

The
DECLARATION
of
PRINCIPLES

of the
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

Sunday School Material

EY 2020-21

FOREWORD

Our Church, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines has been articulating its basic principles, foundational values, and spirituality throughout its existence and in the future. The Faith and Order Commission thought that these must not only be read as texts, or assume their meaning as interpreted and understood from the pulpit, but must be ingrained in the mind and become the very values of our faith-communities. With this thinking and encouragement from the FOC, the National Secretariat was tasked to prepare Sunday School curriculum materials on the Declaration of Principles enshrined in the Constitution and By-Laws.

We are grateful to our CEN Curriculum Development Writers Pool for their dedication and commitment in writing the Sunday School Lessons on the UCCP Declaration of Principles. We know that these lessons will come alive in the teaching-learning process in our churches through the creative engagement of our Sunday School teachers. We pray that as our teachers and learners embark on the study of these lessons they will be inspired and awaken their imagination and creativity to know and understand these principles such as Christian unity, justice, faith, love and prophetic witness in the present and in the future. May these principles become our spirituality and way of life.

The blessings of love, joy and peace be with us all.

In the service of God's people,

BISHOP MELZAR D. LABUNTOG
General Secretary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our Sunday School Guide for this ecclesial year which focuses on the UCCP's Declaration of Principles will help us deepen our understanding of the church's being and identity by studying the set of principles upon which we stand as a church.

With this, we would like to express our humble gratitude to all those who continue to allot their time, talent and effort in making this Sunday School Material possible. We deeply acknowledge their unwavering commitment and passion for teaching ministry of the church.

To the following individuals who conceptualize the curriculum framework and writing of the lessons; Rev. Emily E. Vanguardia, Rev. Lilibeth T. Tendero, Rev. Marjorie S. Belmonte, Rev. Glorilyn T. Ostoy, Rev. Lilibeth L. Damiao, Rev. Goel B. Bagundol, Rev. Annabelle A. Uriarte, and Mr. Jonie Ben Marasigan.

To our General Secretary, Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog for his rich input on Declaration of Principles during the conceptualization process;

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Above all, to our Almighty and Living God, who endowed us talents, wisdom and strength. We offer all glory and honor!

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

Article II, Constitution and By-Laws

Article II

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

- Section 1.** The United Church of Christ in the Philippines is an *integral part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.*
- Section 2.** The United Church of Christ in the Philippines affirms its *Protestant heritage as a reformed and reforming church.* (As Amended by GA 2002-41, Baguio City, May 20-26, 2002)
- Section 3.** The United Church of Christ in the Philippines is *a united and uniting Church*, in response to the prayer of Jesus Christ *“that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou has sent me”* (John 17:21, RSV).
- Section 4.** The doctrines and beliefs of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines are based on the *Word of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and articulated in the historic Christian creeds, expressed in the diverse heritage of faith and practice brought into the union by its uniting Churches*, and embodied in its Statement of Faith.
- Section 5.** The fundamental values of *love, justice, truth and compassion are at the heart of our witness* to the world and our service to the Church.
- Section 6.** At all levels of its life and government, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines shall ensure, as far as practicable, the *equitable representation* of its general membership in terms of *gender, age, sector, and geography.*
- Section 7.** The United Church of Christ in the Philippines *affirms the catholicity and ecumenicity* of the Church of Jesus Christ. This is expressed in the UCCP’s relations with other church bodies and in its support of efforts in *inter-church cooperation and union* in the Philippines and in the world.
- Section 8.** The United Church of Christ in the Philippines affirms its *historic faith and its pastoral and prophetic witness in the life and culture of the Filipino people. The Church supports the people’s aspirations for abundant life and holistic redemption* from all forms of bondage, in accordance with the vision of the reign of God.
- Section 9.** The United Church of Christ in the Philippines advocates vigorous Christian stewardship expressed in the *cheerful giving of tithes, time, talents and possessions.*
- The United Church of Christ in the Philippines shall *observe responsible Christian stewardship* by utilizing the properties under its care towards *self-reliance and support of its various ministries.* (As Amended by GA 2002-42, Baguio City, May 20-26, 2002)

Section 10. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines shall *encourage and provide the means for amicable settlement of conflicts and disputes* between and among members, as well as those involving the Church and its constituencies. Amended Constitution and By-Laws, Magna Carta for Church Workers and Jurisprudence

Section 11. In accordance with the biblical understanding that all persons are created in the image of God, the Church affirms and *upholds the inviolability of the rights of persons as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other agreements on human rights, the international covenants on economic, social and cultural rights and on civil and political rights, the 1984 Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and those that relate specifically to refugees, women, youth, children, minority groups and other persons who cannot safeguard their own rights.

Section 12. As steward of God's creation, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines shall *protect, promote and enhance the ecological balance and the integrity of creation.*

Section 13. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines recognizes that *nurturing the faith is part of its primary responsibility.* (As Amended by GA 2002-43, Baguio City, May 20-26, 2002)

Section 14. Consistent with the heritage and commitment of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, *the autonomy of the Local Church shall be respected.* The scope of such autonomy shall be defined in the By-Laws.

A Brief Background

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTIONS FEB. 25-27, 1993

EC 93-38

That the delegation to the Constitutional Convention will be as follows:

1. Present members of the Executive Committee
2. All Past General Officers, past Chairpersons of the General Assembly, past General Secretaries, National Treasurers and past Bishops who have served at least one term.
3. Delegates elected by the Annual Conferences: two (2) Ordained ministers and two (2) lay persons for every 5,000 members or major fraction thereof, plus two (2) youth who are non-pastors provided that they are not more than 30 years old at the time of the first day of the Constitutional Convention.
4. Six delegates from CREATE and two delegates from the hospitals.
5. In addition to the two (2) lay persons, local churches with at least 500 members and above shall be entitled to one (1) delegate, (a) provided that said local churches have no delegates elected by the annual conference, and (b) provided further that at least one half (1/2) of the delegation from the conferences shall be women in so far as practicable."

The Constitutional Convention which was supposed to happen in October 1992 was postponed to 2nd week of September which is to specifically start on September 14, 1993. It was held in UCCP-Ellinwood, Malate, Manila.

The UCCP Declaration of Principles was written as part of the UCCP Constitution and By-Laws which is in Article 2. In 1993, the Constitutional Convention was convened and provided the UCCP the opportunity to redefine and reposition itself. The Convention offered the golden opportunity for UCCP to articulate the church's self-understanding of its identity, tasks, and mission as a community of faith and as an institution. What was the resulting UCCP self-understanding of its identity and mission? As Bishop Reuel Marigza remarked, "the Heart and Soul of our Constitution are the Covenant Prayer and Declaration of Principles. The Covenant Prayer, which serves as Preamble, is the "heart" as it expresses the desire of our faith community, that is to *remain in covenant relationship with God and with one another*. This covenant relationship exists to en flesh the vision of our "founding parents of a united and a uniting church, reformed and transforming church." The bias for the unity of the Church is clearly stated, to be expressed both in the conciliar-ecumenical form and in the form of organic union. While the latter form has been relegated to the side as an aim of the ecumenical movement, the UCCP, even as it affirms its commitment to the ecumenical movement, sees the organic union as still a valid missional and ecclesiological concern and thrust. The Declaration of Principles, is the "soul" of the 1993 Constitution, detailing the essence of UCCP's being. Like the Covenant Prayer, it, too, covers a lot of missional grounds it is the basis of our decisions, stand on issues, and conduct."

The UCCP Constitution and By-Laws paid way of unifying the various Local Churches who experienced and still experiencing disunity amount its members and church workers. It became the basis of our faith understanding of who we are as a Church and who we are as people of God who are called to be partners in doing God's mission to the whole creation. (*Bishop Reuel Norman Marigza*)