

Council of Elders 2006 Nominee Questionnaire

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INTRODUCTION:

From the beginning of the United Church of God, elders have expressed a strong desire to better know the men nominated as candidates for the Council of Elders. In response to their request a questionnaire was created allowing Council nominees an opportunity to provide information about themselves, their skills and their sense of what they can contribute to Council membership.

Answers to the following questions will help members of the General Conference of Elders better know you as a candidate.

1. Give a summary of your background, work experiences, skills, training and education.

Church Experience and Background – As the fifth of eight children, I was born in May 1951 and grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. I first came into contact with the Worldwide Church of God via the “World Tomorrow” radio program and the “Plain Truth” magazine in 1964. During my first year at the University of Missouri (1969) I asked for a visit by ministers of the church. I began attending services in St. Louis, Missouri and was then baptized in May 1970 by Carl McNair, resulting in my being thrown out of the house.

I transferred to Ambassador College in August 1970 and graduated in June 1973. My wife Monica and I have been married since June 1974. We have two children (both married, living in Dallas, Texas) and two grandchildren.

I have been employed by the church since June 1973.

Council and Board Experience – Following my resignation from WCG in June 1995, I was asked by the United Church of God to remain in Germany and accept the position of “Regional Pastor” for UCG in the German-language area. When legal requirements for incorporation were completed, I became a member of UCG-Germany’s first National Council (in 1996) and have served since then as a council member. Except for a one year period, I have also been its chairman. I also serve as chairman of the UCG-Netherlands National Council.

Employment Experience and Background – Since graduation from Ambassador College, I have served the church as an expatriate for nearly 29 years (in Germany for over 22 years and in the Philippines for 6½ years). I served 12 years exclusively in the field ministry (in the United States, Germany and Switzerland), 10 years exclusively in an administrative function (in Germany and in the Philippines) and since UCG’s start-up in a combined pastoral and administrative capacity. I also served as WCG Regional Director in the Philippines (1990-1994) and in Germany (1994-1995).

Over the years I have performed just about every function in the German-language work, from reading mail to stuffing literature, editorial work, pastoral work, festival organization and youth work, etc.

I believe my employment experience over the years has contributed to skill and personal development in the following areas:

- ability to identify and utilize available resources in innovative ways to maximize the limited financial resources available;
- ability to empower those who want to contribute to do as much as they are capable of doing without the stifling mentality of “We never did it that way before” or “We are the leaders, don’t call us, we’ll call you”;
- ability for realistic assessment of strategic goals – what would be nice to do vs. what really can be done over time;
- administrative experience (having served as Regional Director in the WCG’s 3rd largest international area, the Philippines, with over 3000 members and a Feast of Tabernacles attendance of nearly 6000);
- strong work ethic.

2. Explain how you feel the Council and Church would benefit from your being a member of the Council. Describe the dimensions that you feel you would bring to the Council.

What can I “bring to the table”? Because of my many years as an expatriate serving in such culturally diverse areas as Germany and the Philippines, I believe I can offer a dimension of insight and experience possibly unique within the organization. I have a strong interest in the “balance” among the international areas and vis-à-vis the church in the United States.

In a rapidly changing environment, whether external or internal, unique situations require creative thinking and at times quiet sacrifice. In this regard I am not afraid to stick my neck out for what I believe to be best for the church and am willing to consider solutions that may be unpopular. An example would be my involvement in late 1997 in facilitating an interest-free loan to fund the Home Office move from Arcadia to Cincinnati, thereby helping to end the leadership crisis with UCG’s first President.

3. Membership on the Council requires a commitment to dedicate time for Council meetings, committee work between meetings and occasional teleconferences. Realistically describe your willingness and ability to give time to the Council’s work.

I am not afraid of work. I have considered the time involved and believe I can meet the commitment required. As editor of UCG’s German-language publications, I am familiar with deadline pressure – we haven’t missed a publication deadline yet. (You can visit www.ucg.org/deutsch to see what UCG-Germany has produced in the last 10 years.)

4. The work of the key committees of the Council is central to its success. Describe your interest in and what you feel you could contribute to the work of the following committees.

- a. Doctrine**
- b. Education/Ministerial Services**
- c. Ethical Review/Roles and Process**
- d. Media and Communications**
- e. Strategic Planning and Finance**

Because of my current service as a UCG editorial reviewer and my work in German editorial and media, I would be most interested in the *Media and Communications* area. Because of my international exposure, I believe I can provide helpful input re: the impact of "American"-generated media outside the United States.

Because of my past service internationally in a managerial capacity and my current responsibility in Europe, I believe I could also make a worthwhile contribution to the *Strategic Planning and Finance* committee. All of my administrative experience in the church has involved making the most of very limited financial resources.

Because of my current service as a UCG editorial reviewer, an occasional contributor to "World News & Prophecy" and my work in German editorial I am also interested in the *Doctrine* committee. Because of my constant involvement in reviewing material prior to publication in German, I believe I can make a contribution re: the consistency of UCG's doctrinal content throughout our publications.

Aside from these personal preferences, I would be happy to serve on whatever committee to which I would be assigned.

5. What do you feel are the major issues which must be addressed by the Church?

Overcoming spiritually dysfunctional behavior.

The Council itself identified this problem at its meetings held in Birmingham, Alabama from April 29 to May 2, 1996. The Council concluded that "we, as members of the Church of God, have not always handled our relationships in a godly manner" ("New Beginnings", May 6, 1996, page 5).

A church that does not handle its relationships in a godly manner is, to some extent, spiritually dysfunctional. Would God as a parent want to add children to a spiritually dysfunctional family?

It is my opinion that this situation has not been resolved to the point where we can say that no further attention is required. Just in the last 2-3 years, UCG has lost members and elders because of "non-doctrinal" situations requiring conflict resolution in a godly manner.

As an example, in my opinion, conflict is handled in a "godly manner" when Matthew 18:15-17 is applied consistently throughout the church. The Council helps best in this area by setting the example and applying the spirit of Matthew 18:15-17 in all its own deliberations and actions.

Preaching the Gospel.

While UCG is attracting new people, why aren't we attracting *more* new people?

Statistics on the number of new donors and co-workers are encouraging. UCG's domestic U.S. income does increase with or slightly above inflation. However, the number of new people currently being attracted to UCG, in my opinion, will be insufficient over time to replace aging and retiring members whose capacity to support the Work will be diminished as the employment phase of their lives ends.

(With increased costs in areas other than media, an income that keeps pace with inflation actually means we are *losing ground*.)

We all understand that God must do the calling. We also understand that God works through His human instruments. As I see it, that means we have a responsibility to analyze how well we are doing our part in contributing to God's Work of calling people.

Why, then, aren't we attracting more new people? Is it the "tone" of our message? Within the ex-WCG community we find "tones" ranging from the soft-touch "philosophical" Gospel to the "plagues are coming soon" approach. Where is UCG within this range?

If the tone and content of the message is deemed appropriate, is the amount of resources allocated to preaching the Gospel sufficient?

We are now witnessing those major developments in world events that the church has predicted for so many years (European unification, turmoil in the Middle East, etc.). Is it appropriate, then, that we devote less than 20 percent of our income to our public proclamation? Are we sure that this reflects God's priorities at this time in mankind's history?

While we do not know God's will re: how big a Work is yet to be done by UCG, we do know that it is His will that the Gospel be preached. The Council's responsibility is to evaluate continuously how well UCG is fulfilling that responsibility and give guidance to the administration for those course corrections or adjustments perceived to be needed.

Preparing a people.

How well are we preparing members for rulership in the Kingdom of God?

How well are we encouraging all parts of the Body of Christ to use their God-given talents and abilities? What programs have we implemented in the last 10 years to promote the development and use *within the church* of members' talents and abilities?

How well are we preparing the next generation of leadership? What personal mentoring skills has UCG developed, taught or promoted within the "professional" ministry in the last 10 years?

What is (are) our method(s) of evaluating our success in these areas?

The Council's responsibility is to evaluate continuously how well UCG is fulfilling its responsibility of helping all members develop, nurture and grow in their personal relationship to our heavenly Father and His son Jesus Christ.

UCG's future manpower challenge.

"Manpower" doesn't mean only UCG-employed elders, although it certainly includes them. It means current and future employees, whether ordained or not, and all elders. However, because of our traditional corporate mindset, the term "manpower" tends to be limited only to UCG-employed elders.

Re: "manpower" in terms of UCG-employed elders, financial constraints resulting from increasing health care and retirement costs for an aging ministry may dictate in the future that a one-to-one replacement ratio for each retiring minister is simply not feasible. UCG needs to be prepared for this possibility, which most likely will require some "thinking outside the corporate box", while still providing personal pastoral care for the brethren.

The manpower challenge will be (and in some cases already is) especially acute in the international areas.

What do we expect our manpower situation to be in 5, 10 or 20 years? Shouldn't our strategic planning be extended well beyond the current 1-2 year plan submitted annually to the GCE?

If so, the Council is challenged to provide policy and guidelines for the administration to explore alternative options for meeting UCG's future manpower needs.