

**What is the Judicial Committee?**

The Judicial Committee is defined in Article XI of the constitution.

**ARTICLE XI**

**DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES**

Section 11.9. The Judicial Committee: The Judicial Committee shall be the supreme arbitrating body of THE FELLOWSHIP, but, except as otherwise provided, their determinations and decisions shall be subject to the veto of, or modification by, the Executive Committee within the time allowed by the By-laws of THE FELLOWSHIP. The jurisdiction of the Judicial Committee shall extend to all matters pertaining to the affairs of THE FELLOWSHIP and to all differences between Local Societies or between any Local Society and any member thereof or between any members or groups of members. The Judicial Committee shall, upon the request of any officer of THE FELLOWSHIP, any Councilor, or the Chairman of any Departmental Committee, render opinions on any matters involving a construction of this Constitution, of the By-laws of THE FELLOWSHIP, and of the Rules of the Executive Committee. A permanent record of such opinions shall be preserved.

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**For the Permanent Record.**

**Questions asked the Judicial Chair and Opinions rendered:**

**Question: Why do we allow proxies in the General Council?**

Answer: No. The short answer is that a deliberative body should not allow proxy votes. It should be changed. If you choose to advance it as a constitutional amendment on the track proposed by three general councilors, I would prefer not to be one of the three councilors, simply so I can speak without bias as the judicial chair. If you don't choose that track, then I would propose it to the EC at some point in the future. Personally, I think you should get two additional councilors and propose it. Why waste time deliberating it twice?

**Note: The constitution was amended at the summer session to eliminate proxy voting by the General Council.**

**Question: May a person be a member of two or more Societies at the same time?**

Answer: In my opinion no, a person can only be the member of one Society at a time. In the constitution in Article IV Membership Section 4.2 Transfer of Membership, and Section 4.5 Members-at-large, it speaks of terminating a membership in one Society or at large status due to becoming a member of another Society. Also in the By-Laws, Chapter I, Paragraph 1.4 Record of Transfer of Membership, says, "When a member of a Local Society is accepted for membership by another Local Society, the Secretary of the Local Society receiving such member shall notify the Secretary of the Local Society of former membership, advising of the transfer of membership."

As a practical matter membership in two societies might create the problem of representation on the TDA by one person as delegate for two societies. It reminds me a why Robert's Rules Newly Revised says it is a bad idea for a committee to have two chairs. IE: who would serve on the EC and who has the vote?

**Question: How do we add a new standing committee or eliminate an existing committee to better align committee structure to our current interests and work?**

Answer: Our constitution is a little contradictory concerning how to add committees. Maybe it is just the difference between "adding" a committee and "changing" a committee. But I think it is just an error and should be corrected

The standing committees are defined in **ARTICLE XI** of the constitution where they are referred to as **DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES**.

**Section 11.12. The Outreach Committee: The Outreach Committee shall promote knowledge of *The Urantia Book* and its teaching among the inhabitants of the United States; and shall encourage the dissemination of *The Urantia Book*.**

**Section 11.18. Additional Departmental Committees: The General Council may create other and additional Departmental Committees from time to time by By-laws adopted by a vote of the three-fourths (3/4ths) of all Councilors voting in favor thereof.**

This is the section that I think is contradictory and in error. To me, the Committees are defined in the constitution and changing or adding should be by constitutional amendment. Also **Section 11.18.** seems redundant with the constitutional amendment process (below). I think **Section 11.18. Additional Departmental Committees:** should be removed.

Concerning constitutional amendments:

**ARTICLE XIV  
AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution may originate by the process outlined in (a) or (b) which follow

(a) The Executive Committee shall adopt a resolution setting forth the amendment proposed by a three-fourths (3/4) favorable vote of the entire Executive Committee membership, declaring its advisability, and recommend its adoption by the General Council. The Secretary General will forward copies of said resolution to each member of the General Council not less than thirty (30) days prior to the next meeting of the General Council.

(b) The General Council shall (also) adopt a resolution to amend the Constitution. A resolution to amend the Constitution shall be proposed by three members of the General Council. Proposing Councilors will forward copies of said resolution to each member of the General Council not less than thirty (30) days prior to the next meeting of the General Council.

(c) At the next meeting of the General Council, said resolution to amend the Constitution originating by procedure as outlined in section (a) or (b) shall be presented for adoption. It will require a three-fourths (3/4) favorable vote by secret ballot of the entire General Council membership for adoption. With a vote cast in favor thereof, the amendment shall become effective and a part of this Constitution. Each amendment to the Constitution must be submitted as a separate resolution for a vote by the General Council.

Following the constitutional amendment process, note that:

Following the "EC" track. (a), 3/4 vote of **entire** EC is required. Copies to GC at least 30 days before presenting and the GC vote also requires 3/4 vote of the **entire** GC.

Following the "GC" track (b) , three councilors must propose the amendment. Copies to GC at least 30 days before presenting and the GC vote also requires 3/4 vote of the **entire** GC.

If you believe that a Departmental Committee can be added by changing the By-laws, the requirements are a that the amendment to the By-laws be proposed by a member of the GC (for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting), that copies of the amendment be sent to GC at least **15** days before presenting, and the GC vote also requires 3/4 vote of the **entire** GC.

I believe that adding or changing a Departmental Committee is a constitutional change, not a By-laws change.

**Note: The Executive Committee dedicated the majority of its fall 2010 meeting in Chicago to discussing the committee structure of the Fellowship. At this meeting there were eight amendments considered. The Judicial committee worked on the language proposed for these eight amendments. Five of these amendments are being presented at the General Council meeting in Dallas, Feb. 2011. In additon Judicial was consulted concerning other potential amendments for later consideration.**

**Educational notes for those new to the General Council:**

The Fellowship is an organization dedicated to the purpose defined in **ARTICLE II** of the constitution.

**PURPOSE**

“The purposes of THE FELLOWSHIP are the study and dissemination of the teachings of *The Urantia Book*; the promotion, improvement, and expansion among the peoples of the world of the comprehension and understanding of Cosmology and the relation of the planet on which we live to the Universe, of the genesis and destiny of Man and his relation to God, and of the life and teachings of Jesus; and the inculcation and encouragement of the realization and appreciation of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man -- in order to increase and enhance the comfort, happiness, and well-being of Man, as an individual and as a member of society, by fostering a religion, a philosophy, and a cosmology which are commensurate with Man's intellectual and cultural development, through the medium of fraternal association, ever obedient and subservient to the laws of this country and of all countries wherein THE FELLOWSHIP may extend.”

We are governed in our organizational and deliberative processes by the Fellowship constitution and by-laws available at <http://fefadmin.org/> . Anything not covered in the constitution and by-laws is decided by the current edition or Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised. Currently that is the 10<sup>th</sup> edition. The changes in the tenth edition are interesting reading. <http://www.robertsrules.com/changes.html> . Henry Martyn Robert (1837-1923) the original author of Robert’s Rules said, The great lesson for democracies to learn is for the majority to give to the minority a full, free opportunity to present their side of the case, and then for the minority, having failed to win a majority to their views, gracefully to submit and to recognize the action as that of the entire organization, and cheerfully to assist in carrying it out, until they can secure its repeal.” Occasionally, when the magic happens in our deliberations, and we arrive at a far better solution than any of the factions could have foreseen, I think this is how a *group* seeks for and carries out God’s will. Beth says that is why Robert’s Rules and the deliberative process is a “Light and life” kind of thing.

Michael Challis (Judicial Chair)

Thursday, January 6th, 2011.