

of powers. I challenge the current members of the General Council to call a constitutional convention, vote themselves out of office, and allow a direct election of a single legislative branch with a single President. I challenge FEF to become the democratic association of United Readers, no matter what name they call themselves. I fear, however, that too many on the Executive Committee crave the supposed authority that has long been shared with the Foundation. Whether the readership will stand for the organization continuing with "business as usual" remains to be seen. Most people were hardly more impressed with the openness of the old Urantia Brotherhood than they were with the Foundation.

David Elders objects to the notion of separation of powers in his letter to the San Francisco readers, due to his belief that FEF will not seek to dictate belief as the old Brotherhood did. He argues that only a "governing" group needs checks and balances, and that FEF seeks no control or government over its members. I admire Dave's idealism, but practicality dictates that in an imperfect world, any association must exercise discrimination and judgement in order to strive for excellence and to avoid being "all things to all people." The process of self regulation goes hand in hand with self government, and for better or worse, the United Readers are a government or they are a voiceless flock of followers.

The spiritual group notion requires that its leaders be above reproach and not subject to recall, referendum, or initiative. The vulgarities of the democratic political process are not compatible with an ivory tower or unquestioned leadership. Participatory democracy leads to political parties, competing factions, and power brokering. The dirty laundry is exposed rather than left in the back rooms. David is right. The technique of democracy is unspiritual. It is decidedly evolutionary and human. And so it will ever be and that is why we need it now.

The salvation of the democracy is derived from the personal ethics of the members, rather than in a supposed spiritual organizational facade or methodology. The consensus technique or any other meditative or low stress interactive system is not in and of itself "spiritual". Democracy provides a material structure whereby humans can surrender autonomy and learn to cooperate toward the shared goal of perfection—God's will. Autocracy is

the illusion of imposing unearned levels of ethical attainment by decree without the voluntary process of achievement and consent of the governed.

"The entire universe is organized and administered on the *representative* plan. Representative government is the divine ideal of self-government among non-perfect beings." Page 517.

"The universe administrators have learned from experience that the evolutionary peoples on the inhabited worlds are best regulated by the representative type of civil government where there is maintained proper balance of power between the well coordinated executive, legislative, and judicial branches." Page 797.

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"The only sacred feature of any human government is the division of statehood into the three domains of executive, legislative, and judicial functions. The universe is administered in accordance with such a plan of segregation of functions and authority." Page 806.

If FEF ignores the issues of representation and separation of powers and continues in the "headquarters" tradition of Urantia Brotherhood, then it will not long survive. More than a

new constitution, there must also be the will to follow the due process of the constitution. It has been a concern of mine that the Executive Committee has long operated as the "policy making" branch of Urantia Brotherhood with no constitutional basis for that position. For the first thirty years of the Urantia Brotherhood existence, hardly any policies or programs were adopted through voting, written resolutions, or confirmation by the General Council—the branch of the Brotherhood specifically entrusted with policy making authority.

Comments such as "it is Brotherhood policy this or that" are little more than reflections of the opinions of "status persons" who consider themselves to be interpreters due to their office, position on the Executive Committee, or simply because they answered the phone. Until recently, UB has often operated in a manner that side-stepped the democratic or group process that FEF rode technical issues. Our friends had decided that they