miller introduced the next session: Update on Strategic and Operation Plans. He began the presentation with a review of the last GCE balloting and Kahoot results. Then he turned the meeting over to President Shabi to present the Operation Plan based upon the *Ephesians Framework* model. The plan was discussed in detail and questions were asked for clarification.

After President Shabi's presentation, Mr. Miller continued by giving an update on the Strategic Plan based upon the *Truth in Love* model. The plan was discussed, and suggestions were made for the simplification and clarification of the document. The SPFC agreed to rework the *Truth in Love* document with some of the suggested changes and then represent it during the next council meeting in February 2023. It was also decided that the SPFC will present an update on the progress sometime in January via Zoom with the Council before the February council meetings.

At 6:05 p.m. the Council adjourned for the day.

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Chairman Len Martin called the morning session to order at 9 a.m. Eastern and the meeting was opened with prayer. All 12 Council of Elders (Council) members were present. Scott Ashley was online via Zoom.

After the opening prayer, Chairman Martin introduced Charles Melear who then presented an overview and discussion concerning the 2022 Feast of Tabernacles survey and statistics:

- Festival Attendance
- Charitable Contributions
- Covid-19 Impact
- Families Helping Families Donations
- National Webcast
- Problems
- Speaking
- Special Music
- Suggestions
- Welcome Video
- Youth Education

Mr. Melear then led a discussion on plans for the 2023 GCE annual meeting and the agenda. He ended the discussion by reviewing a few statistics from last year's GCE survey.

Peter Eddington introduced the next session which covered the updates concerning the upcoming 2023 Web redesign, CRM (Customer Relationship Management), and Drupal-9 upgrade. Mr. Eddington then introduced Duncan McClenagan to lead a presentation about the website redesign. Stephanie Bissessar then led a presentation about how to use social media to develop our UCG digital content, expand our outreach efforts and encourage engagement.

Dan Dowd led a discussion to review the proposed amendments and advise the Amendment Committee to determine if these proposed amendments will be taken to the GCE for balloting.

- **Article 1.5.5 - Amendment Procedure – What Proposals Must Include**
- **Bylaw 8.3 - Term of Office of Council Members**
- **Bylaw 9.1 - Officers**

All three proposed amendments were presented and thoroughly discussed. During this discussion, the council members submitted their comments of support and/or comments of concern with each proposal. It was determined that the proposed amendment to Article 1.5.5 should be included in the Call and Notice to the GCE. It was determined that the proposed amendment to Bylaw 8.3 should be included in the Call and Notice to the GCE with the addition of a statement of concern from the Council. It was determined that the proposed amendment to Bylaw 9.1 should not be included in the Call and Notice to the GCE with a letter of concern outlining the reasons why this proposal was not supported by the Council.

At 12:05 p.m. the Council took a break for lunch.

At 1:15 p.m. Chairman Martin called the Council to order and immediately went into a planned executive session.

At 4:05 p.m. the planned executive session ended.

Mr. Shaw presented an update on the Education Committee's mandated project concerning the sanctity of marriage. It has been determined that a study paper needs to be written. A rough draft has been created, but is not ready to be presented. Mr. Shaw then presented the outline and asked the Council for feedback and suggestions. Mr. Shaw added that the purpose of this study paper is to highlight the purpose of marriage as God designed so that our teachings, pre-marital counseling, and marriage ceremony are consistent and in perfect alignment with scripture. The Study Paper will address the following:

- Define origins and purpose of the divine institution of marriage
- Define the correct and proper wording that should be voiced in the marriage vow as used by the UCG.
- Examine the biblical roles of a godly husband.
 - Will you leave your father and mother and be joined to your wife until death?
 - Will you love, cherish, honor and provide for your wife?
- Examine the biblical roles of a godly wife.
 - Will you submit to your husband as to the eternal God? What does submission mean?
 - Will you subject yourself to your husband as to the Lord?
 - Will you revere your husband as the Church does Christ?
 - Define what it means to be a helpmeet – this is an outdated term and the role needs to be clarified.
 - Define what it means to be a homemaker – (it's not housekeeper) – it's about relationships

- The importance of marrying within the faith – address Malachi 2:11.
- What God has joined let no one separate - Matthew 19:1-10.
 - Define and explain the importance of fulfilling our part of the covenant.
 - What do we allow into our marriages that put it in danger?

Mr. Sexton then presented updates on the Education Committee’s mandated project concerning the drafting of a Ministerial Background and Education Survey. Mr. Sexton presented an outline and asked the Council for input and suggestions. The feedback will be used to draft a final version of the survey and will be presented to the Council for approval in an upcoming council meeting.

Chairman Martin gave a brief update on the Historical Archive project. He mentioned that Katherine Rowland has been a key individual in the progress of this project. Mrs. Rowland sent an update with what she has completed and the tasks that need to be completed.

- Documents scanned and made searchable:
 - Worldwide News (1986-1995)
 - Worldwide Church of God Pastor General’s Report (most of 1984, 1986, 1992, 1993, 1994 and part of 1995)
 - New Beginnings (1995-1998)
 - UCG Ministerial Newsletter (1996-1998, possibly not complete)
 - Assorted historical Worldwide Church of God documents
- Tasks that await completion:
 - Archive materials previously submitted by Mr. Dick need to be scanned/made searchable
 - Another archive shipment is in preparation by Mr. Dick upon completion of the above
 - All materials need to be tagged with keywords
 - All materials need to be added to a searchable database

At 5 p.m. the Council adjourned for the day.

Thursday, December 8, 2022

Chairman Len Martin called the morning session to order at 9 a.m. Eastern and the meeting was opened with prayer. All 12 Council of Elders (Council) members were present. Scott Ashley was online via Zoom.

Chairman Martin introduced the first subject of the day concerning the Council review of the “Light of Hope” program. He then turned the floor over to Steve Myers to lead a presentation about the program. Mr. Myer’s explained the reasons why “Light of Hope” was introduced last January. He then discussed the program’s Goal, Vision, Mission, and Scope statements. Mr. Myers also clarified exactly what this program is all about and what it is not.

Mr. Myer’s added that the Light of Hope’s sole purpose is to support our members who struggle with mental health issues and addiction. He made it clear that this program is for UCGIA members only. It’s not a public program or open to other COG organizations. Light of Hope is not just providing counseling services, it’s a support system, as well as assisting the membership with locating and connecting with the available Christian-based mental health and addiction services in their local areas.

Mr. Myers ended his presentation with a question and answer session as well as taking feedback to improve the Disclaimer, Confidentiality, and Hold Harmless Statement. Dr. Roy Fouch, a member of the consultant volunteers for Light of Hope, joined Mr. Myers during this portion of the presentation.

Chairman Martin then asked the Council if this new Light of Hope program needs a resolution or was the presentation and a simple acknowledgment that the Council has been made aware of this new program enough. It was determined that a resolution was needed and would be drafted and then presented at the Zoom council meeting sometime in January. It was also decided that the program can move forward without the resolution.

Chairman Martin then opened the meeting to address any unfinished business for this quarter's council meetings.

John requested that each Council member send an email of their top five subjects/concerns for feedback as the SPFC works on the Strategic Plan.

Chairman Martin lead a discussion concerning a possible need to draft a new resolution for the organizational partnership with the Angola Church. He brought to the Council's attention a previous resolution concerning partnerships and asked for input as to whether or not the previous resolution would be sufficient. After deliberation, the Council decided that a new resolution was needed to address the name United Church of God as well as the use of all UCGIA's licenses and branding. It was also determined that an official letter from President Shabi and a Certificate of Partnership would be sent from the UCGIA to make this partnership official.

The Council went into executive session at 10:26 a.m.

The Council came into open session at 12:20 p.m.

Chairman Martin opened the floor for anyone to discuss any unfinished business or concerns before the meetings adjourned.

The Council adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

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Council Reporter
Ryan Hall

[These are not the official minutes from the Council meeting. Elders can find those at the Home Office with the Council Secretary. Video recordings are posted for the elders on the UCG Ministerial Resource Site.]

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