



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE PHILIPPINES

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COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

PASTORAL ADMONITION TO THE UCCP FAITHFUL

21 September 2022

Dear Conference Ministers, Church Workers and UCCP Faithful:

We greet you all in Christ's peace and compassionate love!

The global and national political, economic and socio-cultural have been impacting the life of the people at the grassroot level and specifically the life of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP). For the last 74 years, the Church has been united and uniting, but not free from challenges to its organic unity, guiding principles, faith and witness.

Yet, even within the UCCP, there are discordant, if not dissentient voices motivated by personal vested interests or harboring mistrust which somehow pose threat to the unity of the Church at the local and conference levels. What is concerning is the alignment of these voices with the coercive and tyrannical powers in society, which proves to us the continuing existence of the clerico-fascist attacks reminiscent of Martial Rule as imposed 50 years ago today (Sept. 21, 1972).

We are concerned about the spread of black propaganda videos on social media produced by SMNI News operated by Apollo Quiboloy and has been financed by NTF-ELCAC, a government anti-insurgency agency, having huge funding that pursues red-tagging and black propaganda against perceived or suspected members and supporters of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). The state's coercive and repressive power has been revealed in the work of this agency. It has exacerbated the number of illegal arrests, red-tagging and extra-judicial killings in the country.

The collusion of *Pagmata*, a group of disgruntled members and church workers has evolved from their discontent about the property development program of the Church to a handmaiden of the NTF-ELCAC. On the September 16, 2022 video

interview by Jeffry Celis or known as Ka Eric Almendras ¹ and Lorraine Badoy of NTF ELCAC on SMNI news, the interviewees were Alfredo 'Al' Tinio and Samuel Pacha both from Southern Western Leyte Conference (SWLC), and the third is retired military chaplain Romeo Ngoho from Northeast Leyte-Biliran Conference (NELBICON). Meanwhile, on the September 19, 2022 video is Nathaniel Anas also from SWLC.

These *Pagmata*-NTF-ELCAC operatives colluded to give false testimonies implicating all UCCP Bishops as members of the CPP, and specifically targeted church workers from Southern Western Leyte Conference as combatants that stock piled arms and ammunitions for the NPA. A couple Mission Co-workers who worked in Korea amongst migrant workers were red-tagged as fund-raiser for the CPP. These are false and unfounded accusations constituting red-tagging and black propaganda on UCCP Church leaders and Church workers who are just doing Christ's mission and ministry amongst the poor, deprived and oppressed. All these allegations are verbalized in retaliation to the case of willful insubordination in the SWLC Conference Committee on Discipline and Conflict Resolution (CCDCR). Rev. Al Tinio and Rev. Nathaniel Anas are declared expelled by the SWLC Conference Committee on Discipline (CCDCR) for conduct unbecoming as Church Workers. Their expulsion is after proper investigation and due process. The same expulsion is accepted by the congregations where these Pastors are assigned.

So far, in response to the malicious testimonies of these expelled Pastors as aired by Pastor Quiboloy's news outfit, the SMNI, the overwhelming majority of the laity -- some of them are employees and officials of local governments in Southern Leyte -- and the Church Workers of the SWLC have reaffirmed their loyalty to the unity of the UCCP as a whole and to the integrity of the Church leadership led by the Bishops. They have rejected the false testimonies or fake news of the expelled Pastors.

We would like to admonish Conference Ministers, Church Workers and the faithful to live in the truth of our being created in the image of God. The defamatory accusations and false witness against fellow members of the Church are grave misconduct and put persons in harm's way. Red tagging and false accusations lead to serious threat to life. These acts cannot be condoned. We shall be taking legal actions against these persons who are maligning the integrity of the Church and putting fellow Church workers in danger with sustained red tagging. The recent UCCP Quadrennial General Assembly held on May 23-26, 2022 has unanimously adopted the Resolution to pursue cases versus redtagging.

¹ PCPR Press Release, Nov. 2, 2022,
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=438883467512870&id=124561675611719&sfnsn=mo

Therefore, let us preserve the unity of the UCCP as a Church founded in our common confession that Jesus Christ is the Lord of Life and creation. That the witness of the apostles on the life and ministry of Jesus are credible and provides the basis for the growth and future of the Church in God. That the kingdom of God is unveiled and experienced through participation in the ministry and mission of Christ through the Church. No amount of red-tagging or any form of intimidations can stop us from doing our pastoral and prophetic tasks. As the bible says in 1 Corinthians 4: 8-10: ***“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”***

THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

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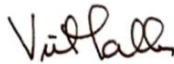
Bishop Melzar D. Labuntog
General Secretary



Bishop Joseph G. Agpaoa
North Luzon Jurisdictional Area



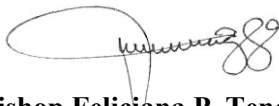
Bishop Francisco Aviso, Jr.
Middle Luzon Jurisdictional Area



Bishop Victor Paller
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Bishop Jerby Salor
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