

Results of Historic Unification Church Elections Released

Krista Moon
October 25, 2012

The long awaited results for the Interim District Council elections are now tabulated and have been officially released on Oct. 25, 2012. The collective wisdom of the electorate was demonstrated by the fact that

Altogether, 11,627 votes were received for 2,318 nominees from 3,029 voters, 53.37 percent of all registered voters.

National HQ sent an email expressing gratitude for the tremendous investment and participation from the incumbent district pastors, community leaders and national membership in this historic election.

The District Council Elections website explains that the votes were collected through a national online ballot, national e-mail and national fax. Those submitted through local channels were transferred to the national collection. Votes were counted only from voters registered through their district headquarters, in compliance with established election directives. Accordingly, votes submitted for current district pastors, their spouses and other "paid" pastors were not counted.

Eight nominees who received the highest number of votes in each district were chosen to serve on the District Council. Each was contacted to verify his/her acceptance to serve.

Breakdown of Gender and Generation Representation

	Female	Male	1st Gen.	2nd Gen.
District 1	2	6	6	2
District 2	1	7	7	1
District 3	2	6	6	2
District 4	2	6	6	2
District 5	2	6	7	1
District 6	1	7	6	2
District 7	3	5	8	0
District 8	2	6	5	3
District 9	2	6	5	3
District 10	2	6	7	1
District 11	2	6	6	2
District 12	1	7	6	2

In all twelve districts men hold the majority of seats on the eight-member councils. Some may argue that community leaders are still predominantly seen as men.

In all the districts, the number of women representatives is low in comparison to the number of male seats. The highest number of females represented on a council is three, in District 7. Eight out of 12 districts have two women council members while the remaining three districts have one female member.

Susan Bouachri, newly elected female council member of District 2 told Unificationnews, "It would be nice to have seen the percentages of the gender of the registered voters to discern the number of females and males who have cast their votes."

When Bouachri first got the call for her nomination and decision to sit on the district council she asked, "Are there any other women elected?" When she was told that the next woman was far down the list,

she said, “I was not looking for extra work, but I did not have a choice, really. In my mind I had to take this role, because there has to be at least one sister on the council.”

On being the only female in a group of males Bouachri further added, “It feels pretty regular. It happens all the time, unfortunately. I was in Ocean Church for a long time, and I am used to being the only woman on a boat or team, so it doesn’t feel that different to be the sole female. “

“We have a lot of qualified and interesting sisters and the low number of women elected is unfortunate,” Bouachri said. “I think that we [sisters] have to convey that we are interested in representing our community. I hope that from my nomination I can inspire the next generation, the female Unificationist born youth, to hold a council membership in the future.”

The generational representation of the members on the council also is predominantly first-generation Unificationists. The majority of the district councils have at least two second generations, or Unificationist-born youth representatives. With a total of three members, Districts 8 and 9 had the highest number of second generation representatives. Only one district, District 7, elected no second generation council member.

At least four districts elected Asian, Hispanic or African council members. In fact, District 3 elected three Japanese council members.

Atsushi Takino, a Japanese Unificationist from New Jersey, is now one of the eight council members in District 3. “I will try my best to offer my services to God, True Parents and the New Jersey and District 3 community,” Takino said. “I believe individuals cannot escape our portion of responsibility to fulfill God and True Parent’s will. That is why I grabbed this opportunity to serve and raise up blessed central families when Rev. Hyung Jin Moon gave the members the decision to elect their representatives.”

Takino further added his views about representing Japanese members, “I do not consider myself solely representing the Japanese. I do not think about boundaries of ethnic categories. I believe that True Father wants the eastern members and western members to walk beyond personal and cultural issues to build a vertical and horizontal tradition of heart of attendance centered on God and True Parents. I strongly believe in one family under God. There are no national boundaries from God’s viewpoint. “

According to Dr. Anthony Guerra, special assistant to the President of the Unification Church, “The results reveal the collective wisdom of the community. Because there was a diverse spread of men, women, young, old and various ethnic groups I found the representation marvelous. I believe that this interim election process was a rather fair and wide, extraordinary representation of the membership.”

“The confidence of the President’s decision to place trust in the collective wisdom of the membership is well affirmed by the responsible way in which the elections proceeded and by the participation as shown by the high percentage of voters,” Guerra added.

At the beginning of a democratic process of input from membership, questions arose as to the idea of modification for the next elections and, if any were to be held. Dr. Guerra answered, “This is clearly an interim process which will be reformed in the future as the first elected council members become more involved in the process and create amendments and charters applicable to their districts.”

Rev. Bruce Grodner, the incumbent District Pastor for District 2, says about the notion of selecting the district council men and women, “[This] is just the beginning of gathering of input and ideas and of taking more ownership by our larger community.” Rev. Grodner added: “I fell short in my duties of administering the election process. However, I do believe our district members were glad to have an election and have confidence in the people that were chosen by many and will help to shore up and secure the foundation for the coming of Foundation Day.”

The results are also available through the website created by National HQ: www.elections.unification.org/