



Unification Church of America  
District 3: Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania  
District Council Meeting Minutes

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**DATE:** Monday, September 30, 2013, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM EST

**LOCATION:** Clifton Church

**PRESENT:**

Mr. John Hessell (Chair)	Mr. Robert Beebe
Mr. Atsushi Takino	Mrs. Carol Pobanz
Mrs. Meadow Tallakson	Mr. Hero Hernández (Secretary & National Rep)
Mr. Joshua Yashiro Dr.	Mr. Hiroshi Inose
Ann I.	Mr. Pablo I.

**ABSENT:**

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I. CALL TO ORDER & CONFIRMATION OF QUORUM

Mr. Hessell called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM and confirmed a quorum of the Council was present.

II. OPENING PRAYER

Mr. Hessell offered the opening prayer.

III. AGENDA

A. Election Discussion

IV. COUNCIL BUSINESS

A. Election Discussion

*Intro – HQ recently released a plan for the Church structure moving forward. To many people’s surprise, the district system is not ending. HQ had hinted several times that the system would be ending, but after consultation with True Mother, last minute, it was recommended to not dissolve the 12 districts. The following is the Council’s discussion upon hearing the news.*

Mr. Hessell – This new direction from HQ is difficult to accept, especially since we’ve been planning seriously to transition into a local system all this time. Rather than rushing into our original election ballot, I wanted to be clear about what is going on. One of the biggest questions is still the District Pastor role. HQ is pushing for someone younger, but would they acknowledge that a transition time is necessary? It may even take a year or two (according to WestRock Church) to really find someone and raise them up to this role. HQ wants to retain some district function. There seems to be a lot of overlapping lines of ownership that is difficult to understand. On the one hand, we thought we were being left with some autonomy and that the district system was being dissolved, now we are being told that the system will stay.

Mrs. Pobanz – Expecting us to accept a structure that is meant to work for the whole country is unreasonable. We need to make a decision that is relevant to our community, which is very unique due to our diversity and size. There is no cookie-cutter solution.

Mr. Takino – On Saturday, I got lots of calls from members and I told them to please wait a little longer, HQ will provide us with more details.



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Mrs. Pobanz – According to the HQ memo, there are the seven that are stepping District Pastors stepping down? The five that are staying?

Dr. Ann – The five that are staying: Rev. Takami of Chicago, Rev. Thompson of Bay Area, Rev. Compton of WestRock ... (can't remember the others). To be clear, the role of the District Pastor moving forward will be very different from before. He or she will mainly focus on his or her local community foremost. It still isn't clear who will be the four Senior Pastors overseeing the other District Pastors.

Mr. Beebe – What are you thinking about doing Dr. Ann?

Dr. Ann – We are feeling the best thing would be for us to step back from this role and welcome younger leadership. I am very much committed to a healthy transition time. I deeply believe in intentional scaffolded growth. We would like to help transition to whatever the next chapter is. I really love education, perhaps I can help with that. Our role will not be as a District Pastor in the way it was before.

Mr. Beebe – What about elections to the National Council?

Dr. Ann – Since there won't be District Councils, it might be a direct election to the National Council.

Mr. Yashiro – Has your role already been decided Dr. Ann?

Dr. Ann – No not yet. We were originally being prepped to transition out of the district system but now the direction has changed. The communities in Pennsylvania and Delaware are able to continue as independent local communities. We have been actively helping to align local church communities there in anticipation of the next phase of infrastructure.

Mr. Yashiro – These four Senior Pastors will choose their area?

Dr. Ann – No. It's not decided yet.

Mr. Hessell – We don't really have many candidates and we don't have lots of time to find the right person to be responsible for such a large role. Perhaps there is a way to have Dr. Ann to stay on as a consultant to mentor someone new. Then again, Dr. Balcomb has also noted that New Jersey is by far the largest congregation in America and might be broken down into smaller groups when they redefine the district boundaries. We can't force this to change, but we could at least plant the seeds for this division: the county system. What should we do?

Mr. Beebe – One question, would the District Pastor be responsible for communicating for the other districts? I assumed that the larger districts would take responsible for other smaller districts.

Dr. Ann – A few weeks ago, when we had an District Pastor planning meeting and reported to Dr. Balcomb that a structure which increased District Pastor areas alone would not be possible and would put unreasonable expectations on the Senior Pastor to oversee more districts without changing the responsibilities of the role.

Mr. Beebe – The fact that the district system is not being dissolved has proved my point all along that the district system is important. I see these Senior Pastors kind of like Bishops who would oversee the other District Pastors and not be too involved. Financially speaking, who would support the Bishops.

Dr. Ann – HQ will not support anything financially.

Mr. Hessell – Let's focus on what to do here.

Mrs. Pobanz – Personally, I think we should use the same system as the rest of the country. I also believe that Dr. Ann should stay on. I believe her strengths are administration and teaching. If we do break into four districts, we can choose a young person for those areas. Then allow for Dr. Ann in an educator's position to raise up the four younger pastors. Then we can give Dr. Ann a time period. It's unreasonable to ask a young person to come into a role of taking care of a church community of such a large population. Perhaps they can be nurtured over a period of time over their respective counties. How many 2<sup>nd</sup> generation have run a church, even a small church? How can we expect to find a 2<sup>nd</sup>



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generation for this District Pastor role? We do have some 2<sup>nd</sup> gen couples that could start part time and start learning.

Mr. Yashiro – I kind of agree with Mrs. Pobanz. The younger person can be an apprentice and learn the church business from the elder member. This is similar to business practices, in general. A new college graduate still needs to take time to learn and grow. If you put a young person in a big role and they fail, they will be burnt out quickly.

Mrs. Pobanz – In our younger years, we were thrown out to learn and swim on our own, but we could at least reach out to someone. I think it should be a smoother transition for our community.

Mr. Hessell – Should we allow Dr. Ann to stay on another year or have the election for a new Pastor and have Dr. Ann mentor him. I am not disqualifying Mr. Dairo Farrabolli but I think it's better to have a younger person. Would we also be electing four Local Pastors?

Mr. Inose – So many things are changing now. Finding new candidates is very important. We could not only search our own district, but we can look nationally and internationally. It also needs to be clear that keeping the district system is True Mother's idea and not Dr. Balcomb's idea. In addition, the push for younger leaders is also True Mother's idea. We should take this seriously and search for a potential candidate.

Mr. Beebe – Perhaps this is another option to offer to the community. Do we ask the community what is best? Or do we ask Dr. Ann to stay on to mentor new candidates? I think we should be careful in communicating to the community. If the district structure is to remain, perhaps it's better to keep Dr. Ann as our Senior Pastor. In one sense, we should have already been prepping our 2<sup>nd</sup> generation. I don't think many are interested in being a church leader.

Mrs. Pobanz – I don't completely agree with that statement. I do see some younger 2<sup>nd</sup> generation stepping up in GO and other programs. And as I look through this list of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation couples, I think there are a few who might be interested in starting part time.

Dr. Ann – I think we still need to keep the Ministry Team here to provide consistency and stability for the work and find these four county pastors. They could work together to support these four new regions.

Mr. Yashiro – So you're saying that there will be four pastors and four counties and the District Pastor would oversee those four county pastors? I think it needs to be clear what authority the District Pastor would have in overseeing these younger pastors.

Dr. Ann – My understanding is that each of these county churches would have the authority to hire and fire their pastor. Thus the "District Pastor" would truly be a local county pastor. New Jersey would potentially be four districts.

Mr. Hessell – What's so unique about our state is that there are no real geographic separations that would naturally create separate districts, as would the cities in California, which are separated by miles and miles. Like the Elizabeth church was a natural expression of the unity and commitment of the members there.

Mr. Takino – Because our district is so unique, can we ask Dr. Balcomb for some flexibility in adjusting it? Is the a requirement or a suggestion from HQ?

Dr. Ann – Originally I attempted to create local communities way before Dr. Balcomb had suggested it. We wanted to increase local connectivity and also wanted to find a way to insulate our members from the constant changes from above. So yes, I think that local control is local control and thus we should take responsibility for our area and report to Dr. Balcomb.

Mr. Inose – This is the time for local churches. Can we really remain as one or is it better to divide? This plan that Dr. Balcomb is suggesting is for the sake of the 2020 vision, to accomplish 500,000 members. Currently, 90% are our own members and 10% new members. But Dr. Balcomb wants to



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have that reversed, where 10% are old members and because of growth, 90% are new members. I think we can make a proposal to the members and ask for their feedback.

Mr. Takino – We already have a ballot that explains this county system so can we just move forward?

Mr. Hernández – Realistically, this new pastor will mainly be focused on New Jersey and not really worry too much about Delaware and Pennsylvania. Those two states don't even want the District Council to dictate their needs. Dr. Ann is already encouraging them to create their own Local Councils. I think it's premature to roll out with four districts within New Jersey and to find four pastors. I'm not sure even the budget can handle four pastors. Let's go forward with the election for a new State Pastor, Dr. Ann can be a candidate if she chooses, and then continue with our original plan. We should push back a little on HQ because their suggestions might not be the best for our district.

Mrs. Tallakson – I agree that there needs to be some community structure on a smaller level. Not sure if it's too early to try and find four pastors, especially with the budget. But I think we should have an election.

Mr. Hessell – There's too many unanswered questions. And there's too much to decide.

Mr. Beebe – We need a very clear nomination process. We also need a clear timeline.

Mr. Hessell – We need to also clarify the job description of the State Pastor.

Mr. Yashiro – With the job description, it's difficult to clearly know because the role can change as time goes on. How to bring breakthrough in the community can be a job description.

Mr. Takino – So we are electing a State Pastor or District Pastor? I think that should be clarified. HQ is expecting a District Pastor, but we are moving forward with a State Pastor. Could there be confusion on the responsibilities of the role?

Dr. Ann – Since the new District Pastor role and responsibilities are completely different than what the term conveys, we should select a state pastor.

*Mr. Hernández reads the current ballot draft for review.*

Mrs. Pobanz – There are too many options on the ballot. I think it's just confusing.

Mr. Inose – Let's change the order of the questions. First Pastor election and then Council election. Let's put the most important questions first.

Mr. Beebe – Make it clear that the Council election will be decided after.

Mr. Hessell – Please include that True Mother suggested the new Council structure (four elected members, two appointed by the Pastor, and the Pastor).

Mr. Beebe – For the voting process, I think we really need to make a campaign about it. I was a little discouraged because I only received 10 ballots after the Town Hall meeting.

Mr. Hessell – So our focus now is the Pastor election. How do we move forward in finding candidates?

Mr. Inose – It's the responsibility of our Council to move the process forward.

Dr. Ann – Please send to Mrs. Anderson to translate it into Japanese.

Mr. Hessell – The nomination period in one sense has begun.

MOTION:

Mrs. Pobanz motioned

Mr. Beebe seconded

That we proceed with our original plans to elect a State Pastor and send out the ballot.

MOTION PASSED:

8:0



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Mr. Hessell – So let's send out the memo from HQ immediately. Then we will send out the revised ballot by Thursday of this week. The ballot will be closed October 15. As mentioned before, the nomination period is open and will end October 31.

V. DATE OF NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

No date set yet.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Mr. Hessell  
Seconded by Mrs. Pobanz

That the Council adjourns the meeting at 9:00 PM.

CARRIED 8:0 UNANIMOUSLY

*Mrs. Pobanz closes in prayer.*

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Minutes Approved by the Council on October 9, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of John Hessell in black ink.

Mr. John Hessell  
Chairperson

Handwritten signature of Hero Hernandez in black ink.

Mr. Hero Hernández  
Secretary & National Representative