

Council of Elders 2008 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.

I 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 had my first personal contact with the church and began attending services in St. Louis. I was then baptized in May 1970 by Carl McNair.

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 three grandchildren.

I have been employed by the church since June 1973.

During that time I have had over 30 years resident experience outside the United States in Asia and Europe. I have pastoral experience in Asia, Europe and the United States and administrative experience in Asia and Europe.

In the WCG I served 14 years in the field ministry in the United States, Germany (East and West) and Switzerland and 8 years in an administrative function (in Germany and in the Philippines). Since UCG's start-up I have served in a combined pastoral and administrative capacity in Europe. In my administrative experience in the Philippines I served as Director of Ministerial Services (1987-1990) and as Regional Director. I also was the Regional Director in Germany (1994-1995). I served as national Festival Coordinator for the Philippines from 1987 to 1993 (5-8 sites annually with over 5,000 in attendance). As Philippine Regional Director (1990-1994) I was also pastor for the northern Western Pacific (Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Pacific islands). From 1982-1987 I was the main PCD writer for the German-language area.

In UCG, in addition to pastoral and administrative responsibilities in the German-language region and the Netherlands, I also serve as editor of UCG's publications in German and as production coordinator for UCG's publications in Dutch. Since January 1997 we have published the German "Good News" continuously (six issues a year), a German version of "United News" (twelve issues a year), 19 booklets, the entire Bible Study Course and

9 study papers. We also provide 50 German-language MP3 sermons a year to our brethren. We have published 7 booklets in Dutch, and we publish a Dutch-language supplement for the "Good News" magazine distributed in the Netherlands.

I also maintain the German "Good News" website (www.gutenachrichten.org) and I designed, programmed and maintain UCG-Germany's mailing system to conform to Germany's mass mailing postal requirements. (We process our own mail and maintain our own mailing list.)

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.

I have lived most of my adult life (30 years) in the "international" area, including involvement from the start in one of UCG's international areas. My perspective would likely be different from someone without resident experience outside his own country, whether he resides in the USA or an "international" area. Examples of a potentially different perspective on situations and issues that the Council might address could include:

- how an international area relates to the USA and is impacted by UCG decisions, policies and challenges;
- experience serving on an international national council as a resident of the region;
- fulfilling the church's mission in an "income challenged" area;
- fulfilling the church's mission in a "manpower challenged" area via member support and involvement.

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 have considered the time involved in Council work. With the existing excellent support from elders, staff and member volunteers in the region I serve, I believe I can meet the required time commitment.

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. Ethics**
- c. Roles and Rules**
- d. Strategic Planning and Finance**

My primary interest would be the Doctrine and Strategic Planning and Finance committees. However, I am willing to serve on any of the Council committees.

Re: my interest and contribution to the Doctrine committee: I am directly involved with publishing our doctrinal material and statements in another language. Because of the

nuances of meaning with another language, my experience has shown me how important it is to be correct and clear in our presentation.

Re: my interest and contribution to the Strategic Planning and Finance committee:
My interest is the result of my administrative experience in Asia and Europe. I was/am involved in strategic planning and budget for the WCG Philippines (\$1.7 million annual budget) and the German-language region.

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

- (1) Determining the right balance between providing future shepherds and preaching the gospel
- (2) Restoring UCG's internal harmony
- (3) Improving personal relationships

a. How did you conclude that these were the major issues?

These issues have been evident for some time, but for whatever reason(s) we have not made progress in resolving them.

b. How do you feel the Council should address them?

Re: determining the right balance between providing future shepherds and preaching the gospel (1): We all agree on the need to train future pastors for the church. The question is how we best address this need in a balanced way vis-à-vis the preaching of the gospel. To illustrate, consider UCG's age demographic. According to information from Home Office personnel, one third of UCG Feast attendees in the USA are under the age of 30. That means that two thirds are older than 30.

Is this a "very healthy demographic" (as has been stated)?

Individual perceptions will vary, so a real-world comparison may help.

UCG's demographic structure is actually remarkably similar to the demographic pyramid of Germany and other Western European countries. In fact, the percentage of UCG attendees over age 60 is actually 50 percent *higher* than Germany's. Like Germany, UCG has a higher percentage of attendees over age 60 than under age 19. According to demographic experts, in terms of population development this pyramid is *inverted* and cannot sustain the existing population, much less provide population growth. That's why Germany and other Western European countries are slowly but surely *dying out*. The populations of these countries can only be sustained via *immigration*.

In the most optimistic view, even if UCG achieves the desirable goal of retaining all its young people, UCG will also slowly die out unless we have *spiritual immigration* – new people drawn to UCG *by God* via our media efforts. (We all understand that God does the calling. However, God calls via the preaching of the word. To the extent that we are willing to preach the word we then become partners with God in *His* effort to call people.)

Without *spiritual immigration* we won't need as many pastors in the coming years, because there won't be as many people left to pastor. In my opinion, this is even more apparent when one considers that many of UCG's young people appear to be concentrated in certain metropolitan areas, while some rural congregations are largely in the upper age bracket.

Our logo in UCG is concise and appropriate: to preach the Word and prepare a people. Seeking God's direction, we need to use our resources wisely to full both mandates.

Since finances are limited, I believe the Council needs to reexamine the premises used to justify the current proposal for future manpower training. Is UCG's situation in 2008 really the same as that of the WCG in 1950?

There may be similarities, but there are obvious differences, too. In contrast to the 1950 WCG, we have over 450 elders with years of experience as members and elders. We have hundreds of members with years of experience. Today's UCG membership is not the "novice" WCG of 1950.

For example, viewed strategically, running out of the pool of "Ambassador College" graduates can be seen as a strategic opportunity instead of a strategic threat. It provides an opportunity to think "outside the box" we used for 40 years to educate ministers and train ministers. That could mean electronic distance learning and alternative forms of mentoring including utilizing the mentoring skills of elders who are not pastors.

It is the Council's responsibility to provide direction for innovative thought in balancing the need to train pastors with the ongoing responsibility to preach the word.

Re: Restoring UCG's internal harmony (2): In his letter dated February 24, 2008 Council chairman Bob Dick described the current condition within the ministry and to some extent within the church resulting from the relocation issue.

Part of the unease re: the proposed relocation has to do with the way the proposal was conceived. I believe the perception of secrecy has contributed to the current situation. The Council can contribute to addressing this situation by limiting its closed and executive sessions to confidential legal matters and sensitive personnel issues rather than using them to discuss business items that impact the entire organization.

In addition, I believe that the inclusive leadership style displayed in several key decisions in the New Testament church is a key factor in promoting internal harmony. Inclusive leadership gets people on board early and gives them "ownership" rather than making them spectators or rubber-stamp enthusiasts.

With today's electronic media, it is easy to catalog the areas of expertise of all elders (and even those of members with specialized skills) and then draw on those skills. It is easy to get input via electronic means such as online surveys, etc.

The Council can contribute here by promoting inclusive leadership in conducting its business and by expecting the administration to do no less.

Re: improving personal relationships (3): 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? Could this be a reason why we aren't experiencing the growth we all would like to see?

Events of the last twelve months have confirmed that the problem identified in 1996 persists. One building block for handling relationships in a godly manner is addressing conflict by applying Matthew 18:15-17 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 deliberations and actions and by expecting the administration to do no less.