

Toward Unified Governance for the National Setting of the United Church of Christ

Dialogue and Discernment Session
United Church of Christ Insurance Board/United Church Insurance Company
May 14, 2010

This discernment session took place in Cleveland with the UCCIB/UCIC Boards. The UCCIB is owned, controlled and directed by the Conferences of the United Church of Christ. It's Board of 20 Directors is comprised of 16 representatives from the United Church of Christ, three representatives from the Disciples of Christ, and one representative from the Presbyterian Church USA. All were in attendance.

The following were general comments:

- There needs to be an updated status report on the first BE IT RESOLVED on reconciliation. The representation question will not be answered until this matter is resolved.
- The Governing Board should be flexible, nimble, inclusive and representative. A Board of 85 to 90 is too large.
- Smaller is better.
- An educator in the group told the story of a second grade elementary school class assignment for students to draw a horse. Each child's drawing represented his or her view of the world on what a horse should look like. He likened this school exercise to the work of the Governance Committee trying to arrive at a precise picture of what the Unified Governance result will look like.
- In trying to please everyone, you will likely please no one.
- Why is so much time spent on governance in the National Setting when we are closing churches faster than any other Mainline Denomination?
- Seems like process is about control and power.
- A consensus governance model works best.
- Autonomy is important.
- From the Hawaii Conference representative *"Do you need to be one to represent one?"*
- Outside of the National Setting who cares?
- How much time is being spent on developing governance "best practices"?
- Where in the representation is there a discussion of critical skills that will be needed for appropriate policy making and review?

It is important to note that there were six Conference Ministers included in this discussion. Approximately one hour was allocated by the UCCIB Board for this facilitation.

Respectively submitted,

Michael A. Downs

Toward Unified Governance for the National Setting of the United Church of Christ

Dialogue and Discernment Session

United Church of Christ Pension Boards/United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance

June 5, 2010

This discernment session took place in Cleveland with the combined Boards of 19 with all in attendance. Our gathering was blessed by the presence of Rev. Geoffrey Black who serves as a Director on the Ministerial Assistance Board.

The following were general comments:

- There was significant discussion about the size of the Unified Governing Board with a preference for a much smaller Board.
- There was a lengthy response from a lay person reporting her view of the disconnect between the unified governance process and the needs, challenges and hopes of a local church
- There was significant discussion about the need and hope for good governance “best practices”.
- There was a “corporate” comment regarding the “value proposition” of the United Church of Christ vis-a-vis the various settings of the UCC, and alignment of strategies, goals and objectives.
- There was concern on where the Conference setting fit within the Unified Governance Discussion
- At a time when most organizations are decentralizing and pushing services and relationships closer to the customer, it appears that the governance discussion is centralizing and consolidating “services” in the National Setting.
- There is a recommendation that a certain number of Board members be classified by essential professional skills to ensure appropriate oversight duty on particular policy matters.

This was a lively and thoughtful discussion lasting about one hour. Following the conversation, two very gifted Pension Boards’ Trustees offered to volunteer their services as needed if asked in the new governance structure.

Respectively submitted

Michael A Downs.