

Maryland Community Experiments with Team Pastoring Led By Miilhan Stephens, Jim Boothby, Kyoho Jones and Lorman Lykes

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Maryland Pastoral Team: Lorman Lykes

The Unification Church in Maryland is experimenting with a new approach to the pastoring: a team of part-time clergy mentored by the district pastor.

On Sunday, January 20, 2013, Miilhan Stephens, a second-generation Unificationist, and longtime church members Jim Boothby, Kyoho Jones and Lorman Lykes were introduced to the congregation as the Pastor Explorer Team. After an exhaustive nomination and interview process, four committed community activists were selected from seven nominees by the Maryland Church Council to fill the position of Pastor by becoming an acting pastor team, according to the Maryland Church Community Newsletter.



Maryland Pastoral Team: Miilhan Stephens

"We are overjoyed to be working with this excellent team," Rev. Henri Schaffler wrote in an interview to Unification News. He continued, "All four candidates are highly qualified with very different strengths. The Maryland Church Council was instrumental in helping craft this new approach, and we expect the results to enhance the growth of the Church in Maryland. The Unification Church has traditionally used a top-down model for leadership and management, but with the advent of President Hyung Jin Moon's leadership in America, a new era of 'Freedom and Responsibility' has emerged. The partnership of the MD Council, the District Pastors and this new Pastor Explorer Team is a wonderful example of what can happen when the creativity of the grassroots is unleashed and the integrity and abilities of a wider cross-section of the membership is trusted."



Maryland Pastoral Team: Kyoho Jones and her husband Gregg Jones

"The idea for a pastoral team made up of part-time pastors has been around for a while but never implemented until now," said Jim Boothby, head of the Maryland Council, in an interview with Unification News. Boothby added, "Because the single pastor was dealing with responsibilities that was just too much for any one person to handle there was, for whatever reason, never the chance for development of an adequate leadership structure around them, sort of like how a president surrounds himself with dedicated cabinet leadership. We finally realized a single pastor could not be held accountable for a lack of progress given the unrealistic expectation to handle all areas of his/her responsibility. Therefore, we decided to try a pastoral team where each team member has responsibility

over a particular area.”

This trial will run for a period of three months, during which time each individual has the opportunity to explore and experience the various responsibilities and tasks that the pastor oversees. The pastoral team will be mentored by the District Co-pastors, Rev. Henri and Loretta Schaffler, and has been divided into four areas Acting Pastor, In-reach Associate Pastor, Out-reach Associate Pastor and Communications/ Administration Pastor.

Each prospective pastor volunteered for his or her respective roles for the first rotation of three weeks: The Acting Pastor is Miilhan Stephens; In-reach Associate Pastor is Lorman Lykes, Out-reach Associate Pastor is Kyoho Pastor and Administration/Communications Pastor will be Jim Boothby.



Maryland Pastoral Team: Jim Boothby

“The process is considered to be a training and evaluation period by which the prospective pastors will first be able to gain experience leading different types of ministries and perhaps discover a particular liking to one of them,” wrote Stephens in e-mail to Unification News. “It also gives the congregation an opportunity to evaluate the pastors’ performances in their respective capacities.”

Even though the Maryland community is in the experimental phase of this ministerial innovation, Boothby said, “We may discover that this approach to ministry might have to evolve and change, since this is just the beginning. We currently have four people but, who knows we could grow and become a team of five or more.”

“A key point is accountability for results,” Boothby continued. “As in business we need to assess whether the job is getting done or not. So, a bit more of a professionalized expectation of results and progress has to be instituted,” he added.

Stephens explained: “I was not involved with the Maryland Council meetings where this brilliant plan was hatched, but my assumption is that by advertising the pastor position as part-time, it would make the opportunity much more palatable for those candidates not willing to give up their current job.”