

Report from the First Meeting
of the Reconstituted Governance Follow-Up Team
Cleveland, Ohio
July 30 to August 1, 2008

The newly reconstituted Governance Follow-Up Team (GFT) met in Cleveland July 30-August 1. Directed by an action of the Executive Council at its April meeting, the GFT was called upon to

1. “Respond to the concerns raised in the document entitled ‘the Urgent Call’ . . .
2. consider concerns raised about the size of the proposed United Church Board,
3. explore the role, function and authority of the Executive Committee . . .
4. take seriously the additional questions and concerns that have been raised by the Covenanted Ministry Boards,
5. and . . . bring, if possible, a new proposal to the meetings of the Boards and the Executive Council in the fall of 2008.”

The GFT received a number of communiqués prior to and during our meeting which were given careful and respectful consideration. These included: The report of the special meeting in June of Historically Underrepresented Groups (HUGS) authorized by the Executive Council; letters from Pacific Islander Asian American Ministries and United Black Christians written prior to the Joint meetings in April as well as a letter from a current and a former assistant moderator of the General Synod, also received prior to the Joint meetings; letters from Ministers for Racial Social and Economic Justice and the Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries received during our meeting; a letter signed by twenty-six of the thirty-eight Conference Ministers following their retreat in late June; and responses from nine Conference Boards of Directors as part of an on-going process of reflection by Conference leaders on governance.

The two overarching themes which served as the group’s organizing principles were identifying and establishing best practices of good governance for the whole of the church, and claiming and re-affirming our deep commitment to the diversity of the church. The most significant amount of the GFT’s time together was spent carefully listening to and in dialogue about the UCC’s commitment to be a multi-cultural, multiracial church, open and affirming and accessible to all, and what that means both historically and in moving forward.

No formal action was taken during this meeting, but there was an emerging consensus around some of the issues before the group. Among them:

- Support for a single board governance, with a board membership of fewer than 100 persons.
- An Executive Committee of that board, with 15 to 20 members.
- Concern for good governance will be a driving force in the decision making.
- Embracing the full diversity of the church, with an understanding that the richness of our diversity is expressed and can be represented in several ways, including the voices of the members of the organizations representing in formal ways the historically under-represented groups, as well as persons of various racial/ethnic backgrounds from across our conferences.

The GFT will meet again in Cleveland on September 5-7, and will at that time work on completing a proposal that will be submitted to the Boards of the Covenanted Ministries and the Executive Council for consideration at their fall meetings. The GFT will provide on-going communications in an effort to maintain transparency in its work.

Governance Follow-Up Team Roster

Jim Antal, Council of Conference Ministers*
Phyllis Baum, OGM
Deborah Blood, WCM
Carol Brown, UBC
Elizabeth Clement, OGM
Sylvia Ferrell-Jones, UCF
Yvette Flunder, JWM
Ronald Fujiyoshi, PAAM
Jean Golden, LCM
Edith Guffey, Collegium
Brian Holeman, Executive Council
Linda Jaramillo, Collegium
Barbara Kershner Daniel, Pension Boards

William Land, MRSEJ*
Martha Mendoza, JWM*
Bob Molsberry, Disabilities Ministries
Rich Pleva, Council of Conference Ministers
Phil Porter, Coalition for LGBT Concerns
Cally Rogers-Witte, Collegium
Curtis Rueter, WCM
Steve Sterner, Collegium
John Thomas, Collegium
Esther Rendon Thompson, CHM
Libby Tigner, Executive Council
Hattie Walker, CAIM
Carol Williams, LCM

Don Clark, Nationwide Special Counsel
Harold Massey, Organizational Consultant
Kimberly Whitney, Staff

* Unable to attend the first meeting

Council for Youth and Young Adult Ministries representative yet to be named.