

Policy Statement on New Religions Movements within the UCCP

I. Introduction

In compliance to the 2006 General Assembly mandate calling for a consultation and study of the phenomenon of New Religious Movements (NRMs), the UCCP Faith and Order Commission (FOC) and the Commission on Church Unity and Union (CCUU) together with the General Secretary and the incumbent bishops held a series of consultations on the issue.

1. On 7-10 January 2013 at the UCCP Shalom Center on New Religious Movements and the impact on the life and ministry of the UCCP involving the Bishops and elected officers, representatives from the different commissions, selected Conference Ministers and Local Church pastors and resource persons.
2. On 22-24 July 2013 at the National City United Church involving the Bishops and Conference Ministers in an All Leaders Consultation on NRMs.
3. On 7-9 January 2014 at Happy Nest, Merryland Village in Mandaluyong City in the Joint Meeting of the Commissions. The incumbent Bishops and elected officers along with the members of the National Secretariate participated in the meeting.

There were other processes that took place at the Conference level during the quadrennium. In all consultations, resource persons in the national level consultations gave inputs.

This document is a consolidation of the findings from the consultations.

Initial Observations

The consultation participants noted the rapid growth of NRMs, which have made substantial inroads in the local churches of the UCCP. This movements focus well on attracting adherents and followers right from within the established churches of the UCCP by presenting a message and program of evangelism that proclaims an image of a mystical, supra-historical Jesus that invites everyone to make an individual, personal faith commitment without due regard to the historical dimension and implication of the gospel that Jesus himself taught to his followers and to all those who decide to follow him (cf. Mark 8:34).

This one dimensional presentation and proclamation of the gospel and of an ahistorical Jesus is carried out and achieved through a systematic and aggressive program of recruitment and training using sophisticated tools and modern technology. its adherents are also adopting the networking style of reaching out to new contacts and developing and organizing cells in a pattern that resembles the "pyramiding" scheme of marketing new products. This approach is accompanied by the use of youth-oriented gospel music together with the introduction of bands as part of the worship experience in the church.

The music that is introduced, with very simple, highly repetitive lyrics expressive of this simplistic, one dimensional faith reinforces the basic teaching and theology of these movements, focusing on the need for a highly personal, individualized faith relationship with a highly mystical Jesus who has nothing to do with the social and historical context of his time and who has nothing to say and would not summon anyone to involve on any critical contemporary issue and concern of the hour.

III. Theological Implication

Even in the face of seemingly impressive numerical growth in the membership of some churches owing to the efforts of this movement, one alarming effect was the de-emphasis or setting aside of the prophetic dimension of the mission and ministry of the UCCP. The removal of Jesus from his own social and historical context as recorded in the gospels and his being frozen in an image of the divine that is above and beyond time and history resulted in the removal also of the historical and social dimension in the over-all mission, witness and service program of the UCCP.

Here is one unique feature of the life and work and witness of the UCCP, borne out of its historical struggle to be faithful to the gospel and relevant to its own context, which now appears to be in danger of being wiped out by the aggressive inroads of the NRMs in its local churches. The UCCP's unique witness to the whole gospel proclaimed and witnessed to and sacrificed for by Jesus is now threatened with being watered down by an alternative but incomplete gospel proclaimed by the adherents of the NRMs.

IV. Practical, Organizational Implication

A number of concerned members have expressed their alarm over the rather different theological thrust and direction this movement has taken and prescribed for its adherents. Some of those who have been converted to its teachings have begun to express indifference over the recognized programs and thrusts of the UCCP. Some even became openly critical of the UCCP's strong prophetic stance and social witness. This has even led to some serious divisions and split in the churches and conferences of the UCCP.

V. The NRMs from a Worldwide Perspective

The rapid growth and expansion of the NRMs, either as an independently organized evangelical organization, or as a result of a split from the mainline churches, has been duly noted by the consultation. As a worldwide trend, it has even outstripped the growth rate and actual membership of the traditional mainline churches in both Europe and the US most of which have actually suffered substantial declines in their membership.¹ Indeed, this is a critical historical and sociological phenomenon which needs to be considered seriously by our church leaders.

This development is also taking place in the context of intensifying commercialization, unchecked materialism, unresolved economic crisis, continuing massive unemployment, unfettered greed and corporate take overs and shut downs and rapid globalization in commerce, communication and transportation. This is accompanied by the rise of migration and the phenomenon of overseas workers, resulting mostly in broken homes, or those traumatized by unending wars and violence in different parts of the world, along with the spate of crimes taking place all over. All these leave the individual with feelings of alienation, insecurity, marginalization, fear of the future and loss of spiritual, psychological and cultural moorings.

It may be conceded that the NRMs may have responded effectively and aggressively to these modern age longings of the individual person and may have opened up rich opportunities for evangelistic campaigns and church expansion in the process. But the UCCP need not be left behind.

¹From actual figures and statistics from official resources shared by Bp. Reuel Marigza.

VI. The Challenge to the UCCP: Recovery of its Rich Faith Traditions

The UCCP stands on a rich and solid foundation of faithful preaching and witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ in its fullness and holistic dimension and with its significance and implication to the life and faith of the Filipino Christian of today. There has always been that element of robustness, active dynamism and prophetic boldness in the carrying out of this unique tradition of its faith and witness. It has a long and historic tradition of preaching the good news proclaimed by Jesus, which brings hope to the poor and the oppressed based on a solid grounding on the Scriptures. This is a dimension of the faith of the UCCP which it need not apologize for nor be defensive about.

As a way of reinforcing this faith posture and its preaching and teaching tradition, some proposals came up which may need the serious consideration of every concerned church member at this point.

1. The UCCP needs to review or redefine its understanding of "Faith in Jesus". Faith does not imply a simple assent or to agree to a set of teachings coming from Jesus or even to accept the idea that Jesus is one's personal Lord and Savior. Faith in its original covenantal context would mean "loyalty" to the demands of a covenant relationship. Faith in Jesus would then mean being a loyal follower of Jesus, living by his teachings, upholding his claims, adhering to the values he had proclaimed, accepting his demands for a life of discipleship which even requires sacrifice and selfless service especially to the kind and class of people whom Jesus first called and ministered to.

It is living by the vision of Jesus for a new and alternative world, one that is governed and shaped by the values and ideals of the kingdom of God, where the last are to be made first, and the first to be made last, where the slaves and the oppressed are to be set free, where the powerless are to be empowered. It is living by this ideal which may even be deemed foolishness in the eyes of this world. *"For God has chosen what is foolish in this world to shame the wise and God chose the weak of this world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God"* (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

It is therefore a faith that cannot be cozy and comfortable with the status quo of this world. Rather, it is a faith that looks forward to the future when Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God finally becomes fulfilled. This is why it is a faith that will always speak and witness to the message of Jesus in a prophetic and rather disturbing manner no matter what sacrifice it may entail. This understanding of faith is what gives the UCCP its unique prophetic edge inspired by an eschatological hope which it should never give up.

2. The UCCP also needs to redefine its understanding of "Evangelism". Evangelism is not solely about increasing one's membership in the church although this is an important dimension of it also. Evangelism is first and foremost about sharing the gospel and witnessing to its liberating truth and power so that others may have the life meant for them by God. It is an essential component of the mission of the church which is simply the continuation of the mission of Jesus which is *"to preach the good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."*

To think and carry out evangelism as if it is only meant to win out souls who would need to accept the Lord Jesus as their Lord and savior for their own exclusively personal salvation is to offer to the people a distorted, incomplete and truncated gospel. The church must preach to people not the mystical, ahistorical, social unconcerned Jesus, but the Jesus of Nazareth, who walked on this earth with ordinary people, who healed the sick, fed the hungry, forgave the sinners, accepted the unclean and the marginalized, and denounced the hypocrisies and abuses of those in power. This is

the Jesus the UCCP has to consistently preach and witness to if it is to remain faithful to its' calling and uphold its rich historic faith tradition.

3. The UCCP also has to understand the meaning of spirituality since this is one area which some sectors have accused the UCCP of sorely wanting in or lacking. Spirituality goes beyond having the trappings of pious, prayerful and churchy religiosity although this may be one expression of such. Jesus himself denounced the practice of such kind of pious spirituality by the scribes and Pharisees calling them as outwardly appearing righteous yet are full of hypocrisy and iniquity within (Matt.23:27). To be a disciple and follower of Jesus would first of all mean to be imbued with the spirituality of Jesus. This is simply being imbued with that spirit of the Lord that has come upon Jesus that empowered him to preach the good news to the poor... (Luke 8:18). It is that spirit that enables the person to obey God's calling for mission to the most ignored and insignificant members of the society.

To be spiritual is to be gifted with the various gifts of the spirit that can be used for the mission and ministry of the church as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12). Yet we are also mindful of the fact that even in the midst of the many gifts of the spirit that one may have received, still what is considered as the greatest gift of the spirit is the spirit of love (I Cor. 13). It is the gift of love for the people and compassion for the suffering, standing in solidarity with the victims of injustice. It is the greatest spiritual gift that one can receive from God. The one who manifests such love for the people, with that spirit of selfless service and compassion therefore is one who can be described as an authentically spiritual person.

VII. Some Recommendations

The continuing presence and influence of the NRMs in the life and work of the UCCP will need to be fully appraised and responded to by the church through programmatic actions and official policies meant to preserve and protect the distinct faith traditions of the UCCP.

The following recommendations were drawn from the series of consultations that took place.

1. All programs of the church that were initiated by NRMs and not by the UCCP must be strictly regulated, supervised and carefully monitored by the church pastor seeking guidance from the conference and jurisdiction officials.
2. The teaching content of such programs must be scrutinized and examined closely by the pastor in consultation with conference and jurisdiction officials for any divergence or teaching that is contrary to established UCCP teaching and doctrines as promulgated in the UCCP Statement of Faith and other official statements made by the church before.
3. The teaching content and materials to be used should also include UCCP teachings on the basic Christian doctrines as promulgated in the Statement of Faith and other officially issued statements of the church.
4. The local churches may adopt with care the methods and tools being prescribed for church growth and development, keeping in mind our own understanding of evangelism and church growth and development.
5. The use of bands for the youth may be allowed at specific times of worship and should use the hymns and songs in the UCCP, NCCP hymnals and other ecumenical sources of church hymns and songs.
6. Regular evaluation of the NRM initiated programs in the church should be conducted in coordination with the conference and jurisdiction officials, so as to determine their strengths and

weaknesses and their degree of effectiveness and to determine also the ways and means of adopting into the programs of the church such elements and aspects that may be deemed positive and supportive of the goals and mission of the church.

7. Local church workers are enjoined to keep themselves theologically equipped and prepared to handle the challenge of NRM teachings and inroads in church life and mission. At the same time they are also reminded to live out a lifestyle and uphold a set of values that will serve as a modeling and source of inspiration for the members and especially for the youth to emulate and live by as shepherds who really care for their flock.

In the end, the UCCP may yet emerge stronger and better prepared for mission work as it engages the NRMs right within its own backyard. The church may actually experience a period of renewal and reformation as it emerges from this critical and challenging period of its existence.

"Let Grace Be Total" (LGBT)

UCCP Statement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGHT) 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 2:5-8) 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 Zacchaeus, 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's 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

UCCP Paper on Climate Change

Climate change has become a critical phenomenon of our time not so much because of its significant and lasting impact on weather patterns but more on its effect on the life and welfare of people in developing nations particularly the Philippines. Natural causes such as biotic processes, variation in solar radiation received by earth, plate tectonics and volcanic eruptions contribute to the climate change phenomenon. But definitely, certain human activities have been identified as significant causes of recent climate change.

The series of calamities that devastated the different parts of the country recently are tangible effects of climate change. Damages of inconceivable magnitude have left many lives and properties at a disconsolate state.

In light of these developments, how can the church (UCCP) respond in order to adapt measures to be able to mitigate the disastrous effects of climate change?

Since the beginning of time way back in our creation account of the Bible, human beings are entrusted with the care of the earth. When God created human beings and gave them the care of nature human beings in effect became the subjugator of all creation, thus, putting the human being at the pedestal as trusted caretaker of the earth and the rest of creation. Of all God's creation, human beings were created the last. This is not coincidental because God created all living things to partake of the bounties of the earth and humankind who was created in the image and likeness of God was called to be stewards of all the earth.

The idea of God's creation is to provide sustenance and abundance for all, satisfying especially the need of humankind. This is the reason why God prepared everything before creating human beings. Every human must access to every bounty irrespective of race and persuasion. "God's creation was intended to be life-giving and life-enhancing for all, and not only for a few who have the power to exploit nature at the expense of many and of nature itself."

The problem with us today is we have neglected our duty to care for the earth. We began to think of stewardship of the earth in terms only of the needs of the human being, or through a very anthropocentric (human centered) view of creation. Greed or the insatiable lust for money and other forms of material wealth have overcome virtues and even brought inexplicable omen. This lust coupled with hubris among the privileged few sent many to starvation and hunger.

Our UCCP Statement of Faith under Article 2 states that, *"Persons are created in the image of God and destined to live in community with God, with other persons and with all creation. That by disobedience, they have become sinful, but, by grace through faith, they are redeemed in Jesus Christ. That being entrusted with God's creation, they are called to participate in the establishment of a just and compassionate social order."*

God placed human beings to be stewards of all the earth. At the same time, God placed human beings as His partners in continuing the never-ending process of creation and of giving birth to life. This, to us is very crucial considering that our present situation is really at a critical stage. As human beings created in the image of God, we should reflect and discern our role as God's partner in preserving and caring for the earth. After all, this is the only one we have. Let us therefore take into serious consideration our moral and spiritual obligation of caring for the earth and everything that is contained in it. This is a mandate from Christ who first loved the world in spite of all its abominations. It is our responsibility to the future generation and to every creature to care for the earth.

Being honest and faithful stewards of God draw us to care more for His creation and in so doing care more for the concerns and agonies of our fellow human beings and other creatures. This will reduce our rapacity for material possessions and gain. It will also drive us to actively participate in the preservation of ecological justice that in the end, every creature in the created web of life will find its order and meaning. We thus develop a new perspective, from a more anthropocentric (human centered), we now begin to acquire a more cosmocentric (creation centered) perspective, one that gives due respect and takes care not only of the needs of humanity but of all creation.

We will note that we have ecological imbalance in our world today. Wherever we go in all corners of our land, we can hear and read the phrase, climate change. There is ongoing change in our climate because human beings have altered the beauty and the order of creation which God saw as good during the creation event. But everything was altered because human beings wanted to explore and exploit everything in the name of development and progress. The question is that for whom are these developments and progress being addressed and for whom are they all intended? Will they benefit the majority of the people living on earth or will they just satisfy the rapacity of the few who are craving for profit and wealth? In light of this occurrence, we need to act in obedience in order to bring about justice to our ecology?

If the prevailing laws do not serve the interest of our people and that of the whole creation, we should take into our own hands the recourse to do something for our environment in order to preserve the ecology and bring about justice to our land. It is therefore imperative for us to get involved in this struggle. If we band together, somehow we can make an impact as we allow ourselves to be channels of transformation.

As God's stewards of all creation we have to do something to save the whole "creation groaning in travail." As an article written several years ago by the NCCP says, "To participate in the never ending process of restoring creation to order, and of building the new out of the old-such is our obedience as stewards of the earth, to set creation free from the yoke of oppression- is to be God's partners in His continuing act of redemption and creation."

In view of the urgency of these concerns, it is therefore highly recommended for all the constituencies of the church to adopt the following steps:

1. Engage in responsible tree planting, organic farming, waste recycling.
2. Practice responsible use of energy.
3. Oppose all highly polluting and destructive energy resourcing and advocate for clean and green energy resources.
4. Initiate study groups on climate change and global warming and join other groups advocating for the protection and preservation of our environment and natural resources.
5. Adopt a lifestyle that is more modest, ecologically friendly and responsible, minimize wasteful consumption.
6. Advocate for the total ban in the use of pyrotechnics and all kinds of firecrackers, for not only are they grave threats to the health and welfare of the people, they are also major contributors to the worsening pollution in our atmosphere.
7. We should unite in calling to account nations and multinational corporations, corrupt politicians and leaders who are the biggest culprits in the destruction and continuing deterioration of our world environment. We should join our voices with all others all over the world in calling for ecological justice.

8. The church should encourage the setting up of an Ecology Desk in the various judicatories and institutions of the church to promote the various environmental advocacies and programs of the church.

We should actively participate in the rebuilding and transformation of this world as God's partners in His creation. A world where every creature shall live in abundance, where every creature is part and parcel of the whole, where there is nobody who will go hungry and empty, a world where ecological justice prevails hand in hand with dignity and integrity of creation. This is the world we should care for and it is the world that God meant it to be to restore the pristine beauty and goodness of all creation.

"Fear Not, Let Us Unite"

UCCP Statement on Large-Scale Mining

God's creation is good and beautiful (Gen. 1). All creatures, no matter how diverse and complex exist in interdependence and co-existence to sustain life for all in all its goodness and beauty. It is only through God's creation that we human beings receive and experience the abundant blessings of God.

We mourn however the present state of God's creation and our actual environmental situation:

1. We are saddened by the destruction wrought by large-scale mining operations all over the Philippines mostly by giant foreign mining corporations. Undeniably, these have caused serious problems to our people - disunity, Human Rights Violations, disasters, destruction of the environment, violent death among the few who oppose. Truly, the wanton and irresponsible destruction of God's good and beautiful creation is destroying our people's life and dignity.
2. We are so dismayed by the media advertisements of the giant mining corporations and the claims of our government that large-scale mining is good for the people. This destructive act is being imposed on us in the guise of development. Foreign mining corporations are plundering our minerals through the doctrine of globalization primarily because of their desire for unlimited profit. In fact, large-scale mining is a clear manifestation of corporate greed.
3. We are so burdened by the fact that our state's laws and policies on mining are catering to and facilitating the greed of the giant foreign mining corporations. For instance, Republic Act 7942 (Philippine Mining Act of 1995) which mandates the liberalization of the mining industry in the Philippines allows a single foreign mining corporation with an approved Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) to mine a maximum of 81, 000 hectares of land (Sec. 3b, sec.34) for a period of 25 years, renewable for another 25 years (Sec. 38). Said law further provides to a FTAA holder the right to cut and use trees within its area of operation (Sec. 72), to use water (Sec. 73), to possess explosives (Sec. 74) and to eject communities if they hamper mining operations (Sec. 75). Moreover, said law also grants the same the right to enter in private lands and concession areas for mining (Sec. 76); and gives many incentives such as 5 years tax holiday, the right to bring home 100% profit, 100% control of minerals, and confidentiality of mining documents including financial statements.

Indeed, transnational mining corporations are so powerful that they can even compel one country like the Philippines to promote their greed. It is therefore not surprising that in the Philippines, state apparatuses are being used to promote and protect corporate interests.

Since large scale mining's ultimate goal is profit, we see this as one form of idolatry. It is all about worship of Mammon god. For this reason, we declare our faith-based stand on large-scale mining:

1. Promoting large-scale mining is total submission to the power of Mammon, a god of destruction, selfishness and greed. This god molds its worshippers to be self-centered and teaches them to destroy the environment and communities in exchange for profit. This god makes greed a virtue. This would explain why its worshippers have always been a glutton for material possessions and find no satisfaction. For Mammon god, to be a poor is sin. Further, this god is also a god of deception and destruction. It is in the name of this god that the foreign mining companies and their local

collaborators are deceiving and destroying mining communities. Insisting that large-scale mining will bring development and progress is a concrete example of their lies.

2. Protecting large-scale mining is act of obedience to Mammon god, a god of death and injustice. This god is bringing death to our people while its worshippers- the giant mining corporations and their local allies are getting richer. Said god ensures them of their legal protections and security as they continue raking profits through the minerals of the land. In fact, it is through the power of this god that our people are divided. This god provokes conflicts and even killings within the families, tribes, churches, organizations and people in the wider communities.

It is true that Mammon is a very dangerous god. Worshipping this god would show the evil of idolatry. Indeed, loving Mammon god makes loving the real God impossible (*Matthew 6: 19-21, 24*).

While we advocate and support mining activities that is in tune with the laws of nature and which would provide genuine economic development of our people, we declare our resistance to all forms of large scale destructive mining. We call our constituencies to join us in this battle of faith:

1. Fear not, let us unite! Resisting large-scale mining is an act of refusing the power of Mammon god — a dead god that could not see the people's suffering and could not hear the people's cry; a god that could not be touched and moved to compassion by the people's affliction.
2. Fear not, let us unite! Rejecting large-scale mining is an act of denying the god of death, a god that causes the death of people; a god that demolishes homes and drives away tribal people from their ancestral lands; a god that destroys the mountains and pollutes the rivers and seas; a god that destroys God's good and beautiful creation.
3. Fear not, let us unite! Opposing large-scale mining is an act of reaffirming our loyalty to the most powerful, righteous, liberating and loving God - the God who created the earth with purpose and order; the God who commissioned us to be His faithful stewards.
4. Fear not, let us unite! Supporting and advocating alternative mining activities that are not destructive and which would truly support genuine economic development of our people is an act of worship to the God of life.