

MINUTES - BOARD MEETING

July 27, 2016

Board Members Present: Ginny Parrish Loy, Chad Carson, Tom Hiebel, Sarah McNeill, Kristin Trowell, Nancy Sumners, Larry Fredendall, Pat Zungoli

Staff Present: Rev. Terre Balof, Ed Proulx

Members and Friends Present:

Don & Debbie Byzdl	Cecil Huey
Ellie & Ted Taylor	Janie Shipley
Elizabeth Branstead	Mary Orem
Cindy & Jeff Burke	Carol Ward
Karl & Janice Dieter	Meg Williamson
Jane & Frank Powell	Holly Ullbrichs
Bill Meldrum	Michelle Bostick
Mandy Guyen	Carol Slough
Martha Thompson	

Check in and Opening Words - Ginny

- UUA sermon video

Review and Approval of June Minutes as amended.

- **Move to approve the minutes.**
 - Motion: Sarah
 - Second: Tom
 - Approval: Unanimous

Members Addressing the Board

- **Ellie Taylor-** Ellie asked that the UUFC Board not revoke her membership. Ellie stated that she was a longstanding member of the UUFC, had raised her family in the Fellowship, and wanted to remain a part of the UUFC. Ellie stated that she did not have any issues with Terre, was not out of covenant with Terre and did not believe a signed covenant agreement was needed.
- **Ted Taylor-** Ted stated that there was no conflict. Ted requested access to all reports, email and other data related to the conflict. Ted stated he is considering legal action. Ted provided a document outlining his main talking points (See attachment 1).
- **Janet Marsh-** Letter dated July 27, 2016 read into record by Ginny (See attachment 2).
- **Jane Powell-** Stated that she was here to support the women involved in the conflict and was concerned about the covenant groups.

- **Karl Dieter**- Karl stated he was concerned with the membership termination procedures and policies and the fairness of the procedures. (See attachment 3).
- **Karel Keel**- Letter dated July 23, 2016 read into record by Sarah (See attachment 4).

Motion to go into Executive Session to receive the Right Relations Report.

- Motion: Sara
- Second: Kristin
- Approval: Unanimous

Executive Session over

The Board acknowledges receipt of Right Relations Report. The Board recognized procedural inconsistencies in the conflict resolution policy that have caused unintended consequences. The board agreed to step back and revisit the policies and procedures before any further action is taken.

Adjourn 9:50 pm

Karl Dieter's Comments to the Board – July 27, 2016

Thank you for allowing time for me to address the Board. I have many fond and pleasant memories of speaking in this room. My first sermon was given here, the podium was over there and Ellie and Sandra were present. I wish it were not necessary for me to speak this evening. I'm Karl Dieter and I've been a member since 1987 and President in the early nineties. I became aware of possible revocation of several memberships on July 16, 2016 (11 days ago) in conjunction with a request for advice and counsel. After examining the information and documents available to me and constructing a timeline, I am deeply concerned about the application of policies, procedures outside the by-laws and the absence of structural safeguards for members who may have negative experiences or disagreements with any level of leadership. I request that my long letter, which I e-mailed to Board Members be entered into the meeting minutes and be appended to them. The *Right Relations Council* appears to be an extra quasi-judicial entity operating outside the language and structure of the bylaws and should not be making recommendations on membership status. Given human nature, how can the *Right Relations Council* mediate a covenant of right relations under a coercive threat of membership revocation particularly in this case where they are highly unlikely to make a similar threat to the other party. In the 29 years that I have been a member I know of no membership revocation for member/leadership disagreement or interactions or for any other disagreements for that matter.

The current situation appears to have arisen out of a failure by the *Shared Ministry Committee* to distinguish between a presentation of information and concerns, whether a request for redress of grievances was or was not made, and of what exactly constitutes an active or ongoing conflict. The inability or unwillingness to distinguish these nuances coupled with a breach of confidentiality requested by these members

resulted in an institutional escalation of the situation. These members' involvement in the process should not have gone beyond the *Shared Ministry Committee*, although the concerns themselves are issues that the committee should have looked into. There was no need to personalize these concerns by revealing names.

I am also concerned that procedurally, the members who may be recommended for membership termination have not been allowed to examine the documentation supporting the recommendation. This is essential in order for them to know the allegations against them, to have an opportunity to address the accuracy of the information, and to rebut information or arguments that they consider misleading or wrong.

Given the procedural problems, questionable policy applications, and to be consistent with the ideals and religious values expressed on Sunday morning, I respectfully ask that you do not vote to remove from membership these individuals, allow all parties time for reflection and healing, and then as a community deal with serious and significant procedural and policy issues that have been raised. The best gift that you can give to UUFC is to show compassion and acknowledge that here at UUFC we have a great deal of work to do in insuring that the UU Principles of democratic participation, free and responsible pursuit of truths, and the inherent dignity of all individuals are fully embraced. I also request that the policy and procedural difficulties raised by this case be examined by the Board or referred to an appropriate ad hoc committee for examination and recommendations with either path allowing for membership input. I'm submitting the short and long comments to the secretary of the Board for inclusion in the record.

Thank you.

Karl

TO: UUFC Board of Trustees
FROM: Karel Keel

July 23, 2016

Dear Board Members:

Please do not revoke the Membership of Ellie Taylor, Janet Marsh, and Sandra Sanderson. Please do not remove the Friend status of Mary Meldrum. Please do not prohibit these four good women from participating in UUFC activities, particularly covenant groups.

These women have done nothing wrong.

They have been accused of being harmful to the health of the Fellowship and of creating discord and widening conflict. No, the discord and widening conflict resulted from the June 28 letter from the Right Relations Council that threatened to revoke their membership.

They have been told that “people were speaking about this conflict in covenant groups and other social activities of the Fellowship, resulting in a conflict impacting the social fabric of our church.” No, when the covenant group facilitators met with Ginny Loy and Sarah McNeill on July 18, they all stated that Ginny’s letter of July 15 was the first they had heard of it.

My covenant group, IMAGINE, discussed the conflict at our July 12 meeting because two of our members, Janet Marsh and Ellie Taylor, are being threatened with revocation of their membership and termination of their involvement in covenant groups. How are we to proceed if we lose two of our members in this fashion? The group decided that if indeed their membership is revoked, we will remove ourselves from under the UUFC umbrella. We will continue to meet, probably at members’ homes, but will not be part of UUFC.

Four members of IMAGINE stated that if membership is revoked for these women, they will resign their own membership and discontinue financial support for UUFC.

I have resigned as Covenant Group Coordinator because I cannot be involved with a program that makes participation hinge on agreement with the minister and/or leadership.

Procedural points:

- Right Relations has violated the UUFC Bylaws by neither including the Membership Committee in their deliberations regarding membership nor informing them of their intentions. (Section B. Removal of a Voting Member from the Membership Roster: A member may be removed from the membership

roster when: 1) The member dies; 2) The member submits a written request to the Membership Committee; 3) *The Membership Committee* and the Minister recommend that the member be removed because the member has moved away, cannot be located, has withdrawn active support, or because it has been determined that the member does not support the purpose and program of the UUFC.

- The Conflict Resolution Policy clearly states that "should the matter remain unresolved but be limited to a personal dispute involving a very small number of individuals without indications of widening conflict, the Council will forward a memo of record to the Fellowship secretary and *let the matter lie.*" Yes, they should have let the matter lie instead of stirring up a hornets' nest of controversy.
- The Conflict Resolution Policy also states that if any member of Right Relations believes that their "personal involvement with either the individual(s) or the issues involved in the dispute prevent them from being impartial, *they MUST recuse themselves from further participation ...*" Cecil should have recused himself from any discussion of this issue because of an extremely negative and hurtful interaction he had with Ellie in the summer of 2014.

The threat of revocation of membership is clearly wrong. This threat is what's creating discord and weakening the social, communal, and covenantal fabric of our Fellowship. I ask you to rescind this threat and "let the matter lie."

Sincerely,
Karel Keel

To: UUFC Board of Trustees
From: Janet Marsh, UUFC member since 1998
Re: My UUFC Membership
Date: July 27, 2016

I was encouraged by Toni King, 2015 President of UUFC, to meet with the Shared Ministry Committee (SMC) in the fall 2015 to discuss concerns I had about the UUFC minister. This was an extremely difficult decision. I had resigned my membership on SMC in spring 2015 because of the inappropriately large influence that the UUFC minister had in SMC. However, believing in the important role SMC can play at UUFC, I, three other UUFC members and one friend met with it November 15, 2015.

I was also influenced to take this action by Helen Bishop when she told us that no member should let problems fester, as was done by some with our previous minister. It took courage but I had acted in covenant when I talked with the current minister numerous times about my concerns, when I went to SMC, and when I kept silent after meeting with SMC, thereby giving up the many joys of UUFC.

We gave the SMC a prepared document of our purpose, concerns and recommendations which we understood they would share with the UUFC minister. They told us that everything we discussed would be held in strict confidence. We expected nothing less.

Our purpose was two-fold:

1. To tell them of our experiences and attempts at reconciliation with the minister that were troubling to us and unproductive so that if anyone else came with similar concerns, they would see a pattern.
2. To offer four minimal recommendations that might help prevent the problems we experienced with the minister.

SMC heard us with compassion and empathy, wanting to know what they could do to help. I very clearly said 'nothing;' I was taking a break from UUFC. I said that I would be silent about these problems with members and friends of UUFC; I supported the overall health of UUFC and understood most members were happy with the minister. I went home and maintained silence.

The June 28th letter from the Right Relations Council (RRC) states I have harmed the health of UUFC and must complete a covenant with the minister or it will recommend to the Board that my membership be terminated. I was never invited to meet with RRC. I have asked for two pieces of information:

1. The by-law or policy on which its decision is based. After a number of requests, I was sent the October 2015 Covenant of Right Relations Policy. I do not find anything in there that applies to my situation except one section:

Should the matter remain unresolved but be limited to a personal dispute involving a very small number of individuals without indications of widening conflict, the Council will forward a memo of record to the Fellowship secretary and let the matter lie.

One caveat, however. I was not in dispute with the minister. I reported my concerns to SMC, then chose to remain silent.

2. RRC's evidence that the "continued health of our fellowship requires" it to terminate my membership if I don't sign a covenant, as stated in the June 28th letter. According to Bob Hiott's July 14th email to me, I have brought "discord" to UUFC. Of the two RRC members I have asked, neither could answer my question, "What specific discord and what is the specific evidence?"

In closing, please hear one more aspect of this very hurtful saga. Concerned about the inappropriateness of the RRC's directive to me and others in its June 28th letter, Karel Keel met with two members of the RRC July 3. During the meeting, Cecil Huey falsely accused me of making demands on UUFC. When Karel asked why RRC hadn't followed the By-laws and included the Membership Committee in its actions, Cecil said By-Laws don't need to be followed, they are "quibbling details."

I end with one question to you:

Do you care that the Right Relations Council is suggesting my membership be revoked yet can't name a by-law or policy I broke; can't give any evidence that I caused discord, as reported by Bob Hiott in his July 14 email to me; and can't state how I harmed the health of UUFC, as stated in the RRC's June 28 letter.

Do you care that I followed UUFC procedure, understood that I spoke in confidence, keep my silence and as a result am now publicly and falsely accused of causing discord and harming the health of the fellowship??

I hope you care and do not vote to terminate my membership.

Excommunication proceedings for Ellie

- A. This isn't really a conflict**
- B. All Ellie was doing was alerting the Shared Ministry Committee of possible future problems of which they needed to be aware**
- C. We assert that it is possible to be in covenant with the congregation, and still think that the minister has deficiencies**
- D. We are request copies of all reports, data, and emails as well as sources, pertaining to this matter about Ellie**
- E. There could be slander/defamation-of-character issues.**
- F. We reserve the right to file a rebuttal, should we find inaccuracies in the data that you will supply us.**