

DISTRICT ASSEMBLY ON MISSION EVALUATION

Weaknesses: What needs to be changed?

- ❖ At the General Assembly, not having enough microphones at times slowed the proceedings. *(Gary Flinders)*
- ❖ During debates and prior to voting, delegates should be able to call for a 5 minute recess for the purpose of consulting one another informally. This option should be clearly made known to them. The Assembly voted on matters about which they were insufficiently informed. *(Brother Edmond Larouche, FSC)*
- ❖ I believe that the Assembly should either span two weeks or should be split up in some way that allows for committee rework of propositions and position papers. I realize that if this were two weeks long, it would be very difficult to get some people to attend. I am not sure if any of our trustees could afford to give up two full weeks. However, these deliberations are very, very important. Some propositions went down in flames because they were poorly written and unfavorably nuanced. I think particularly of the Diversity Proposition. I voted “no” because of the manner in which the proposition was presented and not because of the sentiment the committee tried to express. The Diversity Proposition, and others, might have been passed if they had been sent back to committee with clear concerns and expectations about language. This certainly did not presage the end of the world. The District Chapter may, very well, pass a proposition that recovers the diversity theme, but something as important as this warrants a second look and further discussion. I think we delegates might have benefited from a bit more exposure to and/or training in parliamentary procedure. Calling the “Order of the Day” and “Remit” threw everyone into a tailspin. Perhaps I didn’t read my procedure guidelines carefully enough, but a little more training in this would have helped me. Some committees were writing propositions at “sea level.” This was not good. The Preparatory Committee or whoever is in charge in the future must better train the Committee Chairpersons to stay up high at the 30,000 foot level. I would produce named sections for each of the committees in the binders so delegates could insert propositions and reports by committee. It was a bit cumbersome trying to find some propositions and reports once we had many of them. I wish more people would have spoken up during debate. This isn’t something anyone can legislate, but many people whom I admire simply did not joint he verbal fray. Too bad. *(Mark Warren)*
- ❖ Seemingly some committees had too many propositions. *(Brother Joseph Fabiano, FSC)*
- ❖ Fitted sheets on the beds! *(Ed Tywoniak)*
- ❖ Better direction to committees with regard to expectations (limits) on reports, propositions, etc. Clarification on the District Assembly’s relationship to District

Chapter, District Leadership Team, etc. Speeches from Monday (District Leadership) should be in one booklet – overall... too much paper.

- ❖ Color coordinate documents (all props one color, all minutes another, etc). Impress upon delegates their need to be up-to-speed on “Rules” and parliamentary process. Those who knew the ropes were able to manipulate the Assembly on occasion (The Holy Spirit works through details too!) Each committee meeting room needs a laptop and printer. More microphones, please. *(Rudy Schulze)*
- ❖ Reorganize the number of all reports and propositions. It was very difficult to find reports. It might have been helpful to have committees meet prior to the Assembly to better prepare. This might have occurred at the regional preparatory meeting. *(Greg Schmitz)*
- ❖ So much material, so little time... More blue jelly beans. Need quicker vote counts – bring a calculator? *(Bruce Shoup)*
- ❖ Because there was some difficulty identifying propositions and reports – different colors of paper for reports and propositions. Introduce the “staff” (especially since they work behind the scene) at the beginning of the Assembly so folks can acknowledge their gratitude for their hard work! *(Bertha Ortega)*
- ❖ Needed some large breaks to get some exercise.
- ❖ Each committee should have had a different color for their propositions and reports. Blue: Formation, Green: Religious Ed., etc. This would have facilitated organization when discussing propositions. Need to know Roberts Rules of Order. There was a failure in clarity because District documents that were used as background materials for the various committees should have been given out to the participants. *(Brother R. Philip Thez, FSC)*
- ❖ Too many documents came to the Assembly floor. I suggest that the Rules of Procedure be modified to impose a limit on the number of documents any one committee can forward. Regarding hospitality, Sodhexo should consider assigning an employee to make sure water pitchers are re-filled during Assembly deliberations. *(Richard Gray)*
- ❖ Review procedures – parliamentary, I mean – lots of confusion was experienced regarding propositions versus reports for endorsement versus reports for receipt; process for debate, amendments, recommitting to committee, etc. Stronger emphasis on delegates familiarizing themselves with pertinent documents prior to the Assembly.
- ❖ Beds. More widely available, bottomless cups of coffee.

- ❖ The pace was challenging to many – too much to do in a very short time. Committees, generally, did not always stick to macro issues. The secretariat staff lacked proper equipment and was pushed to perform beyond the humanly possible! The Central committee was at some points in a similar condition. Delegates had trouble keeping track of paperwork (color-coding, consecutive number of propositions have already been suggested). (*Brother Stanislaus Campbell, FSC*)
- ❖ Time – do we need more? Perhaps a longer time? (*Robert Jordan*)
- ❖ Perhaps some different forms of the liturgy (i.e., organ, choir) could supplement the main group. Schedule was a little tight.
- ❖ The number of proposals/limit how many can be put forward (perhaps two?) Provide opportunities for committees working on similar propositions can meet together before presentation.
- ❖ Some of us needed more time in learning the rules of procedure. (*Brother Jesus Lara, FSC*)
- ❖ Could the committees work on propositions and reports in the weeks prior to the General Assembly? (*Christine Buell*)
- ❖ Voting procedure. Less time for lunch. Committees need to refine their work so as to reduce the number of propositions and strive to make the content more meaningful, i.e., less “Apple Pie” concepts. (*Brother Norman Cook, FSC*)
- ❖ I think that for future Assemblies there should be a clearer discernment of themes to avoid overlapping of topic for the committees.
- ❖ Schedule feels jammed. Difficult time of year.
- ❖ Speaking over and over on a topic.
- ❖ Committees need to be encouraged to limit propositions/reports to only those that they feel are most important (perhaps limited to only those things that are new).
- ❖ If there is an inexpensive method to count votes electronically, it would be nice to save the time used in the manual count.
- ❖ Facilities – only two people per bathroom.
- ❖ I think it would be a good idea to stress to the entire body of delegates at the orientation prior to the Assembly what is the appropriate content and level of specificity for propositions versus reports. This issue came up often in the Assembly. (*Limarys Caraballo*)

- ❖ Warning about what residence hall rooms lack: chair, table, drinking glasses, clothes hangers, loose sheets. More education on procedures for participants.
- ❖ Better train the committee chairs. Guide them in understanding appropriate language and the nature of appropriate proposals. A little hard to be away from home for an entire week – but, what else could we do? *(Catherine Karrels)*
- ❖ Next Assembly – a session at the beginning on: What is a proposition/resolution/report, etc. and how to vote/speak/Robert’s Rules, etc. “Terminology”/”how to” close debates, etc. Quality versus quantity of resolutions and/or reports. Better identification of documents.
- ❖ It needs to be clear to all involved that comments made by Partners during debate are not used in the form of evaluation of the person for his/her worksite. It limits the potential for a healthy debate.
(Mike Trafecanty)
- ❖ John needs a little more training in his role as moderator. Early in the week reports on the work of the committees to the Assembly of the whole. *(Bill George)*
- ❖ Too much food. Facility for meeting (committees) less than adequate. Preparation by delegates.
- ❖ Committees often overlapped. Make clear the difference between propositions/reports for endorsement/reports for receipt – the delegates didn’t seem to know. I found (on my committee) that several members had already worked on projects and didn’t always provide other members with info.
- ❖ Better preparation in parliamentary procedure. Practice a round of debating and bringing to vote a proposal. Better preparation regarding documents referred to in proposals/reports.
- ❖ Accommodations – glasses in rooms. Public announcements of changes in schedule – Thursday change could have been made at morning prayer – some got lost in the change of times. Secretariat (committees need to label committee names consistently. Same groups have appeared with different titles of committees on propositions/reports.
- ❖ Parliamentary procedures – too cumbersome at times (but the moderators made it tolerable!) When committees were done (if done early) there was no way for them to continue to contribute (perhaps join other committees as non-voting member or even observers).
- ❖ Social hour not as successful as it might have been – perhaps due to place. Music, games, entertainment?

- ❖ Consider color-coding the various propositions and reports... or creating a section in the binder for various propositions and reports. (*Brother Kevin Slate, FSC*)
- ❖ I wish there had been a session after all of the presentations and before the committee work for a general discussion of the whole of the themes and issues that had been raised, especially that will affect the next four years. There were perhaps too many committees: their areas overlapped and there was a lack of clarity about their areas. (*Penny Washbourn*)
- ❖ Better preparation of delegates as to District governance structures. Reports should be limited to one day.
- ❖ Give each proposition/report a number so that we can easily find each item.
- ❖ Some break time needed each day to keep minds/bodies alive and bright.
- ❖ Lots more microphones. Distribute Leadership team reports (first day) in advance. Instead, have them given summarily and spend time answering questions.
- ❖ More time maybe for General Assembly meetings and opposite – more time for social and being together.
- ❖ Organization of all the paper.
- ❖ Dorm rooms are never like home for partners – but it is nice to see how our students live.
- ❖ If there is an evening session at 7:00 the liturgy must move along to be over by 5:50 p.m. Close votes: need for two counters? Double check. Does the Central Committee have the right to throw out a proposition and send it back to Committee?
- ❖ Microphones at each table. Rent an automatic vote “taker-counter.”
- ❖ The way that interchange on the floor is conducted has always been a problem for Chapters. It has been geared to slow down debate rather than allow for pertinent interchange. Perhaps this works for the Chapter, though there are problems with the system there as well. However, with the Assembly it would be good to have an opportunity for free-ranging debate on crucial issues, e.g., the proposal by Tom Brady to research the voucher system. There are a number of topics that could be discussed if certain people were prepared to offer papers which could subsequently be discussed through a Q and A period or some opportunity for interchange either between the presenter or presenters if there were a panel, and among the participants. While this Assembly focused on

“Mission” the idea of “Mission” extends beyond one aspect, albeit a crucial aspect of Mission, namely, aiding the poor. (*Brother Mel Anderson, FSC*)

- ❖ We ran out of time. One of the most important issues brought before the Assembly, on “diversity,” was not settled. There were three committees working on the same issue. The Central Committee had these three committees issue a single proposition. Though there was some overwhelming support for it *in committee*, it did not pass. Perhaps, in the rush to get *something* to the floor, a proposition was crafted without sufficient reflection. Need to number all the documents – it became hard to manage all the propositions we were given. (*Brother Lawrence Haley, FSC*)