

# 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.