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February 15, 2015

TO ALL INCUMBENT BISHOPS AND CONFERENCE MINISTERS

On the Change of the Sub-theme for Annual Session 2015 and EY 2015-2016

Upon the recommendation of our Executive Staff and in consultation with the Faith and Order Commission and the Incumbents Bishop, we have sought for the change of order of the sub-themes:

Annual Session 2015: Toward a Spirituality for a New Creation

Annual Session 2016: Spirituality for a New Humanity

Annual Session 2017: Spirituality for Mission

We urge our Conferences, through the Conference Ministers, to take note of these changes.

Rationale for the Change

The previous years we had been subjected to unprecedented disasters both in the world at large and in our country. In the Philippines the weather patterns have become unpredictable, with natural disasters having widespread and detrimental impact to a wider number of victims. Super typhoon Sendong, Pablo, and the world's strongest typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan has sent our country reeling and has brought untold misery to our people. Compounding these typhoons were earthquakes and restive volcanos.

It is undeniable that in some of the "natural" disasters, there is human imprint: from wanton logging, from destructive extraction of minerals through mining, from pollutants released in the air and in rivers and seas, from our excessive use of non-biodegradable and even toxic materials, and our dependence on fossil fuel like oil,

Quadrennial Theme: "Spirituality for These Critical Times"

Member: National Council of Churches in the Philippines • Christian Conference of Asia • World Council of Churches • World Alliance of Reformed Churches
(Presbyterian and Congregational) • World Methodist Council • Christian Peace Conference • United Evangelical Mission (UEM)

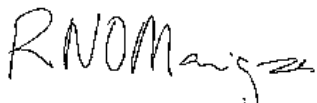
we have helped multiply the impact and effect of climate change.

Thus the urgent call for us to work climate justice. And since this is a pressing issue, we have seen it fit to change the order of the sub-themes to impress upon us all the need for us to take radical action and steps in order to avert the ecological time-bomb facing our world today.

Also even as we go about our rehabilitation work in the Yolanda-affected regions, Lord willing, we hope to set-up within the next EY, a distinct and duly-registered Disaster Response Unit that will focus not only on relief and rehabilitation but on disaster preparedness. We hope to put up regional warehouses and hope to train Quick Reaction Teams in every Conference. Thus we become more pro-active and not merely reactive.

Our UCCP Declaration of Principle so states: "As stewards of God's creation, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines shall protect, promote, and enhance the ecological balance and integrity of creation."

This is not a principle we stand on but our urgent task if we are to survive!



BISHOP REUEL NORMAN O. MARIGZA
General Secretary