

## **"Let Grace Be Total" (LGBT)**

# **UCCP Statement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Concerns**

### **1. Understanding LGBT**

What is LGBT?

This is primarily a matter of the sexual or gender orientation of the person, where a woman may feel, act and think like a man (lesbian), and where a man may think, feel and act like a woman (gay) or adopt both orientations (bi sexual), or one who may have actually undergone physical change in order to fully transform into one's own sexual or gender orientation, (transgender). Society generally views this group as a kind of aberration, something that goes against the accepted, regular 'norm of the society. Thus, this is a group that has been experiencing rejection, ridicule and even harassment and bullying from some sectors of the society.

### **2. What can our faith tradition say about the LGBT?**

The church, particularly the UCCP stands on a tradition of faith that has always been regarded as an affirming, welcoming, accepting and caring community of the followers of Christ. This Protestant, Reformed, Evangelical faith tradition is rooted primarily and solely on a theology of grace, not a theology of law or pure legalism. Within this faith tradition, we consider the grace of God as an unconditional gift of God. All people, regardless of race, gender, nationality, political affiliation or even religious conviction are seen as one in Christ and are all objects of God's redeeming, healing and reconciling love (cf. Gal. 3:28). It is in the spirit of this so profound and immeasurable love of God for the world, "*not counting equality with God as a thing to be grasped,*" (Philippians 2:54) that God sent His only begotten son in humble solidarity with the lost, the last and the least in this world, completely humbling himself as a servant, *and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross* (cf. Phil. 2:8; John 3:16;).

This is the very nature of this God we worship which makes the Christian faith truly unique and distinct from all other religions. We worship and follow a God who in the spirit of this great love for all took the most unthinkable and so radical step for a powerful, divine being to undertake, to humble Himself and stand in complete solidarity with the most ordinary, powerless, alienated and struggling people of this world.

As demonstrated by Jesus in his numerous encounters with people caught in various kinds of situation, God does not impose conditions to being accepted, or being healed. Jesus even gave especial attention to people who are considered as outcasts like the lepers, the sinners, such as the tax collectors like Zachaeus, the widows, the poor, the immoral, the rejected, the ostracized and the marginalized, those who are objects of ridicule, contempt and outright judgment and condemnation by the rest of the society.

### **3. The Present situation of the LGBTs**

The LGBTs, as a group has long been an object of ostracism and judgment, ridicule and condemnation by so many in our society. This is largely due to cultural ethos and values that are so patriarchal in nature,

legalistic in perspective, pharisaic in world view and self righteous in outlook. From such a perspective, world view and outlook, the LGBTs have no place, since this is a world only for either male or female. There can be no in between. There can be no gray areas. It is either black or white.

Jesus has long denounced and rejected such a narrow, legalistic, patriarchal, pharisaic, self righteous outlook and even hypocritical perspective (Matt. 23:1-28). Within this purview of the teachings and work of Jesus, the LGBTs can be considered as well embraced, affirmed and upheld by the gracious and loving presence of God in Jesus Christ.

#### **4. The Gifts as well as Accountability of the LGBT**

With the gift of God's grace that heals and accepts unconditionally, LGBTs therefore can take their own place within the body of Christ and can contribute their own gifts towards the ministry and mission of the church. They are to be considered and respected as legitimate members of the community and fellowship of the church and as such should be protected from the prejudices, discrimination and even bullying by some sectors of the community.

At the same time, a code of moral and ethical conduct will have to be observed and expected from the LGBTs in the same degree that is to be expected of any other person or member of the community. A gay person or LGBT who commits an illegal, immoral, unethical act, or an actual crime is to be held liable and responsible for such act in the same way that an immoral and unfaithful spouse or a corrupt politician-thief, or a bullying student had to be held accountable for their acts.

#### **5. What the church can do to address the concerns of The LGBT**

Subsequently, the church needs to address the prejudices of society against the LGBTs by engaging in educational seminars and fora on this issue for both members and the wider community. A program on Gender Sensitivity that will include issues related to LGBT concerns may be launched on the conference and local church levels. Such program may focus also on the LGBT is own struggle for justice and equality of treatment and against prejudice, discrimination and rejection.

This stand of the church should be seen as being in line also with our goal for greater unity in the church of our only one Lord and God in Jesus Christ, (*that they may be one, John 17:11, 21, 22, 23.*). In this high priestly prayer of Jesus, just before he gets arrested, tried, tortured, and executed by crucifixion, Jesus more than once expressed this prayer-wish for the unity of the church to be sealed by the love of God for his people as perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ. Finally, in the last verse of this prayer of Jesus, he himself had expressed the wish that this love of God, this love that expressed full acceptance of and solidarity with the beloved, this love that is even willing to sacrifice for the beloved is the very same love that should characterize the life of his followers.

---

This statement is in response to the mandate coming from the 2010 Gen Assembly to come out with a Statement that will address the issue of LGBT consistent with the theology and Statement of Faith of the UCCP. This is an initial statement for reflection.

The Faith and Order Commission  
08 January 2014