

Justice and Witness Ministries Board of Directors
Discernment Discussion
15 April 2010

Question #1 What do you believe God is calling the UCC to be now and into the future?

Broad question – too overwhelming

More of our legacy

Christ: head of the church – Is this what guides our settings?

Focused on the poor and oppressed, based in God's calling

Community

Vibrant worship blending with justice

To think about evangelism: to share the good news—we have a story of hope

Witness

Inclusivity

Where does the rubber meet the road in focus on younger generations?

Churches need to connect to one another

Be the Church of Jesus Christ

How do we live out the call?

Live out the story of Jesus Christ through creed and deed

Civic engagement – getting the people

Stronger connection between local and national settings

Living and dying denomination – what does that mean for us?

Being intentional in moving in the direction of becoming diverse and inclusive

Need connectors that bring congregations together

Preserve history

More of a focus on younger people (Example: contemporary services that draw in young families)

Diversity in terms of leadership of the church

Need integrity in our diversity

UCC should continue to be a prophetic voice in the ministry & society

Educational issues

Congregational support for social justice

Do away with conferences? Is there a better way to structure? Have they outlived themselves?

Generations now don't have brand loyalty but want good products. What can we sell?

We need to be younger

Creative models for worship –help from conferences on technology

Churches should be the hub of their communities

Function on experiments – be fluid

Youth – Do churches really want young people? Not really

How do you meet the needs of young people while remaining committed to the gospel?

Isn't God calling every church to the same thing – telling the story of Jesus Christ

Youth outreach – camping and mentoring

Become more than a middle class church

Increase Biblical literacy

Find connections among local, association, national settings

Do what we're already doing

Spend energy on people who are in churches, not everyone who has left
Transform churches to speak to the needs of people
Be a justice church
Regional affiliations rather than regional structures

Question #2 What feedback do you have for the Unified Governance Working Group?

How do you maintain independent voice?

There needs to be spaces in structure to allow voices of those not present in particular meetings

Where are the spaces that allow independent groups/boards

Liked the proposal

Respond creatively to the people rather than do business as usual

The world needs to hear our message louder

Put the church back into the community, place of transformation

Need an experiment mindset not paralyzed by tradition or predecessors, follow your heart and just do it; find ways to get who we are to the masses

Stability in motion

Unity is more important than things that divide us

This conversation on governance is missing the boat completely

We aren't asking questions about God's calling for the church. We are asking about the structure.

We are not setting goals for a denomination that builds relationships, serves congregations. It feels like we are rearranging the deck and that the deck will only be rearranged in another 5-10 years.

Are we becoming an irrelevant denomination?

What are the voices that need to be heard?

Flattening out structure is not more efficient

We need strong and healthy leadership

Worried that this change is for a church we were

Scope is too small

What makes a conference or association effective/helpful?

Limited autonomy is not a bad thing

It takes too long to make decisions now and we need something more flexible

The current structure is getting better as we learn how to live into it, in cooperation among covenanted ministries

Have smaller boards with more meetings

Restructure is not the only way to fix things

Struggle with the power of the GMP. Having power isn't bad, but must be careful how power is used.

We're tired of fighting over this. There are more important things to focus on.

We need to know that when we're not in the room our interests are looked out for

Don't think its better or worse than current structure

May just end up with 1 deadlocked board instead of several deadlocked boards

We can't afford the number of people on the boards

This is consistent with who we are as the UCC

It is a good way to move forward

Continued concern about representation

Where are spaces in structure for voices to be heard?

Advantage: Lower cost; Disadvantage: Less diverse, fewer checks and balances

Concern/suspicion how this process takes place

Who will be represented? How many seats will be lost?

What is the structure that will help us reach the vision?

Instead of each conference having representatives, have regions

Didn't have very worshipful opportunity to respond to questions

*We need chronology of actions taken to this point