

UGov Feedback from a local church, Bethany UCC in Seattle, WA
Received June 18, 2010

Bethany UCC in Seattle, WA is a 10-year-old church with an ethnically and economically diverse congregation of about 150 members. Bing Tso, member of Bethany and former UGov task force member, led a scheduled, informal discussion based on the UGov packet with seven members/leaders in the congregation for about an hour after the Sunday service on June 13, 2010. Participants were quite engaged and offered plenty of feedback. Key themes that emerged from the session, and related, specific comments, are listed below.

UCC should be about affirming justice

- We want the UCC to be of/for justice, people, and all creation.
- It should be God's community, inclusive and accepting.
- The "HUGs" acronym rings false and shouldn't be used.

Structure of the national setting structure needs to be more efficient

- It should be set up in the most efficient way possible, so that it is using resources wisely.
- The structure and systems need to have strong accountability.
- The 30 at-large synod delegates specified in GFTII needs to be better defined (clear, fair process for selecting them).
- Need better communication between local churches and the national setting.
- The governance proposal on the table is not too far off, and just needs some minor tweaking.
- We value the UCC polity, where individuals and congregations are involved in decision-making.

Representation at the national setting should be inclusive, and we acknowledge it has worked hard to be so. Inclusivity, though, should be about more than just identity.

- Need to strike a good balance being providing representation for the diverse groups in the UCC, and having a structure capable of action.
- Underrepresented populations will evolve and change in our society (yesterday's underrepresented groups might become better represented over time, while new groups, such as immigrants, find themselves completely shut out).
- Marginalized groups may have their own tensions and conflicts that may spill over into other realms.
- Want open and transparent conversations to continue.