

These responses came from PAAM delegates (Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries, UCC) gathered in Plenary Session on August 14, 2010 in Dallas, Texas.
Chris

Question No. 1: What is God calling the United Church of Christ to be now and into the future?

Inclusive of all
Continue reforming now and in future

- We are created in the image of Divine
- Be with the living Christ
- Keep calling the Holy Spirit

Church for the youth and young adults

Church for and of the poor

Inclusiveness in terms of respect

Inclusiveness should be shown in action

Flexibility in the selection process of ministers (Call) according to the ethnic needs.

God's message of love, care for the "least" and inclusion of all classes of people has been supremely manifested in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. God's prophets of old boldly proclaimed the message of justice, peace, and hope. The Spirit created and empowered the church to proclaim in word and deed this message and to be faithful in ministry. God continues to speak to individual members and the UCC... showing and teaching ways of love, witness and service in concrete, understandable terms in the various situations of need... calling us/the UCC to listen to the cries of the poor, deprived and oppressed of today and to clearly speak the truth to power (e.g., the rich, the corporations, the legislators, the justices).

God wants UCC to use its privileged position to the max---to promote or express to the best of its abilities the creation of more equitable laws or policies for the benefit of every human being on earth and not just for peoples who reside in the U.S., which means U.S . policies that apply to other countries or peoples should be more equitable and fair.

Question No: 2: What do you want to say to the Unified Governance Working Group?

The Church needs to be more democratic in governance and less bureaucratic

If the drive for looking into the governance is from the perspective of stewardship and the cost of the current governance structure, ... we would like to request for an audit of the books to show how much has been spent for this governance proposal from beginning of Collegium proposal to present. (Administrative and financial audit by outside body)

To be an authentic multi-cultural/ethnic/racial church, it is important to include the various ethnic groups around the table, particularly in the decision making processes of the UCC. From the perspective of good stewardship (of money and resources both human and material) and our commitment to the inclusion of the diverse constituency of

the UCC, we suggest that the working group responsible to address the issue of governance consider alternatives that do not dishonor our identity as a multicultural church whose ministry includes matters of justice and peace.

PAAM cannot support the recommended restructure proposal of the Unified Working Group (Unified governance proposal if it is still a single governance structure) for the following reasons:

-We do not agree with the collapsing of the Boards of Directors of the four Covenanted Ministries; we affirm the resolutions passed by all the Covenanted Ministries boards in 2002 declaring that we should be a “board-driven church” and not a “staff-driven church”. We feel that collapsing the Boards into one large, “superboard” would make the UCC a more staff-driven, corporate church.

-PAAM believes under the proposed structure, passion for the different ministries would be seriously diluted. Presently those nominated to the Covenanted Ministries boards are nominated partly for their passion for JWM or WCM or LCM. This passion is not divisive and should be prized within our church. Under the proposed structure, there is no guarantee that a person with a heart for one of these ministries would be able to serve in that particular capacity. For example, a person with a passion for the local church might be asked to participate on the justice committee, which does not fully utilize a person’s skill-set or energy creating just as much inefficiency as four boards that have gaps in communication.

-By collapsing the boards into one larger “superboard,” there would be more decisions made by fewer people, and new leaders in the church would not have as many opportunities to gain experience by serving at the national level. Whereas years ago PI/AA churches made up only 2% of the new church starts, in 2006 PI/AA churches made up 33% of all new church starts. These are mainly Samoan and Micronesians churches that are filled with young people who we want to feel welcome and a part of the larger church. PAAM currently has 6 members on the Covenanted Ministries boards and Executive Council (and one COREM seat), giving more opportunities for new members to participate and become leaders within the church. Under the new plan, this would be reduced to 2 seats. Presently, we have 16 ethnic groups within PAAM and with a reduction of 6 seats to 2, there is no way we would be able to give voice to all of our different communities.

-Also, under this proposed new structure, the board members who are chosen to serve would have to set aside more time to attend longer board meetings, meaning that students, workers, young adults, etc. would have difficulties serving, further limiting the diversity of those who were chosen to serve.

-Although we receive the Justice and Witness Ministries diversity guidelines with appreciation, we do not feel that the new structure truly promotes

multi-culturalism and multi-racialism.

Recommended Alternative Actions:

-If a primary reason why the church feels like there is need to restructure is because of lack of communication between the four boards, and the church sees gaps of efficiency, then PAAM recommends, as a solution, that the boards always meet simultaneously rather than only once every two years.

-If one of the other primary reasons for restructuring is economic in nature, then PAAM recommends the Boards streamline their finances. Also, if local church giving has increased and it is the conferences that are responsible for the deficit, then we recommend there be a series of strategic conversations with the conferences on how to distribute the finances of the church more resourcefully. Furthermore, we recognize the importance of local churches increasing their giving to OCWM and the other major offerings. In light of this, PAAM is making it a priority to work with local PAAM churches and encourage them to increase giving to OCWM and other major national offerings.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours in Christ,

PAAM