

Serious Deliberations Laced with Heart

The Interim National Council of the HSAUWC America convenes its first meeting.

Called into being by the Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, the HSAUWC Interim National Council is constituted by delegates of the 12 District Councils and representatives of the national headquarters. The Council exists “to help our movement in America plan for the future in a new era of shared responsibility of Blessed Families” and “to review the current state of our church and to propose changes to be implemented going forward.” One specified task for this year is to develop a charter that sets forth the basic rules for local church governance, with an ear to the District Councils and members.

In December of 2012, the District Councils formed the Council by each selecting a delegate. As all delegates were male, Dr. Michael Balcomb, then HSAUWC Vice-President, launched a discussion that led to each District Council selecting a female delegate and Rev. Moon choosing six of those 12 to join the National Council.

Rev. Moon, together with Noah Ross, set up four committees in the Council: family, identity and positioning, evangelism, and governance. In the months preceding the March conference, Mr. Noah Ross, consultant to Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, and Dr. Balcomb worked out committee membership with the Council members.

And so we arrived for our first face-to-face meeting.

Serious Deliberations

It took place at 4 West 43rd Street over the weekend of March 23-24, Noah Ross chairing. We opened with introductions and statements of expectation for the weekend, varying very high to very minimal, very hopeful to very desperate. Bishop Kim and Dr. Balcomb followed with remarks of about 15 minutes each. Bishop Kim stated, “I feel that we are afraid to act, but need to make important changes. It is important for leaders to be humble. Your feedback can really heal our community.” Dr. Balcomb said that “We really are one family, with one heart. Health and growth go together. Part of our goal is to make ourselves ‘partnership-ready’ with the American community and with True Mother.”

Mr. Ross then walked us through an orientation. He said that we are here because True Parents want our church to grow and we want a healthy church we are proud of. He mentioned that healthy organizations plan, act and assess in a transparent and purpose-driven way. He called us to keep our interventions brief and succinct, to put all ideas on the table without judgment, and to express concerns in positive ways.

He walked us through a voting process using sticky dots, which we used after his presentation and after each Committee report. After this orientation, we used this process to determine that our highest priority is to create a strategic plan, following by identify the holes in the bucket, especially the departure of second gen, ratify a charter and turn around the image of the church.

After a lunch break, each committee met to hammer out a picture of where we are now, where we want to be, the gaps between the two, and action steps. The attached Report to Members provides the specifics of each committee’s presentation and the top vote-getters among the Council’s comments.

Did any general themes emerge from the discussion? I would point to the following.

1. Our Blessing and family life has unique value.
2. We need
 - a. ...tools and training
 - b. ...to admit our brokenness on all levels, and grow from there
 - c. ...to steward our resources and invest wisely
 - d. ...to clarify our unchanging, unifying identity, mission and message
 - e. ...good governance and management, from the local church to the corporate Board
 - f. ...marketing excellence, especially on the Internet
3. Critical battlegrounds
 - a. ...youth and young adult ministry
 - b. ...recovery ministry
 - c. ...the Internet

On Sunday morning before UCNyc worship, we heard Mrs. Kaye Allen, Director of Legal Affairs and the Corporate Secretary, report on financial and legal matters. She identified the Board of Directors and indicated that an annual report will be put into effect including salary ranges for corporate executives and staff, the identity of para-church entities, non-profit and for-profit subsidiaries, income and disbursements. She named many of these entities, familiar to church members, including CARP, Kodan, Ocean Church, KEA, UPF, Unification Theological Seminary, ACLC, the New Yorker Hotel and Manhattan Center.

In response to Mrs. Allen's report, the Council conveyed the need to protect public assets and people's hearts. We called for transparency, participatory openness and professional management. We underlined the need for the charter to clarify the purpose of the organization's entities and positions, their inter-relationships, the responsibilities and authority divided among them and the qualifications to hold them. The Council also heard requests or questions from district and local councils, which highlighted governance and evangelical themes.

The meeting concluded with a debate on voting rights on the Council, with the conclusion being that HQ representatives cannot vote in general session but can vote in committee. We then set a schedule to produce this report, created an Executive Committee composed of Committee chairs, chaired by Mr. Ross, set deadlines for committee submissions and our next conference call, 10 p.m., EST, April 22. The Council closed in prayer at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Laced with Heart

A Council member expressed amazement at "the level of sincerity and heart of the participants, along with desire of all to be responsible to support True Parents, provide solutions for problems and create a community centered on love and an application of the Divine Principle. There were some tears in some of the moments of discussion. It's good for members to know there can be serious deliberations laced with heart."

Another shares that, "As a member of the Headquarters staff it was a valuable experience to get to know the representatives from the Districts who represented a wide variety of backgrounds, and to gain an understanding of their situations, hear their concerns and their suggestions for improvements."

And a third, “It was a good start, but we have a lot more work to do. Although we currently serve only in an advisory capacity to the President of the FFWP, I am hopeful that our recommendations will result in meaningful reforms, including a form of representative governance, greater transparency and more feedback from the membership.”

To that end, I have to say that the intergenerational dynamic helped us balanced faith and hope with honesty and realism. But the cool thing was the love. The cool thing was Dr. B. hanging in with rapt attention, intervening himself, pushing our envelope and talking to us straight. It was humor, as when one advocated we need baptism, followed by a call for circumcision. It was passion and generosity. It was honesty about second gen flight and cheers of one present who’s about to have a first baby. It was people on a scale of grandparents and grandchildren talking heart to heart about a shared future. It was Bishop Kim’s story of how a far-flung network of physicians with no central figure sought relentlessly to save his life. It was “my church is like *this*” and “oh really? My church is like *that!*” It was an organization talking like a family about how to be a church.

I’ll close with a committee’s articulation of who we are: “Our future will be as a network of healthy churches producing healthy blessed families, a Blessing community. We will be known as a cutting edge of innovation, a place where problems are solved and the Kingdom is being built. The Divine Principle will be core to our identity.”

Submitted by Tyler Hendricks

Mrs. Yakari Takashima, Dr. Balcomb’s secretary, monitors the National Council e-mail address: nc@unification.org.

For your information, here is the preliminary suggested timeline for our work:

March 23-24	Kick-off Weekend (DONE)
May 6	Current State Draft
June 18	Future State Draft
July 15	First Recommendations Draft
July 29	Second Recommendations
Aug 16 - 18	National Council Convention
Sept 23	Local Review Completed
October	Final Recommendations approved