

## NORTHERN PLAINS CONFERENCE – NPCUCC

Conference Annual Gathering – June 11, 12, 13, Valley City ND, Congregational UCC

Facilitator: Juanita J. Helphrey – Received Electronically June 17, 2010

NPCUCC invited Ms. Helphrey to the Annual Gathering to have a conversation with their Council, after which a brief presentation of this conversation was provided to the full Conference gathering. Total time spent with the conference was two hours.

Ms. Helphrey used power point to highlight important facts, and to provide more time for conversation (assuming that advance materials had been reviewed). The last page contained the two questions for a focused conversation which this report covers.

The conversation results around the questions, what is your response for Unified Governance Working Group and what do you think God is calling the UCC to be now and into future, are as follows:

- With review of resolution, the question was asked: Did the train pull out? In other words, is it a done deal? If so, is this conversation an after thought?
- Also in regard to first paragraph of resolution re race reconciliation, is this revamping going to result in better relationships, or, will it be threatening to relationship building?
- There is dissatisfaction with the directive to become “unified” in that decreasing of membership to a single governance board limits the ability for input by rural conferences such as Northern Plains, as well as for HUGS groups – their voices lost, maybe silenced, in the small board. They ask the question: Can the UGTFII find solutions to keeping small and rural conferences in overall planning and development of Mission with one small governing board of 85-88 members. Further, with this smaller board will UGTFII be able to stay faithful to its goal to be multi-racial/multi-cultural, open and affirming, and accessible to all? If so, how will we be assured of this?
- It was noted that UCC is currently pretty much “decentralized,” and, hasn’t had functional associations for at least ten years, so to that end it was the view of the Council that restructuring of the whole structure was needed.
- Finally, there were questions which seemed to have no answer to such as how the Collegium model worked this past decade, and assumptions made that it probably did not work, hence, a new single or unified governance is assumed to be the solution to the problem. The Council felt the Ministry teams, at least the JWM, WCM and LCM, were the best solution, and felt that if there were power struggles, it was because of funds each ministry managed – each had its own Treasurer, for example – that exasperated the issue.

