

**A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
IN THE PHILIPPINES IN ITS CONSTITUTION AND
GENERAL ASSEMBLY DOCUMENTS**

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Van Cliburn M. Tibus

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

On June 23, 2015 there was a confrontation between the Philippine National Police and the indigenous people (lumads) who were seeking sanctuary at the United Church of Christ in the Philippines compound called Haran. It was an attempt by the government to return these lumads who were clamoring for the dismantling of paramilitary forces in their communities. “The attempt to return the lumad to their communities happened after North Cotabato Representative Nancy Catamco, chair of the House committee on indigenous people, accused activists and the UCCP of ‘detaining’ the tribal people against their will and vowed to send them home.”¹

The church was caught in the conflict between the government and the lumads as many members in the church were taking opposing positions with regards to the issue. Some were siding with the government accusing the lumads as part of the communist front and the church should not harbor these people inside the property in Haran. Others were taking the side of the lumads expressing solidarity in their position and demanding the government to recognize their demands. Both groups provided theological justifications for their position.

As these arguments became more passionate, it led the researcher to wonder why the members were taking different positions on the issue. Especially when the arguments

¹ “Davao Vice Mayor Intervenes after Police Bid to Dismantle Lumad Refugee Camp in Church Compound,” *InterAksyon.com*, accessed October 14, 2016, <http://interaksyon.com/article/114701/breaking-police-fire-trucks-deployed-to-dismantle-lumad-refugee-camp-in-davao-church>.

boil down to the purpose and nature of the church. For those who took the government side, the church should focus more on church planting and leave these matters to the state. For those advocating on the side of the lumads, the church should side with the oppressed.

The incident at Haran was just a picture of the internal conflicts within the church throughout the years whenever the UCCP make a stand against the government. Many members have accused the leadership of the UCCP to be overtaken by leftist elements and ideology. Many local churches have experienced splits because of these conflicts including conferences as members and congregations became divided on how the church should act in society. They felt that the church has strayed away from its evangelical traditions and focused mostly on the worldly state of things instead of the spiritual side.

The researcher, who has been a pastor for 10 years certainly experience these conflicts when being assigned in a church. Some members complained that the church has become like an NGO because whenever issues of development and human rights arise, the UCCP is very vocal about it. But when it comes to evangelism and proclamation of the Gospel the church is being passive. UCCP seminaries, like the Divinity School, has been accused of teaching mostly liberation theology and forgetting the evangelical traditions of the church. They claim pastors trained in UCCP seminaries are being taught more of the social gospel instead of saving souls. Some even accused the pastors of not being able to master and even memorize Bible verses!

These perceptions towards the UCCP especially towards its leaders and pastors boil down to how the church does its mission work. There seems to be an unbalanced way of how the church does its mission. The UCCP is focused more on development and human rights issues and neglecting the command of the proclamation of the Gospel. It is here

where the researcher focuses on these missiological themes of proclamation, development and human rights to find out if there is truth in that perception. Because these are the root causes of disagreements and misunderstandings that have caused tension and disunity in the local churches / conferences in the UCCP. But it must be understood first how the church do mission. It must be stated right now that the church has no mission but it participates in God's mission, *missio Dei*.

“The term *mission Dei*, ‘the mission of God,’ has a long history. It seems to go back to a German missiologist Karl Hartenstein. He coined it as a way of summarizing the teaching of Karl Barth, ‘who, in a lecture on mission in 1928, had connected mission with the doctrine of the trinity. Barth and Hartenstein want to make clear that mission is grounded in an intratrinitarian movement of God himself and that it expresses the power of God over history, to which the only appropriate response is obedience.’² By uprooting the source of mission from the church and back to God, it enabled the church to depend on God and participate in the divine mission. As each Christian is called to be the “salt and light to the world”, the church as the body of Christ involves itself in doing God's mission.

As a church located in the Philippines, how does the United Church of Christ in the Philippines understand mission and do mission in the country? Because if we are to look at the issues affecting the church like the situation in Haran, it is vital to find the context of the church. To have a better understanding of the UCCP let us look at how the church was organized.

² Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 62.

This is the origin of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.³ The UCCP traced its roots when the American forces engaged the Spanish forces at the Battle of Manila Bay in 1898. By that time the Spanish forces was a spent force as the Philippine revolutionaries was able to take the whole country and Intramuros was the last Spanish stronghold. However, the revolutionaries were robbed of its complete victory when the Spain surrendered to the Americans, ceded the country to the United States at the Treaty of Paris. As the Americans began governing its new colony, American missionaries became more aggressive in doing ministry to the Philippines.

On April 26, 1901 the Evangelical Union was organized. It was composed of representatives from the various Protestant denominations dividing the country territorial mission work. Here the Congregationalists did mission work in Mindanao; the Presbyterians did work in the Visayas; the United Brethren and Church of Christ Disciples did their missionary efforts in Luzon. During this time these denominations were establishing schools such as Silliman Institute which is now Silliman University and Union Theological Seminary.

On March 15, 1929 the United Evangelical Church was organized, the first Protestant church covering the entire country. Rev. Enrique Sobrepeña as Moderator of the General Assembly, Rev. George W. Wright as General Secretary, and Rev. J. C. Hooper as General Treasurer. In January 2, 1942 the Japanese occupied the Philippines.

In 1943, pressured by the Japanese imperial government, the Evangelical Church of the Philippines was formed and brought together the United Evangelical Church, the Church of Christ (Disciples), the Iglesia Evaneglica Unida de Cristo, and some segments

³ “A HISTORICAL SKETCH.docx - UCCP-Historical-Sketch.pdf,” accessed October 13, 2016, <http://isitdoneyet.uccpchurch.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/UCCP-Historical-Sketch.pdf>.

of the Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Las Islas Filipinas (IEMELIF), Iglesia Evangelica Nacional, the Philippine Methodist Church, and some independent local congregations. It was the first union of churches under the full leadership of the Filipinos.

After the war and defeat of the Japanese, the former Presbyterians and the Congregationalists reconstituted the United Evangelical Church. On the other hand, the former United Brethren, together with the Church of Christ (Disciples) and the independent congregations remained as the Evangelical Church of the Philippines. However, those in the Visayas and the Mindanao churches who were Presbyterians and Congregationalists by tradition, joined the United Evangelical Church.

On May 22-25, 1948 one hundred sixty-five delegates coming from the Evangelical Church of the Philippines (except the Tagalog Convention of the Church of Christ – Disciples); the Philippine Methodist Church (a breakaway group from the Methodist Episcopal Church), and the United Evangelical Church gathered at the Ellinwood Malate Church and signed a declaration of union proclaiming that the three churches “shall be one church known as the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.” Although this union involved three churches - the Evangelical Church of the Philippines (union of Brethren & Disciples); the United Evangelical Church (union of Presbyterians & Congregationalists) and the Philippine Methodist Church – it has five denominational traditions: Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodist, United Brethren and Church of Christ Disciples.

The UCCP has been a member of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, the Christian Conference of Asia, the World Council of Churches, Vereinte Evangelische Mission (United Evangelical Mission), World Alliance of Reformed

Churches to name a few. Describing themselves as a “uniting and united church” it is ecumenical in nature but also have evangelical roots as traced in its history. “[UCCP] work for human rights, justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. [UCCP is] a church that gladly welcomes change.”⁴

According to the UCCP Constitution Article IV Section 1 it states “In faithfulness to Jesus’ proclamation of his own mission (Luke 4:18-19), and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), the Church as the people of God, is called to a ministry of love and service and the search for peace based on justice and reconciliation, in obedience to, and as exemplified by Jesus Christ. Having been given a diversity of gifts, all church members are called upon to participate in the ministry.”

These ministries are services offered by the church. Programs designated by the National Office are Christian Education and Nurture; Evangelism and Church Development; Community Ministries; Health, Environment and Socio-Economic Development; Disaster Response Management; Justice, Peace and Human Rights; Partnerships and Ecumenical Relations; and Stewardship and Resource Development. “These ministries are the expressions of the church’s commitment to Christ’s mission, which are primarily expressed in the local church. Their goals include the strengthening of the faith community, enriching the life-work of the community where the local church is located, and deepening the impact of collective response to societal issues. The Program Ministries Team in the National Office is in charge of development, implementation, and integration of established programs based on priorities set by the General Assembly.”⁵

⁴ “About Us – UCCP Web,” accessed October 12, 2016, <http://isitdoneyet.uccpchurch.com/about-us/>.

⁵ “Program Ministries – UCCP Web,” accessed October 12, 2016, <https://uccpchurch.com/services/program-ministries/>.

The General Assembly is the highest policy-making body where it is composed of delegates from conferences, made up of local churches in a particular region. Aside from local churches, the UCCP also have hospitals and academic institutions and offer services in line with the programs laid out by the National Office. There is a current move to have a one management system as some of these institutions have their own Board of Trustees although its members are mostly belonging to the church. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines is indeed providing service to the society it is located in. Its history is very much affected by the reality of the country and it is only when the different Protestant denominations saw the need for a cooperative effort in doing mission work. Engaging with government policies and institution as a whole, despite its small population had contributed much to the national discourse because of their prophetic understanding.

It has been known to issue statements with regards to human rights and Philippine development and perceived to be not doing enough in proclamation of the Gospel. During Martial Law in 1972 under President Ferdinand Marcos, the UCCP has been one of the churches in the country critical to the dictatorship. Many of its leaders were subject to persecution by the government during that time accusing them of being subversives and communists. After the toppling of the Marcos dictatorship, the UCCP became bolder in criticizing the government and in time was perceived to be infiltrated by leftist ideology by its own members. In fact, there was a consultation at Cagayan de Oro in 2003 as members demanded a dialogue to the bishops of who is controlling the UCCP. The leadership was accused of being leftists, having no evangelism program, focusing on worldly matters instead of the spiritual. This perception has been around until to this study and for the

UCCP to be united in doing mission it has to deal with it head on. Because of this, the study was undertaken to determine the mission understanding of the UCCP.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to know the mission understanding of the UCCP. This paper will be guided by the following questions:

- 1) What is the biblical and theological understanding of mission?
- 2) How are the missiological themes of proclamation, development and human rights reflected in the General Assembly Statements?
- 3) What are the missiological implications of these documents to the life and mission of the UCCP?

Significance of the Study

The following will benefit from the study:

Divinity School, mission center and other UCCP theological seminaries. Hopefully seminaries of the UCCP especially the Divinity School will be able to build on this study to pursue further studies in exploring the missiological character of the church. It will help the seminarians and soon-to-be pastors to be equipped on the different statements General Assembly of the UCCP which will be helpful in the education and nurture of the members and even enhance and improve their witness to the community. With this knowledge, the formation centers of the UCCP will be able to train pastors who have a good grasp of mission of the UCCP.

Office of the General Secretary. The office benefits as the study provides valuable insights on the state of the archives and documents in the National Office and the importance of disseminating the statements of the church through its history. With its findings the office can take action in ensuring cohesive the implementation of programs based from the missiological character of the UCCP.

UCCP Office of the Clergy. This office which is responsible for the ministers of the church. This study could help inform the missiological character of the UCCP and guide pastors on how to participate in God's mission through the local church they are assigned to.

UCCP conferences. Divisions have not only happened in the local churches but even in the conference level. With this study it will enable the conferences especially the conference ministers to see the missiological character of the UCCP based from the official documents of the General Assembly. This will help settle conflicts and avoid splits even in the conference level as the this understanding can help enlighten what is the mission of the UCCP.

UCCP local churches. The study would surely be significant to allow the whole UCCP how effective they are in mission especially in the local church level which is the locus of mission. Differences in missiological understanding would open the possibility of the church to focus on conflicts and quarrels, affecting its witness and lack of cohesion and effectivity of their programs and activities. Hence, it is of great importance to have this study for the United Church of Christ in the Philippines as it continues to mature in its faith and witness and to be more organized and comprehensive in its understanding of mission. It could also show how better to address the various splits especially in the local

churches. By reviewing its missiological statements of the General Assembly, we can find ways where we can create solutions that contribute to the resolution of conflicts because the missiological understanding of the UCCP is an integral part of its identity. Continuing to ignore this issue will lead to further divisions hampering the mission thrusts of the UCCP.

Silliman University Graduate School and other graduate schools. The findings of the study are helpful to the graduate students who are interested to study the UCCP. The study can be a resource for their thesis and dissertation.

Church partners of the UCCP. The church partners of the UCCP will be able to understand better their partnership with the UCCP if they know her missiological character. For example, the United Evangelical Mission. As one of the members of UEM in Asia, the UCCP is in a unique position to be instrumental in the study of mission especially in Asia, a region where Christianity is a minority. Located in an English based educational system which would open to various academic studies on the field to Asian Christians, understanding the missiological character of the UCCP provided by this study hopefully will become a blueprint for further studies in their own countries. Enabling the UEM to have a rich fertile ground for mission studies in Asia whose context is constantly diverse culturally and spiritually.

Scope and Limitation

This research is theological. The nature of my research is limited to the analysis of the UCCP General Assembly statements. Only official documents from the General Assembly will be evaluated for this study. Although there are numerous statements coming

from the Council of Bishops, local church, conferences and even the National Office; unless they are adopted and affirmed by the General Assembly in session, these documents cannot be considered. Only when they are affirmed in the General Assembly in session can they be included.

However, there are some assemblies that the researcher was not able to locate the documents. The researcher was not able to find the minutes of the Biennial General Assembly on 1950 and the documents from the assemblies that happened between 1978 until 1986. Perhaps it is because it was during the Martial Law era and documents during this period is hard pressed to be located since UCCP was one of the churches who stood against the dictatorship.

Also there is a confusion because of the terms Biennial and Quadrennial. Like for example in the 9th Biennial General Assembly on 1964. The next document gathered was the General Assembly on 1970 and there is no designation whether it was a Quadrennial or Biennial General Assembly. If it was a biennial assembly, then that makes the 1970 gathering the 11th Biennial and the question must be asked: Was there a 10th Biennial General Assembly that happened in 1968? If it was a Quadrennial Assembly, then why in the next Assembly in Cebu on 1974 it was designated as the 1st Quadrennial Assembly? To avoid confusion, designations such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc. Biennial and Quadrennial will be dropped and just be identified as General Assembly and the year.

Although there are many missiological themes, this study focuses only three, mission as proclamation, mission as development, mission and human rights as these three themes are foremost to the missiological identity of the UCCP.

Definition of Terms

Missio Dei / Mission literally translated “mission of God”. According to noted missiologist David Bosch he defined mission this way. “The term ‘mission’ presupposes a sender, a person or persons sent by the sender, those to whom one is sent, and as an assignment. The entire terminology thus presumes that the one who sends has an authority to do so. Often it was argued that the real sender was God who had the indisputable authority to decree that people be sent to execute His will. In practice, however, the authority was understood to be vested in the church or in a mission society, or even in a Christian potentate.”⁶ By this definition we can see that mission depends on the authority which is perceived to be God but also the understanding of who God is according to the church.

It is not debatable that the church derives its authority from no less than the head of the church, Jesus Christ. Yet the changing Christology of the church through time has undergone dynamic shifts which can be related to its change of its understanding in mission. Not only it is confined to its Christology, but theologically, since the concept of “*Missio Dei*” is primarily God’s mission and not the church.

Missiology / Missiological is the study of how churches do and participate in mission. “Within ecumenical circles and in the life of particular churches, missiology not only affects the way mission is understood and practiced but conversely also receives from

⁶ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 1–2.

within the *oikoumene* stimuli for the deepening and modification of theological models and for the development of practical mission orientations.”⁷

General Assembly refers to the highest policy-making body of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. It is composed of delegates from the conferences around the country. Each conference is the representation of local churches in a particular region. Through representation, the General Assembly meets every four years to set the direction and program thrusts of the UCCP. It tackles issues that concerns the church and Philippine society crafts policies and delivers statements for the church.

Official Documents are understood as statements made by the General Assembly in session. For this study only statements that concerns the mission of the church is considered for documentary analysis as there are several official statements made by the General Assembly in the entire existence of the UCCP. Statements with regards how the church will act in view of the various issues outside of ecclesiastical boundaries to guide the members’ faith and witness in Philippine society. This differs from the statements issued by bishops, individuals, congregations and even the National Office as they do not have the distinction of being the highest policy making body in the UCCP.

⁷ Karl Müller, *Dictionary of Mission: Theology, History, Perspectives* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 301.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

“Whenever the Christian Gospel truly encounters a culture, it disturbs the status quo, altering the normal state of things that gives human beings identity. It exposes the fact that no culture is wholly submitted to the kingdom and rule of God.”⁸ This quote was made by a Mennonite missiologist, Wilbert R. Shenk and is applicable to the context and ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

Situated in a country where it is dominated by Roman Catholic Christianity, the traditionally Protestant UCCP has been vocal in the life of the Filipinos despite being 500,000 strong in a population of 100 million. The UCCP is known for its commitment to the Filipino people. What then is the mission understanding of the UCCP? This is the question the researcher is attempting to answer and aims to find theological themes to determine what kind of missionary work the UCCP is known for to the Filipino people.

Related Literature

Mission. Despite the common use of the word mission especially in a church setting, the word has only been recently popular in the 1950’s. This is remarkable since the church has been around for 2,000 years. What is mission? According to David Bosch

⁸ Wilbert R. Shenk, “Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World,” in *Landmark Essays in Mission & World Christianity*, ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 119.

mission is understood in several different ways. “It referred to (a) the sending of missionaries to a designated territory, (b) the activities undertaken by missionaries, (c) the geographical area where the missionaries were active, (d) the agency which dispatched the missionaries, (e) the non-Christian world or ‘mission field’, (f) the center from which the missionaries operated on the ‘mission field’. In a slightly different context it could also refer to (g) local congregation without a resident minister and still dependent on the support of an older, established church, or (h) a series of special services intended to deepen or spread the Christian faith, usually in a nominally Christian environment.”⁹

Johannes Aagard, a missiologist from Denmark, define it this way. “Missions in history reveal who God himself is: that he in being God is a fountain of sending love. Further back is it not possible to go. If the mission of the Church is based on God’s own form of existence it is thereby stated that mission is the necessary form of existence of the Church.”¹⁰

This is clearly seen in the Bible as God is sending people to speak and talk in His behalf. For Professor Richard Bauckham there is a clear movement where God as the center reaching out to humanity by the act of sending. “The dominant centrifugal image in the Bible is that of the sending of an individual. This image is frequently used of God’s sending a prophet to God’s own people (Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jesus himself), and in such cases there is little, if any, sense of geographical movement entailed. The image is rather of authorization to speak and to act in God’s name, and this meaning is

⁹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 1.

¹⁰ Johannes Aagaard, “Trends in Missiological Thinking during the Sixties,” *International Review of Mission* 62, no. 245 (1973): 16.

retained in the sending of disciples by God or Jesus (e.g. John 20:21; Romans 10:15; 1 Corinthians 1:17; cf. Matthew 28:18-20).”¹¹

In his study of the Pentecost event in the book of Acts, Dr. Noriel Capulong said that the gift of the Spirit was given to reach out and empower people. “In this story, *we begin to understand the spirit as the gift of power and empowerment*. It is in effect, an experience of sharing and participating in the power of God. It is being empowered, as an individual and as a collective body of the church, to move on faithfully and obediently living and speaking as powerful reminders of the presence of God in this world.”¹²

As empowered by God’s Spirit, Christians are witnesses of the divine to the world. “The biblical motif of witness, drawn like so much of the New Testament’s missionary conceptuality and vocabulary from the later chapters of Isaiah and developed especially in the Gospel of John and the book of Revelation, imagines history as a global contest for the truth in which the God of Israel and Jesus will demonstrate his true and sole deity to the nations. God’s people are the witnesses to his truth and his great acts of salvation.”¹³

Dr. Everett Mendoza on his article “Evangelism with Integrity and Coherence” said in the New Testament especially in the epistles (1 Peter 2:9b; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 20:31) that the church has been tasked to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. “Even the so-called Nazareth Manifesto found in Luke 4:18 is a mandate ‘to preach good

¹¹ Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Paternoster Press, 2003), 74.

¹² Noriel C. Capulong, “The Church’s Quest for Renewal and Spiritual Empowerment,” in *Commitment and Struggle: The Life and Ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines*, ed. Leomyr L. de Jesus and Hilario Molijon Gomez (Quezon City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1998), 172.

¹³ Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 100.

news to the poor...to proclaim the release to the captives...to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Further, Paul claimed that Christ send him to preach the Gospel, not even to baptize converts to Christianity (1 Cor. 1:17)”¹⁴

Mission as seen in the Biblical witness especially in the New testament was more on reaching out to people instead of converting them to fold of Christianity. “...the New Testament’s understanding of mission is usually said to be novel, not in its expectation of the conversion of the Gentile nations, but the idea of mission to them, i.e. of going out from the center to the periphery, a centrifugal movement.”¹⁵

However, this Biblical concept of mission was deemphasized especially when Christianity gained political and religious dominance in Western civilization. The Christian religion became a means to legitimize the colonization the non-Christian world. This understanding was dominant especially when the Western missionaries do mission to the continent of Asia. When Roman Catholic powers Spain and Portugal made the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1479, dividing the world in half for conquest and propagation of the Catholic faith, it started the quest of Christianization the pagans. “This alliance between Empire and Church sowed the seeds for the subsequent pervasive association of the European-led Christian mission with the worst of European imperialism and hegemony in the many colonial territories. In addition, this alliance also resulted to the blurring of boundaries between colonial expansionism and Christian missionary expansion, such that

¹⁴ Everett L. Mendoza, “Evangelism with Integrity and Coherence,” in *Commitment and Struggle: The Life and Ministry of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines*, ed. Leomyr L. de de Jesus and Hilario Molijon Gomez (Quezon City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1997), 185.

¹⁵ Bauckham, *Bible and Mission*, 73.

the missionary task became identified with and defined in terms of European imperial aspirations and colonial expansionism.¹⁶

With the merging of the Christian expansion with colonialism, it made a profound negative impact to the colonized people and the missionaries were not even aware of this until recently. “Missions became bearers and advocates of Western imperialism, the ‘hounds of imperialism’, set on or whistled back as it pleased ‘Caesar’. So, even where a mission agency criticized the authorities, it would immediately proceed to re-avow its own and its missionaries’ patriotic loyalty. It is because mission was state-sponsored and missionaries were citizens of their own country. The mission agencies and the missionaries were simply not able to see reality in any other way – not until the friendly ‘protective umbrella’ of colonialism had been abruptly withdrawn from them.”¹⁷ Because they were unable to realize the negative impact of merging with colonialism, the missionaries had a difficult time presenting the real essence of the Gospel to the people particularly in Asia. “Rightly or wrongly, it could not be denied that in the eyes of many Asians, the missionaries and their proclamation of the Christian gospel were tainted by their association and collaboration with the European colonial powers.”¹⁸

Especially when Asian culture is very much different from Western culture. For D. Preman Niles, Western theology is more centered on man instead of creation. “This shift from history to creation was important to argue for theology that focuses on all of life, for

¹⁶ Jonathan Y. Tan, *Christian Mission Among the Peoples of Asia* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 17.

¹⁷ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 312.

¹⁸ Tan, *Christian Mission Among the Peoples of Asia*, 60–61.

a theology of life, rather than a theology of that has humanity as its primary concern, with its noncomitant emphasis on ‘Man’s dominion over nature’. The concern in Asian theological discussions was to see creation as a framework within which God’s dealings with all God’s peoples could be located and understood.”¹⁹

As the Asians countries began gaining their independence after the aftermath of World War II, Christian mission had to undergo a change of outlook or a paradigm shift. Mission is not only to be understood as Western Christianity to the pagans, it has to go back to the source of mission which is God. “We have to distinguish between mission (singular) and missions (plural). The first refers primarily to the *mission Dei* (God’s mission), that is, God’s self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God’s involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei* enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people. Missions (the *missiones ecclesiae*: the missionary ventures of the church, refer to particular forms, related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in the *missio Dei*.”²⁰

The term *missio Dei* was first conceptualized during the World Missionary Conference meeting held in Willingen in July 5-17,1952. Here missiologists and theologians such Walter Freitag, Karl Hartenstein, and Karl Barth came together. “The mission of the Triune God was encapsulated in the byword, *missio Dei* (Latin for defining God’s own mission). The mission of God embodies the work and person of Jesus Christ. He stood for the exclusive claim over salvation against all belief systems of other religions.

¹⁹ D. (Daniel)preman Niles, *From East and West: Rethinking Christian Mission* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004), 138.

²⁰ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 10.

This was paired with the concept of salvation history (Halsgeschichte), which promoted a specific mediation of salvation that is bound to the church's preaching and witnessing activity and that sets itself apart from other providential activities and struggles at overcoming political and social oppressions. Furthermore, they also added an eschatological motif that instilled a strong sense for the 'otherness' of Christ's kingdom in this world and that its completion was still outstanding at a time to come."²¹

Dr. Oscar Suarez in his book "Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics" argues that the church has to challenge any oppressive structures that causes human suffering. "In summary, the life and vocation of the church cannot be conceived apart from the essential calling- to assert both the presence and the voice of sacred reality in all aspects and circumstances of human life. This means the church must define its ministry in a way that champions the drive for human wholeness. It implies a radically a new posture in mission and a new orientation regarding the overriding concerns of the church. Such calling reveals no less than an open invitation to preside over the reunion of those faces of life which have long been partitioned in the past – the personal, the political, the historical, and the sacred. For only in doing so can the church begin the work of healing where wounds and sickness abound, or be God's agency of wholeness where brokenness is most real. Only in this way can the church regain its reason for existence, and above all, the integrity of its calling."²²

This study is blessed as it gained insights from the various thesis made with regards to mission. The studies of Maruhum Simangunsong, Amran Simangunsong, Joko Mahendro

²¹ Klaus Detlev Schulz, "Revisiting the Missio Dei Concept: Commemorating Willingen, July 5-17, 1952," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 66, no. 4 (October 2002): 366.

²² Oscar S. Suarez, *Protestantism and Authoritarian Politics: The Politics of Repression and the Future of Ecumenical Witness in the Philippines* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1999), 169.

and Marudur Siahaanm focus on the churches in Indonesian context and how mission is practiced and envisioned. Maruhum zeroed in creation. “The Article on Environment is an explicit admission by HKBP that God is calling her to discernment and to action as God’s stewards of creation, to look after the goodness of God’s creation. God is calling HKBP and the entire human race, to be responsible or else face consequences of an altered global climate with grave implications to human life and the relationship of God with His people and His creation.”²³

Amran dealt with interreligious dialogue especially since Christianity is a minority in Indonesia. “Christian mission includes evangelism, social witness and interreligious dialogue. Evangelism is a proclamation of Good News about salvation of God through Jesus Christ. It generally refers to preaching, conversion and church planting. Social action is a fruit of proclamation which provides social ministry, especially embracing the poor, the weak, the needy, the marginalized and the oppressed. Interreligious dialogue is a task to encounter other believers with respect. Therefore, the three are part of mission which has distinct aspects and roles.”²⁴

Mahendro discussed how Christian mission can entwine with culture to achieve positive goals. “As expression of mission in particular context, contextual mission takes the realities of the context as one source in articulating a theology of mission. Under the anthropological model by Bevans, contextual mission provides the way of understanding the particular context in positive perspective, especially its culture. It is because of the

²³ Maruhum Simangunsong, “The Environment in the 1996 Confession of Faith of the Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP): Missiological Implication” (Silliman University, 2013), 88.

²⁴ Amran Simangunsong, “Interreligious Dialogue in Indonesian Context: Missiological Challenge to Huria Kristen Indonesia (The Indonesian Christian Church)” (Silliman University, 2013), 100.

awareness that God through God's 'hidden presence' is already at work in every human context."²⁵

Marudur's work tackles the partnership of "old and "new" churches in doing mission. "Partnership in mission' is a key term for churches and mission agencies which seek to share resources between different regions of the world. The term represents a concerted attempt within the missionary movement to break free from the dominance and dependency that marked relationships between 'old' and 'new' churches, as they were once called, in the colonial era of the mid-20th Century. It also marks a move towards mutual and reciprocal sharing between Churches, regardless of historical and economic status, and a shift away from one-directional sending of resources from Churches in Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America."²⁶

The studies coming from the African countries like, Boniface Kombo, Amavie Nana and Elmereck Kigembe provide valuable insights for this study as a fellow Third World country although from a different continent.

Kombo presents the challenge of the Eastern and Coastal Diocese (ECD) of the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Tanzania. "As results of improper understanding, the ECD strategic plan lacks holistic ministry programs. This has resulted in an imbalance in mission work. The effects of this discovery included implemented programs that as mainly

²⁵ Joko Mahendro, "Contextual Mission in Indonesia on the Basis of Pancasila During the Reform Era (Since 1998)" (Silliman University, 2011), 41.

²⁶ Marudur Siahaan, "The HKBP Perception of Its Existing Partnership in Mission with German Churches: A Missiological Evaluation" (Silliman University, 2011), 42.

soul-oriented. The physical and intellectual aspects of holistic ministry are almost totally neglected.”²⁷

Nana speaks on how the church’s mission is to involve in fighting corruption in Cameroon. “In view of all the foregoing, we came to the conclusion that prophetic mission-advocacy is a key approach that should be used by the EEC in the fight against corruption in order to be able to bring about justice and sustainable change in the economic and socio-political atmosphere of the country. In other words, the contribution of this study to new knowledge is that the prophetic mission of the church in relation to the fight against corruption does not only consist in evangelism and social action; it also includes prophetic advocacy.”²⁸

Kigembe studied how the church can do mission in its relation to the Tanzanian government. “The study recommends that in order to improve the Church’s advocacy, the prophetic mission and Church-State relationship should operate in the framework of the Reconstruction paradigm due to its approach in encouraging cooperation, self-criticism and self-evaluation rather than putting blame on others...The Church gets room to join hands with public-spirited people, to be identified with victims of injustice, and to speak for them against grand corruption in the public service.”²⁹

²⁷ Boniface Kombo, “The Church’s Mission in the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania: A Critique and a Proposal” (Silliman University, 2011), 105.

²⁸ Amavie Nana, “Corruption in Cameroon: A Challenge to the Prophetic Mission of the Eglise Evangelique Du Cameroun (Evangelical Church of Cameroon)” (Silliman University, 2015), 120–121.

²⁹ Elmerck Kigembe, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church and Other Organizations’ Perception of Grand Corruption in Tanzania’s Public Service: A Critical Analysis of Prophetic Mission-Advocacy and Its Implication for Church-State Relationship” (Silliman University, 2011), 119.

Finally, the study of Filipino thinker, Dr. Victor Aguilan, on the UCCP and its relations to the state during Martial Law provide valuable background of the mission of the UCCP during this period. “Thus it was inevitable that the relationship between the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and the Marcos government would soon deteriorate. The United Church of Christ in the Philippines was not against the imposition of Martial Law in the early stages of the regime. In fact, the Church had manifested that it would support the New Society. But when the abuses against human rights became evident and intolerable, the Church had to speak out against the root cause of these acts of injustice which was the perpetuation of the one-man rule. And to put an end to this unjust and dehumanizing situation, the Church called for the lifting of Martial Law for the immediate restoration of all the civil and political liberties of the citizens.”³⁰

In their website the World Council of Churches has this understanding mission. “Mission” carries a holistic understanding: the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (kerygma), deed (diakonia), prayer and worship (leiturgia) and the everyday witness of the Christian life (martyria); teaching as building up and strengthening people in their relationship with God and each other; and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into koinonia communion with God, communion with people, and communion with creation as a whole.”³¹

With this understanding it provides a vertical and horizontal expression of doing mission. The vertical is our relationship with God and the horizontal our relationship with

³⁰ Victor R. Aguilan, “A Critical-Historical Analysis of the Church-State Relations under Martial Law from the Perspective of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines” (Silliman University, 2003), 123–124.

³¹ “Preparatory Paper N° 1: Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today — World Council of Churches,” Document, accessed December 3, 2016, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/mission-and-evangelism/preparatory-paper-01-mission-and-evangelism-in-unity-today>.

the rest of creation. Latin American theologian Rene Padilla affirmed this understanding of mission. “In a way, the adjective holistic only intends to correct a one-sided understanding of mission that majors on either the vertical or the horizontal dimension of mission...The affirmation that ‘the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility’ seems to suggest a real integration of the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of mission, which is at the very heart of holistic mission.”³²

New Testament scholar Stephen Ayodeji A. Fagbemi, affirms the Trinitarian framework and Jesus as the model missionary. “Jesus commissions the disciples for ministry saying ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you’ (John 20:21). Now it is difficult to understand this well without first understanding the mission of Christ himself and what the Father had sent him to do. As is widely believed, the ministry of Jesus composed of preaching, teaching and healing. They summarize the entirety of his life and ministry, and one can say it was largely about a call to repentance and proclamation of the kingdom of God (Lk. 4:18–19). This is further clarified in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) when Jesus commissions his disciples to ‘go and make disciples of all nations’, to baptize and teach.”³³

Lesslie Newbigin, the famous missiologist added mission is basically following Christ. “When Jesus sent out his disciples on his mission, he showed his hands and his side. They will share in his mission as they share in his passion, as they follow him in challenging and

³² Rene C. Padilla, “Holistic Mission LOP 33 - Edit.doc - LOP33_IG4.pdf,” accessed December 3, 2016, https://www.lausanne.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/06/LOP33_IG4.pdf.

³³ Stephen Ayodeji A. Fagbemi, “Transformation, Proclamation and Mission in the New Testament: Examining the Case of 1 Peter,” *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 27, no. 3 (2010): 212.

unmasking the powers of evil. At the heart of mission is simply desire to be with him and to give him the service of our lives. At the heart of mission is thanksgiving and praise.”³⁴

He added the figure of Jesus is to be the core of mission. “In the Gospels the new reality is the presence of Jesus himself. He is here. In him the kingdom of God has come near so that it now confronts men and women with its reality and requires them either to be so radically turned around that they recognize the truth and believe, or else to continue on their way facing the wrong direction and pursuing that which is not God’s kingdom.”³⁵

Liberation theologian Orlando Costas stressed why Jesus is so crucial in our understanding of mission. “The true identity of Christ is, rather, defined by the life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ as witnessed to by the New Testament. For the New Testament constitutes the basic source of information about his history. It also underscores its theological relevance for the church’s mission and its historical significance for the confession of faith in his name.”³⁶

This study also includes the perspectives from the evangelical tradition. The book of Christian Smith “Christian America” surveys the attitudes and perspectives of lay members of the evangelical churches in America which surprisingly showed a diversity of theological thinking. Smith presents a wider look at evangelicals who are viewed with deep suspicion and enemies of freedom and liberal democracy by non-evangelicals. “These

³⁴ Lesslie Newbigin, “The Logic of Mission,” in *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations*, ed. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 25.

³⁵ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 133.

³⁶ Orlando Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1982), 15.

widespread concerns and alarms about evangelicals raise big questions: Are American evangelicals ultimately tolerant and freedom loving people who actually can get along with other Americans with whom they disagree? Or are evangelicals finally intolerant absolutists who really seek to impose their morals and values upon those with whom they differ? Are American evangelicals, friends or foes of diversity and pluralism? Just exactly who are these evangelicals, what do they want from America, and how do they hope to get it? These are the questions this book seeks to answer.”³⁷ Christian Smith is Professor of Sociology at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His books include *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (1998) and *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central America Peace Movement* (1996). His book provides insights on how American evangelicals understand their role in society. This perspective is helpful in this study as the Protestant heritage of the UCCP comes mainly from America.

Gregory Beale who is a professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Illinois, said from Genesis to Revelation there has been a movement of God filling in the cosmos. “Consequently, the new creation and new Jerusalem are none other than God’s tabernacle. This ‘tabernacle’ is the true temple of God’s special presence portrayed throughout chapter 21. It was this cultic divine presence that was formerly limited to Israel’s temple and then the Church, which will fill the whole earth and heaven and become co-extensive with it. Then the eschatological goal of the temple of the Garden of Eden dominating the entire creation will be finally fulfilled (so Rev 22:1-3).”³⁸

³⁷ Christian Smith, *Christian America?: What Evangelicals Really Want* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 6.

³⁸ Gregory K. Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation.”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 1 (2005): 25.

Robert Plummer is instructor of New Testament interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky. His study on the Apostle Paul and the church's missionary role in 1 Corinthians provides evangelical thinking. "Motivated by love (13:1-13; 16:14), believers must logically desire and work for the salvation of those who do not share in their blessed estate. Paul's addressees' active concern for the lost must have been so self-evident that the apostle chose to focus on practical advice about how to win the lost, rather than instructing his converts that they should desire to do so."³⁹

Eckhard Schnabel study on Israel, the people of God and nations helps discuss how Israel is understood in the context of mission. "The book of Genesis, which is read by Israel as God's revelation about his creation, shows again and again that God and his purposes are not limited by the boundaries of Israel: God's being and God's purposes are relevant for the entire world and for all human beings. YHWH is the Lord of world history and the Lord of human history. The book of Genesis implies that Israel's relationship to her God must be understood in this general, universal context."⁴⁰ Schnabel is associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois.

Royce Gordon Gruenler study on 1 Timothy 2:8-15 showcased how Paul promoted a missionary lifestyle that produced practical ways of witnessing to society. "My view will be that Paul's foremost concern in the pastorals is founded on (1) the mission work of Christ as the ground, (2) the mission mandate to the Church as the consequence, and (3) a Christian lifestyle that will maximize the mission witness both outside and within the

³⁹ Robert L. Plummer, "Imitation of Paul and the Church's Missionary Role in 1 Corinthians," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44, no. 2 (2001): 234.

⁴⁰ Eckhard J. Schnabel, "Israel, the People of God, and the Nations," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 45, no. 1 (2002): 35.

Church as the believer's responsibility." Hence the directives to men and women in 1 Tim 2:8-15 are addressed to those whose lifestyle is out of order in the hope that they will choose to be faithful in their mission responsibilities as did Eve after the fall when she reunited with her husband and began the faithful bloodline that led to the Messiah and his offspring."⁴¹ Gruenler is a professor of New testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. His insights on the understanding of Paul on witnessing helps this study.

Finally, for the evangelical perspective, Steve Walton's take on the meaning of mission to authorities contributes to this study by his insights of how early Christians dealt with the government. He said, "...testimony to Jesus can involve calling the powers to act justly when they fail to do so, as Paul does with the magistrates in Philippi and with Felix in Caesarea. This is not only because to get them to act justly will (as we might say) open more doors for the gospel, but also (I suggest) because justice itself is part of the gospel the believers proclaim, for it is a key feature of the Christian God's character and a key Christian hope for the world to come; by contrast, injustice, in the sense of distinguishing between citizens and non-citizens, between elite and non-elite, was just the way the world was."⁴² Walton is a professor of New Testament at the London School of Theology.

In the discussion of mission, it seems that most of the biblical foundation is coming from the New Testament. The Old Testament may not be a rich as source as the New Testament. David Bosch presents this dilemma. "...On the issue of mission we run into

⁴¹ Royce Gordon Gruenler, "The Mission-Lifestyle Setting of 1 Tim 2: 8-15," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41, no. 2 (1998): 216.

⁴² Steve Walton, "What Does 'Mission' in Acts Mean in Relation to the 'Powers That Be'?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 55 (2012): 556.

difficulties here, particularly if we adhere to the traditional understanding of mission as the sending of preachers to distant places...There is, in the Old Testament, no indication of the believers of the old covenant being sent by God to cross geographical, religious, and social frontiers to win others to faith in Yahweh.”⁴³ However Bosch added that although the nation of Israel were not compelled to go to other nations to the worship of Yahweh, they also understood that it was Yahweh who would be the primary missionary. “Israel, would, however, not actually go out to the nations. Neither would Israel expressly call the nations to faith in Yahweh. If they do come, it is because God is bringing them in. So, if there is a ‘missionary in the Old Testament, it is God himself who will, as his eschatological deed *par excellence*, bring the nations to Jerusalem to worship him there together with his covenant people.”⁴⁴

Christopher Wright, the director of international ministries for the John Stott ministries and professor of Old Testament in All Nations College in England, considers Genesis 12:1-3 an important text missiologically. “[The text] is pivotal in the book of Genesis: it moves the story forward from the preceding eleven chapters, which record God’s dealings with all nations...into patriarchal narratives that lead to the emergence of Israel as a distinct nation. And it is pivotal in the whole Bible because it does exactly what [Apostle] Paul says – it ‘announces the gospel in advance’. That is, it declares the good news that, in spite of all that we have read in Genesis 1-11, it is God’s ultimate purpose to bless humanity.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 16–17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁵ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 194.

It must be noted the book of Genesis provides the beginning and this includes mission. Abraham's call was the beginning of God's redemptive work after the fall and sin that Babel represented. "Clearly, then, we are meant to see this new initiative as God's response to the world portrayed in the preceding chapters, especially the dual perspective on the world of nations that we found in the table of nations in Genesis 10 and the Babel episode in Genesis 11. The mission of God will be to preserve and maximize the blessing that is inherent in the multiplication and spread of the nations while removing the blight of sin and arrogance represented by Babel. And Abraham will be the trigger for that process, a process that will ultimately include all nations in the scope of its blessing."⁴⁶

Now that the study has a comprehensive understanding of mission the researcher then focus on specific theological themes that characterizes mission. From the ministry of Jesus, we can see aspects of missiological themes as proclamation; mission as development; mission and human rights. Each would be discussed separately of why these three can understood as part of mission.

Mission as Proclamation. The biblical basis of mission as proclamation is taken from Matthew 28: 18-20. "18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (*New Revised Standard Version*) Known more as the Great Commission, here we can clearly see Jesus Christ as the one in authority in tasking

⁴⁶ Ibid., 203.

the disciples to go, make disciples, baptizing them in the Trinitarian formula, teaching them all that Jesus taught.

Another biblical basis is provided by Fagbemi in his exegetical study of Peter 1. “It is significant that throughout 1 Peter, it is only here (2:9) that we have a direct use of proclamation as a task of the people and it is also linked to the translation or transformation of life from darkness to God’s marvelous light. The other inferences relate to the initial preaching of the gospel to them through which they were saved, and the proclamation that Jesus did to the spirits in the grave (1 Pet. 3:19).”⁴⁷ From his study he emphasized the importance of proclamation by the church in doing mission. “First, it is obvious that the church has been given a mission, which consists largely in its ‘be-ing’, its life and activities-being who God intended it to be. By simply living out its calling, the church is engaged in mission, and is employing a variety of ways in fulfilling the mission. Second, the importance of mission consists in its goal – the proclamation of the kerygma – and in its implications for the lives of its beneficiaries. And that would seem to consist in salvation and transformation, the impact of mission on the recipients and the world at large, just as encounters with Jesus transformed the lives and understanding of many people.”⁴⁸

Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and this is what Jesuit missiologist Stephan Bevans emphasized. “What is of ultimate importance is the reign of God, and it is from the church’s commitment to preach, serve and witness to that reign that the church receives and maintains its identity. To preach, serve and witness to the reign of God is to preach,

⁴⁷ Fagbemi, “Transformation, Proclamation and Mission in the New Testament,” 216.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 212–213.

serve and witness to the gospel about and of Jesus, and it is to participate as well in the very life of the triune God.”⁴⁹

This study will heavily rely on the various thinkers on how proclamation is used in doing mission theologically. Dutch missiologist Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk whose article “The Call to Evangelism” is useful for this study as it observes the Reformation emphasis on preaching, which is passed on to Protestants including the UCCP, has stunted the creativity of proclamation as mission. Dutch Reformed lay theologian, linguist and missiologist Hendrick Kraemer whose book “The Communication of the Christian Faith” helps this study on the process needed for the proclamation of the Gospel. Filipino writer and social anthropologist Melba Maggay wrote an article “Evangelism and Social Action” helps this study to understand the two concepts are not supposed to be separated from one another. Finally, Filipino theologian Lourdine Yuzon whose article “Towards a New Understanding of Evangelism” helps this study to connect evangelism to mission as proclamation.

If we are to understand proclamation as an understanding of mission, we cannot do away with the idea of evangelism. It is because evangelism is focused on the spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ. However, our thinkers are united to the idea that evangelism is more than the verbal and oral presentation of the Gospel.

Hoekendijk argues that the Reformers emphasis on the preaching aspect of the spoken Word has narrowed the creativity of doing proclamation and which evangelism has focused upon. As the one body of Christ the church is to be careful in internalizing the message that Jesus proclaimed as an authentic witness to the world. “To regain liberty and flexibility in

⁴⁹ Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 396.

our witness two things must happen: We must in the first place find ourselves fully at home in this strange new world of the Bible, so that we can move familiarly about and concretize and articulate the shalom in a different way in different situations.”⁵⁰ The second is to be aware of the audience that we are proclaiming to as we consider the culture and find ways that makes the Gospel relevant to their own context.

Kraemer emphasized the communication aspect of proclamation which is not limited to the verbalization of the Gospel. Rooted in Christ, who is seen as the restorer of relationships for communication is the reestablishment of the broken relationship between God and humanity. “In Jesus Christ, the decisive and only authentic Word of God comes to [persons]. In him the image of God in which [people] was created becomes gloriously visible. In him all things are reconciled to God, i.e., he overcomes broken relationship, reopening the way of communication. In him it is possible to be one in the full sense of the word, in spite of all differences and divisions which separate [people] and hamper or frustrate their communication. In principle, Jesus Christ is the sole ground on which full and true *communication between* can become effective.”⁵¹

Both Dutch missiologists emphasized that aside from the *kerygma* or message aspect of proclamation of the Good News, the service aspect, *diakonia*, together with *koinonia*, the community, is to go together for the proclamation to be authentic and concrete. Missiologist Michael Amaladoss agrees the proclamation as part of mission. “Mission as proclamation may be considered as a communication of revelation, understood as a creed

⁵⁰ Johannes Christiaan Hoekendijk, “The Call To Evangelism,” *International Review of Mission* 39, no. 154 (April 1950): 173.

⁵¹ Hendrik Kraemer, *The Communication of the Christian Faith* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 21.

or body of truths, to which faith as an assent is demanded. The supposition is that the truth, once known, will lead to appropriate moral behavior. But the focus is communication.”⁵²

Maggay and Yuzon both rooted to the Philippine context, pinpoints the tendency to dichotomize evangelism and social action. Maggay is more comfortable to the idea of witness rather than evangelism because witness translates to not only the verbal aspect of proclamation but the action required that accompanies it. “It seems clear from this that evangelism is more than something we **say**; it is also something we **do**. To speak of Jesus is not only to say things about him. We also need to show what his character and his power must be like.”⁵³

Yuzon merges proclamation of the Gospel by incarnating the proclamation to the context for it to be relevant. “This touches on the issue of communicating the Gospel incarnationally. That is, Good News we proclaim should be no less than an incarnated Gospel. By this is meant that as Christ Himself became a human being, so the Good News must be immersed in concrete realities. The Gospel must interact with life situations. The truth of the Gospel must not only be analyzed and reflected upon, but fulfilled and actualized in concrete human situations. Proclaiming the Good News is not simply a sharing of information, but the communication of the Gospel that bisects and relates dynamically to persons in the totality of the human situation in which he/she is located.”⁵⁴

⁵² Michael Amaladoss, “Mission as Prophecy,” in *New Directions in Mission & Evangelization 2: Theological Foundations*, ed. James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 68–69.

⁵³ Melba P. Maggay, *Transforming Society* (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute for Studies in Asian Church & Culture, 1996), 14.

⁵⁴ Lourdino Yuzon, “Towards a New Understanding of Evangelism,” *The Asia Journal of Theology* 1, no. 1 (April 1987): 120.

Both Filipino thinkers agree that the proclamation requires an individual response to the Gospel and the responsibility required to be prophetic. From these literatures we are aware that even though evangelism is more recognized as emphasizing the preaching of the Good News, it is limited in its definition and cannot be defined as mission. Which is why proclamation being a broader definition that can be considered mission as it highlights the oral presentation of the Gospel and encompass the witnessing aspect as it lives in diakonia and koinonia.

Mission as Development. The biblical basis for development is found in Luke 11:1-2. “1He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’2 He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come.’” (*New Revised Standard Version*). In this prayer Jesus showed how a Christian must pray for the bringing of God’s Kingdom as shown in this text. Since, the kingdom has not been fully realized yet, the kingdom is still under development hence it is part of every Christian and the church to do mission in kingdom building.

Another biblical basis of mission as development is from the Apostle Paul. African missiologist Lamin Sanneh said in the early church the Gospel worked within culture. Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles emphasized his Jewish culture should not be imposed to those Gentiles who receives the Gospel. “Paul’s ambivalent relationship to Judaism cannot be isolated from his leadership in the Gentile mission, and for good reason. As missionaries of the modern era found, encountering evidence of God’s reality outside the familiar terms of one’s culture overthrows reliance on that culture as universal and exclusive. A fresh

criterion of discernment is introduced by which the truth of the gospel is unscrambled from one cultural yoke in order to take firm hold in another culture.”⁵⁵

Thomas Moore of the Summer Institute of Linguistics affirms the need to recognize culture as vehicles of transmitting the Gospel in mission work. “On the other hand, mission by translation comes through the recipient culture. The culture of the message bearer has only a relative-not an absolute-status. According to Sanneh, translation produces cultural revitalization. He outlines three steps: the elevation of the vernacular, the concurrent elevation and questioning of culture, and the emergence of national pride.”⁵⁶

Sanneh credited the biblical figure of Paul enabling the Gospel to enhance and develop one’s culture. “It was Paul’s achievement that which saved the gospel from cultural determinism, he retained the particularity of culture as necessary for launching Christianity.”⁵⁷

The Introductory Paper 2 of Emercito P. Nacpil during in the book “Mission and Development” of the Cardinal Bea Studies book series is relevant to this study. This paper was delivered during a symposium at the Cardinal Bea Institute on February 21, 1970 where twenty-one experts from Roman Catholic Church and various Christian churches discussed the issue of mission and development.

Another source is Dr. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro’s article “Capitalism as Religion: When does the cycle end?” in the book “Religion: Help or Hindrance to Development?”

⁵⁵ Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 29.

⁵⁶ Thomas H. Moore, “Human Rights and Christian Missions in the Emerging Global Culture,” *Missiology: An International Review* 24, no. 2 (1996): 208.

⁵⁷ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 39.

For our two international thinkers, Akinyemi Alawode's article "Mission, Migration and Human Development: A New Approach" is helpful to the understanding of mission as development. It is a contemporary approach of how the development especially on third world countries have affected and influenced churches in doing mission. Finally, we have Scoot Bessenecker's book "Overturning Tables: Freeing Missions from the Christian Industrial Complex." This book shows how mission has been influenced by economic models on development particularly capitalism.

From our sources, mission as development is basically understood as the ushering of God's Reign. Bishop Nacpil stressed that the resurrection event of Jesus Christ is the beginning of the consummation of God's kingdom and we are in the stage of history in going to achieve in that goal. According to him "...mission in the wider sense of mission Dei is the activity of God whereby his reign in Christ may occur and be acknowledged and realized in the world...Mission is therefore the realization and expansion of the divine presence over the earth. It is a mighty movement from the one to the many, from the middle to the end of time, and from the center to the ends of the earth."⁵⁸ With this understanding of mission, the church is urged to join and participate in this development towards the establishment of the Reign of God.

However, missionary efforts by Western Christianity has been disastrous as pointed out by the Philippine experience by Dr. Montenegro. While Nacpil has been seeing development in theological terms, the experience of those countries receiving mission as development has produced a reality of injustices. "In the Philippines, one cannot talk about capitalism without connecting it to the experience of colonization and Christianization.

⁵⁸ Pedro S. de Achutegui, ed., *Mission and Development*, Cardinal Bea Studies (Quezon City, Philippines: JMC Inc., 1970), 109.

Until today, the Philippines continue to bear the heavy burden of neocolonial governance and neoliberal capitalism. Historically, the Philippine experience of capitalism has been closely associated with religion.”⁵⁹ With capitalism becoming a new ideology and even religion, Montenegro argues that the values of the God’s Reign such as truth-telling and justice is to be practiced instead of going after Mammon which capitalism is geared towards to, because of profit.

For the African experience where migration among the people have enabled churches to achieve increasing growth it is because the sense of community and belongingness is embedded in their culture. According to Alawode, the church then has to join God’s mission in bringing development to them not only development as defined in the West but a comprehensive and holistic understanding to bring about social transformation. “One can argue that there has always been a developmental dimension to mission. This is so, amongst others, for three reasons. Firstly, mission aims at ensuring that the human being is fit for every good work (2 Tm 3:16–17) – an aim which is developmental in essence. In the second place, from its earliest beginnings in history mission included healing and educational dimensions, without which no development can take place. And finally, mission harbors an unquenchable eschatological dimension, waiting for and working towards a new heaven and a new earth.”⁶⁰ For Alawode, the Kingdom of God being preached by Jesus points to the historical reality that we are going

⁵⁹ Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, “Capitalism as Religion: When Does the Cycle End?,” in *Religion: Help or Hindrance to Development?*, ed. Kenneth Mtata (Lipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2013), 121.

⁶⁰ Akinyemi O. Alawode, “Mission, Migration and Human Development: A New Approach,” *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 49, no. 1 (March 4, 2015): 2.

towards an advancement of society. Jesus showed to us this goal, and as participants of the divine mission, we are to do our duty towards this end.

Thus Bessenecker acknowledging the influence of capitalism to Protestantism made it possible to have an understanding of mission focused on numbers and profit has produced a reality of development that is fragmented and disjointed. The result is a far cry of the Kingdom of God as initiated by Jesus Christ. “Overturning tables indicates what his kingdom is like, or more to the point, what his kingdom is not like. In Christ’s kingdom the poor are not bilked for the rich to carpet their palaces. It is not a kingdom where eighty-five individuals possess more wealth than three billion people. It is not a kingdom where devotion to God is leveraged for ruling-class profit or where commercial enterprise gets in the way of those seeking to draw near to God. And it is not a kingdom where the world of profit making overrules the world of prophet making.”⁶¹

The need to overturn the tables of the moneychangers which is the Christian Industrial Complex has to be done and it makes the missionary endeavor more interdependent. When working with the development of those in the margins, it is important to be involved in the process and allowing a real interaction between the First World and the Third World where one affects the other. Allowing for real mission as development to happen.

While mission as development needs to overcome the trappings of colonization, it still has to be pursued by the church. The World Bank in 1990 tried to infuse faith with development and find ways where these two would complement instead of contradict each

⁶¹ Scott A. Bessenecker, *Overturning Tables: Freeing Missions from the Christian-Industrial Complex* (USA: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 19.

other. “Faith groups across the world have long engaged in what we would today term development, working at all levels ranging from families, neighborhoods, and communities through global movements. These faith institutions have been deeply involved in humanitarian assistance and social services, especially in the arenas of education and health, with their engagement reflecting both ancient religious teachings and contemporary lived religion and practice.”⁶²

Recognizing the importance of faith groups in achieving development, they saw the need to involve the input of these faith groups for development to take place. “The hypothesis, grown to a contention, is that by understanding and engaging with faith institutions in the fight against poverty and for social justice, secular development professionals and ordinary citizens can improve and expand the overall effort. This is a simplifying statement, but it reflects admiration for extraordinary work, appropriate cautions about enduring tensions, and concern that the challenges at stake deserve more serious attention than they have commonly received.”⁶³

Mission and Human Rights. The biblical basis for mission and human rights is found in Matthew 25: 40 “And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” (*New Revised Standard Version*). In this text Jesus was referred to as the Son of Man and the King who comes back to judge the world. Here it depicts how Jesus considers the least of His family as part of himself consistent with biblical imagery of humanity as created in the image of God as shown in Genesis 1:27.

⁶² Katherine Marshall and Marisa Bronwyn Van Saanen, *Development and Faith: Where Mind, Heart, and Soul Work Together* (Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2007), 2.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 306.

For female theologian Frances Adeney, she argues that the concept of human rights came from this idea of created in God's image. "A belief in the dignity and worth of persons as a source for the idea of human rights springs from a Judeo-Christian understanding that persons are created in God's image. The creation narratives in the Bible tell of an all-powerful yet good God who creates humans in God's own image (Genesis 1 and 2). Consequently, God's image defines humanity."⁶⁴

She further explains this image of God is better than the humanistic concept of humans having great worth. "The sacredness of persons also finds a stronger base in the Judeo-Christian notion of humans created in the image of God than in a humanitarian intuition that persons are inestimable worth. The Christian idea that God redeems the world through Christ further strengthens the value of persons in the Christian view. The common experience of shared values of reciprocity and human equality as sources for human rights need not remain theoretical. Those experiences, documented in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, can be interpreted as precursors to the rise of human rights."⁶⁵

For the promotion of human rights, we will look at how the church has incorporated this idea in doing mission. As our related literature on the topic we will look at George Newlands' book "Christ and Human Rights: The Transformative Engagement" on how Christology can contribute to the understanding of human rights. Another source is Charles Taber's article entitled "In the Image of God: Gospel and Human Rights". From the theological discussion, we will zero in to how human rights and mission praxis is done in

⁶⁴ Frances S. Adeney, "Human Rights and Responsibilities: Christian Perspectives," in *Christianity and Human Rights: Influences & Issues*, ed. Arvind Sharma (Unites States of America: State University of New York Press, 2007), 19–20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

the Philippines. Kathy Nadeau's study on "Christians against Globalization in the Philippines" focused on the Basic Christianity Movement is enlightening. Another study is by Anne Harris which dwells on the experience of church people's involvement in the national liberation movement.

The church does have a difficulty of reconciling its theology with the contemporary issue of human rights. Not only it is because it was a secular idea but they too are subject to the judgement as Christianity has been guilty of many human rights violations in history. The belief of human rights which is inherent and inalienable in every human being, cannot do away with such thought as it resembles closely to the vision of Jesus as everyone being equal in the eyes of God. Hence Newlands, propose that Christianity is to contribute to the ongoing discussion of human rights by emphasizing Jesus's revelation of God's love. "A Christology of human rights can be articulated in a number of ways. If it is to enrich our understanding of the goals of human rights, then it should encapsulate the nature of the Christian understanding of the love of God...It should illuminate the self-giving, self-dispossessing nature of divine reality as a pattern for human relationships."⁶⁶

For Taber, he stressed that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the seeds of the human rights movement which was eventually distorted by taking away the transcendence of God. This took away the universality of human rights as it was only in the Gospel that the concept of human rights was able to express the human dignity of every person as created in the image of God and Jesus' emphasis of loving your neighbor as yourself. "It is my primary thesis that the currently promoted concept of human rights is (1) a modern Western

⁶⁶ George Newlands, *Christ and Human Rights: The Transformative Engagement* (USA: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013), 146.

development (2) derived from a narrowing and distortion of (3) a more fundamental concept of human dignity that is in turn (4) a unique contribution of Jesus of Nazareth to the human scene. The specifically unique contribution of Jesus was his categorical rejection of any and all of the limits human societies have placed on the dignity of the person, and of any and all bases for discrimination between human beings in dignity and therefore in rights.”⁶⁷ Both Newlands and Taber came into the conclusion that for mission and human rights to be realized one has to go out of the confines of the church structure and work within the community. It is because human rights cannot be owned by Christians itself as it is a secular movement although closely aligned with the theological understanding of humanity.

As mission and human rights have to work hand in hand, the experience of the Philippines missionary endeavor with human rights allowed them to cooperate with the communists despite its contradicting philosophical outlook. Working in Basic Christian Communities, church people engaged with other groups which aimed for alternatives methods of liberation especially for the poor and the oppressed. Accused of being front of communists, the BCC’s were harassed by the authorities. “Physically destructive forms of development aggression can be characterized as a political process wherein police and military forces work in cooperation with local governments to dislodge poor farmers from their land, while depriving the urban poor of homes and jobs, all in the name of development.”⁶⁸ This was undoubtedly a violation of the rights of the individuals involved

⁶⁷ Charles R. Taber, “In the Image of God: The Gospel and Human Rights,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 26, no. 3 (July 2002): 98.

⁶⁸ Kathy Nadeau, “Christians Against Globalization In The Philippines,” *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development* 34, no. 4 (2005): 335.

in BCC. "...[A]ggressive development is in violation of international human rights conventions such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, which states that 'all peoples have a right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development'." ⁶⁹ Because of this, the BCC also has to be aware and vigilant of their human rights and is more than ready to report violations.

Criticized and harassed not only by the state but even in ecclesiastical authorities, they came up with the theology of struggle, which attempted to articulate doing mission by upholding human rights. Eventually what moved these people was out of sense of mission in response to the struggle of the times. "For progressive Christians, two institutional gatherings, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the World Council of Churches (1966), were significant. Priests and members of the religious orders, whose identity until that point had been shaped largely by their institutions, welcomed options not previously offered. Their encounters led them to innovative directions." ⁷⁰

In addition, there is a need for the push of human rights especially in Asian countries who are susceptible to authoritarian states. Malaysian Kam Weng Ng explains, "In particular, Asian Christians are keenly aware that religion in general and Christianity in particular provides moral resources for social critique. The challenge is for Christians to develop social institutions in civil society that will promote a culture of human rights

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Anne Harris, "The Theology of Struggle: Recognizing Its Place in Recent Philippine History," *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies* 21, no. 2 (November 14, 2007): 85.

that is resilient and resistant to encroachment by authoritarian governments seeking to restrict human rights.”⁷¹

Moore of SIL also added that indigenous cultures need to be respected and human rights to be recognized. “Cultures are constantly re-creating themselves through language, and ethno-rhetoric is a significant contributor to the emerging global culture. Contributions to human rights must be evaluated in the postmodern context, where I have attempted to show the changing role of both anthropology and Christian mission. With its efforts in mother-tongue literacy, bilingual education, and Scripture translation, SIL has been contributing to indigenous peoples' right to ethnic sovereignty for 50 years.”⁷²

Biblico-Theological Framework

To synthesize our discussion found in our related literature, the following is the outline which provides the Biblical and Theological framework of this study: The historical development of *Missio Dei*; Biblical Foundations of Mission; Theological Themes: Mission as Proclamation, Mission as Development, Mission and Human Rights.

The concept of *Missio Dei* is fairly a modern phenomenon as problems and challenges of the modern missionary movement arose with the advent of the two World Wars which subdued the triumphalist attitude of converting the whole world to Christianity. The church then took to deep reflection on what is the mission of the church and upon reflection discovered that it was God's mission and not of the church. As the

⁷¹ Kam Weng Ng, “Human Rights and Asian Values,” in *Christinaity and Human Rights: Influences & Issues*, ed. Arvind Sharma (Unites States of America: State University of New York Press, 2007), 161.

⁷² Moore, “Human Rights and Christian Missions in the Emerging Global Culture,” 209.

church is called to participate in mission centering on the ministry of Jesus Christ who proclaimed and ushered in the kingdom / reign of God.

From the biblical witness, it is God reaching out to humanity and the church is called to participate in mission. Taking its cue from Jesus Christ, the New Testament witness saw how God through Christ preached the kingdom / reign of God and went about healing the sick and liberating people from the bondage of sin and oppression as visible signs of the incoming kingdom / reign of God. The ministry of Jesus showcasing the vertical dimension (how we can relate with God), and the horizontal dimension, (how we can relate with the rest of God's creation) provides us the blueprint of doing holistic mission. Jesus as revealed in the New Testament witness, is the paradigm of how the church do mission that includes both the vertical and horizontal dimensions.

The Old Testament although provides the basic mission of God as seen in the book of Genesis. After the fall of humanity, God's redemptive work began anew in Genesis 12:1-3 where Abraham was called to become a blessing to nations. The eschatological hope of making all things new began in that call. Also the Garden of Eden is seen as the original concept of the eschatological vision of the Kingdom of God as revealed in Revelation.

As the church embarks in doing mission, there are theological themes that characterize how the church participates in *Missio Dei*. These theological themes can be expressed in three ways: mission as proclamation, mission as development, mission and human rights. As God is a missionary God these three themes describe how the church participates in God's mission in our contemporary times.

Mission as proclamation generally takes its cue from the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 although the exegetical study of 1 Peter highlights how proclamation is done both by word (preaching) and deed (witness). The communication of the Gospel is emphasized here and it reflects how Jesus communicated the love of God that impacts the community throughout the years which brought about the church and continues to follow the footsteps of the Risen Lord.

Mission as development is derived from the Lord's Prayer as taught by Jesus to his disciples where it prays for the coming of God's kingdom / reign. Adding to this prayer is the biblical witness of the Apostle Paul where he emphasized the Gospel over any culture including its own. Culture can be used as a means to communicate the Gospel where development of that culture progress to the kingdom / reign of God that Jesus preached. The resurrection of Jesus started the development of society towards the kingdom / reign of God. Churches then participates in the development of society because of its belief that the process will ultimately end up with the kingdom / reign of God.

Mission and human rights can be biblically based on Matthew 25:40 where every person especially the least is a reflection of the divine. Human rights although a secular and modern concept can be included in the mission because of the Judeo-Christian tradition of person created in the image of God. And because God is doing its mission even outside of the church, human rights in uplifting the dignity and life of people regardless of race, status and gender, is an opportunity for the church to be relevant in its faith and witness. Although much needs to be done especially in Asian countries where authoritarian governments are many and how the church can campaign for human rights in mission work.

With this biblical and theological framework, we now have a guide on how we can proceed in answering the questions found in this study. As shown in the diagram, the biblical and theological understanding of holistic mission is profoundly discussed as a starting point for this study. After establishing the biblical and theological understanding of mission, we proceed to the specific theological themes of holistic mission which are mission as proclamation, mission as development, mission and human rights. With these theological themes we are then to look at the UCCP General Assembly Statements which deals with mission and interpret them based from these themes. Finally, after interpretation we can glean out what is the UCCP understanding of mission based from these documents.

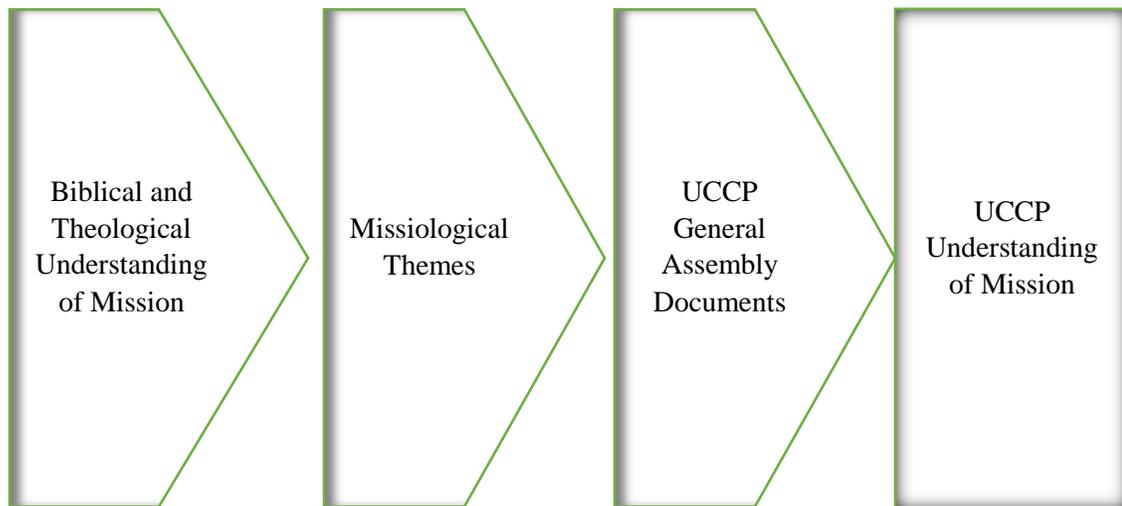


Figure 1. Research flow of the Study

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is a qualitative research and sets to bring out the missiological character of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines through the review of the missiological statements of the General Assembly from its formation until the present situation. Therefore, general methodology is qualitative. Document analysis is used particularly the missiological statements of the General Assembly from 1948 until today. “Documents such as charts, journals, correspondence and other material artifacts can provide qualitative data. These are especially useful in policy, historical or organizational studies. There are different approaches to the analysis of documents. One involves counting specific content elements (e.g., frequencies of particular words) while the other involves interpreting text as one would interpret any other form of communication (e.g., seeking nuances of meaning and considering context). The former approach, especially if used alone, rarely provides adequate information for a qualitative, interpretive analysis.”⁷³ This study used interpreting the text rather than the frequency of particular words being used. A historical approach was used to serve as a procedure in the interpretation and analysis of the text with the objective of contextualizing the extracted themes or essential ideas.

It must be taken into account that the statements had to be considered a missiological statement before they are considered for documental analysis. These statements that are considered missiological are determined if they fall under mission as

⁷³ Ian Hodder, “The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 1994, 393–402.

proclamation; mission as development and mission and human rights. These are the theological themes used for the study in categorizing the mission of the church. From these we can now define the missiological character of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines based from these statements from the General Assembly.

Data Gathering and Analysis

The study used primarily the official statements and documents of the UCCP General Assembly from the beginning up to the present. The researcher had access to these statements from the UCCP National Office. These statements were gathered and those that deal with the field of mission are picked for analysis. A hermeneutical approach was used for a better understanding of why the statement was made in that period. Here are the years of the General Assemblies of the UCCP used in the study: 1948, 1952, 1954, 1960, 1962, 1964, 1970, 1974, 1978, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014.

After analyzing the statements that falls under the field of mission, each were categorized to a particular missiological theme. After bringing all these together then the study established the missiological character based from the statements of the UCCP General Assembly documents.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher wrote to the Office of the UCCP General Secretary for access and revisit the documents. The letter explained the purpose of the study, strictly observe confidentiality and the study will not cause harm to anyone.

CHAPTER IV
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS
AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Before we get to look at the statements, it must be determined first what is a missiological statement. Mission as defined is the process of being sent to do the task. In *mission Dei* God is the source of mission and the church is being sent to participate in God's mission. "In an attempt to flesh out the *mission Dei* concept, the following could be said: In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God. 'It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfill in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church' (Moltmann 1977:64). Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission...To participate in mission is to participate the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love."⁷⁴ The church is being sent by God to do mission.

With this understanding let us glean out the statements that refers to the inner workings of the churches such as the decision of dividing a conference into two. While this is important to the administrative and logistical sense in the life of the church, it does not fall under the category of a missiological statement. It is when the church makes a statement that interacts with the world and not within the confines of the church, does it qualify as there is a movement from the church to society. This is being consistent of the idea of being sent to do mission.

⁷⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390.

With that we proceed to the missiological statements of the UCCP General Assembly. Since the church's union of five denominational Protestant churches in 1948, there has a total of 18 General Assemblies of the UCCP. Ten of those assemblies were held in a quadrennial manner or after every four years and first happened in 1970. The rest of them were held biennial or ever after two years and happened in the early years of the UCCP.

1948 General Assembly Ellinwood⁷⁵

On May 25-27, 1948 at the Ellinwood Malate Church was place where the UCCP was founded. "In the Philippines, which had only regained its independence in 1946 from the Americans, the year 1948 was marked by a mixture of hope, doubt and uncertainty. The country was plagued by an economy still in shambles, the situation aggravated by selfish opportunism on the part of many, rampant graft and corruption in government, and the ravages of the Communist Hukbalahap insurrection under Luis Taruc."⁷⁶ It is in this spirit of opportunity and rebuilding of society that the UCCP was organized.

Basis of Union. The first statement coming from the UCCP is obviously the document that formed the UCCP in the first place. For brevity we will just focus on the statement that concerns on the subject of mission. In Article III – Historic Faith and Message it states: "We do preserve all of the heritage of faith brought into the Union by

⁷⁵ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)* (Quezon City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1990). This is the source of all statements until 1990

⁷⁶ T. Valentino Jr. Sitoy, *Several Springs, One Stream: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The Formative Decade (1948-1958)*, vol. 2 (Quezon City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1997), 558.

each of the constituent Churches and hereby declare as our common faith and message:

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Lord and Saviour⁷⁷

This indicate that the churches although with different doctrines and traditions, came together to form one church because of the common faith and message in Jesus Christ. This also happened in the post-World War II period as conflicts ran high between two evangelical churches, Evangelical Church of the Philippines (ECP) led by Presiding Bishop Sobrepena, and the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines (UECP) headed by Moderator General Leonardo Dia. For context, the UECP was a union of Protestant churches in the pre-war period while the ECP was formed during the Japanese occupation. UCCP historian Dr. T. Valentino S. Sitoy Jr. observes: “For the uniting churches, the healing power of the postwar divisions and the coming in of such new ecclesiastical groups as the Philippine Methodist Church, the Disciples, and a few IEMELIF and UNIDA congregations seem to be guided by Divine Providence. To delay the union seemed a hindrance to the urging of the Holy Spirit.”⁷⁸ This spirit of unity was affirmed by the “Declaration of Union” statement.

Declaration of Union. In the beginning the document states “WHEREAS, it’s in accord with the ***Divine Will*** that Christians should be united in worship and in every effort to spread the Gospel, WHEREAS, the unity of the Church is founded upon loyalty to Jesus Christ, the Head and Lord of the Church, and on fidelity to the cause of his kingdom.”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 2.

⁷⁸ T. Valentino Jr. Sitoy, *Several Springs, One Stream: The United Church of Christ in the Philippines. Heritage and Origins (1898-1948)*, vol. 1 (Quezon City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1992), 497.

⁷⁹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 10.

From this statement it is obvious that unity was the effort of God and its purpose was to proclaim the Gospel. Unity is not even the end goal but doing mission. Sitoy in his epilogue reflected: “Yet, in a deeper sense, church union, though potent and imperative witness to the oneness of Christ’s Church, cannot be the ultimate goal in itself, and this many leaders and members of the new united Church realized. What was more important, for which the uniting of the constituent Churches was a necessary step, was the Church’s mission and witness in the Philippines. How the United Church of Christ in the Philippines sought to be faithful to this task would be seen only in the years ahead.”⁸⁰

From the missiological statements in the first General Assembly of the UCCP, the missiological theme that characterizes both is mission as proclamation. Although the union enabled the increase of membership it is not the primary purpose. “The reason for this is that the church is not the end, but the means of the Kingdom of God. To be sure, the church is a sign of the Kingdom, but of itself, the church is not the Kingdom of God in its fullness.”⁸¹

The union of churches and the formation of the UCCP was a witness to God’s initiative for mission. “First, it shows that while proclamation may be the goal of mission, mission is broader than evangelism. Mission is the essence of being. Second, being just who God wants the church or his people to be – living out their calling – has a conscious dimension, namely the conscious imperative for holy living that manifests noticeable

⁸⁰ Sitoy, *Several Springs, One Stream*, 1992, 1:501–502.

⁸¹ Yuzon, “Towards a New Understanding of Evangelism,” 121.

contrast between the past and the present.”⁸² By sacrificing their old identities as individual churches, they decided to form one organic church as a proclamation of God’s mission.

The next two assemblies were done in the 1950’s. The context was still the rehabilitation of society after World War II and the communist threat began flexing its muscle during this period. According to a propaganda leaflet, the communists were inciting the people to rebellion with the following issues: “...high cost of living, high taxes, refusal by America to include in the Japanese peace treaty reparations to the Philippines for war damage, instances of graft and corruption in the Quirino regime, return of ‘Mickey Mouse money’ in the form of paper ‘coins,’ the useless death of Filipino boys in Korea.”⁸³

1952 General Assembly

Taking place at Silliman University Church, the 1952 General Assembly happened on May 12-17. In this gathering, three statements can be considered missiological: Resolution Expressing Belief in and Adherence to an Ecumenical Church; Resolution Condemning Gambling and Liquor; Resolution in the Formation of the National Federation of Credit Unions. Before dealing them one by one let us look at the context of this assembly. After the birth pains of the union and with obvious adjustments of the churches involved, the UCCP maintained its union. “Perhaps the most exhilarating and comforting development in this regard by 1952 was the fact that the union was holding, and contrary

⁸² Fagbemi, “Transformation, Proclamation and Mission in the New Testament,” 218.

⁸³ Jose M. Crisol, “Communist Propaganda in the Philippines (1950-1953),” *Philippine Studies* 1, no. 3 (1953): 211–212.

to the cynical doubts and fears of skeptical spirits, the new united Church remained vital, vigorous, and determined to keep the union.”⁸⁴

The union also opened horizon for the UCCP to seek ecumenical relations with other churches even outside of the country. “The UCCP’s understanding, which is shared also by other kindred Churches, is that real Christian unity is unity only in Christ, and that divisions in the Christian world can be healed, only as all Churches, each one looking at its own faith and practices, seek to follow more and more closely the teachings of Jesus Christ, and in thus coming closer to Christ, also come closer to one another.”⁸⁵ Hence it is this understanding that gives context to missiological statement below.

Resolution Expressing Belief in and Adherence to an Ecumenical Church. This resolution states: “WHEREAS, We accept the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men; WHEREAS, Denominational distinctions are harmful to the progress and cause of the Church; WHEREAS, The idea of one world can be strengthened by the unity of the Churches; WHEREAS, The United Church of Christ in the Philippines, while it is a united church, is also a uniting Church; and WHEREAS, It was Christ’s prayer that we all may be one;”⁸⁶ Then the rest of the statement showed action in seeking efforts to unite Christian churches particularly in Southeast Asia, presenting this document to churches in support of ecumenism. What is then the missiological theme of this particular statement? Ecumenical efforts and cooperation with other churches is done because of the task of evangelism which falls under mission as proclamation. This is a characteristic of Protestant

⁸⁴ Sitoy, *Several Springs, One Stream*, 1997, 2:605.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:585.

⁸⁶ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 23.

churches according to missiologists Bevans and Schroeder. “Due to its recognition of the need and potential for denominational cooperation and interdenominational efforts, mission became the primary motivation for ecumenical openness within Protestantism in the 19th century. ‘It was not cooperation for the sake of unity, but unity in order to better pursue the task of evangelism.’”⁸⁷

Resolution Condemning Gambling and Liquor. This statement is the church’s stand on liquor and gambling as morally wrong. This because after the war, the resolution observes the moral degeneration of many of our people. “WHEREAS, it has been demonstrated through the centuries that gambling, drinking have been great factors in breaking up homes which have been seat of happiness...BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved, that this Third General Assembly in session assembled, of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, goes on record as being against and condemning gambling and liquor and hereby enjoins its constituents to refrain therefrom;” While this statement is intended for members it should be noted that the church took a moral stand on gambling and liquor. The fact that it encourages the members to refrain from these vices because of lifestyle.

A Christian lifestyle is important in witnessing to others. Professor Gruenler from the evangelical tradition said that a Christian’s lifestyle is very important in doing mission and cited the writings of the Apostle Paul. “My view will be that Paul’s foremost concern in the pastorals is founded on (1) the mission work of Christ as the ground, (2) the mission mandate to the Church as the consequence, and (3) a Christian lifestyle that will maximize

⁸⁷ Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 208.

the mission witness both outside and within the Church as the believer's responsibility."⁸⁸ Because this resolution deals with lifestyle, and lifestyle is important in witnessing, the missiological theme is mission as proclamation.

Resolution in the Formation of the National Federation of Credit Unions. In this resolution it starts and ends with "WHEREAS, In line with the Government movement regarding the upliftment of the living condition of the rural people and in line with the movement started by the American missionary, Rev. Allen R. Huber, especially Credit Unions; ...THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Federation of Credit Unions be formed during this General Assembly and the officers be elected by the Medical and Rural Department so that request be presented to ECA as soon as possible."⁸⁹ The key phrase here is the "upliftment of the living condition of the rural people. Added that this was a program of the government and Rev. Huber has already initiated it in his ministry, the missiological theme of this statement is development.

Religion has always been interested in the development of society as observed by the World Bank. "The increasing interest among faith communities in issues of global poverty can be traced in many ways; but two notable examples are the focus of Catholic social teaching on development, and the ecumenical work by the World Council of Churches in the decades following World War II."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Gruenler, "The Mission-Lifestyle Setting of 1 Tim 2," 216.

⁸⁹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 27.

⁹⁰ Marshall and Saanen, *Development and Faith*, 3.

1954 General Assembly

The next General Assembly took place at Los Baños, Laguna on May 17-23, 1954. These are the following missiological statements issued in the gathering.

Resolution Requesting the Secretary of Education to Ban ROTC and PMT Drills, Teachers' Meetings, and other activities on Sundays. Only one statement can be called missiological from this assembly and from the title itself it is self-explanatory as the UCCP request the Secretary of Education to ban any school activities on Sunday for it is a day of worship. To provide context why there is only one statement that is missiological in nature, the UCCP was more concerned of strengthening its organization and structure. In short church politics was the dominant concern. "Considering the that the Church is composed of human members, whose human-ness is very often clearly manifested, but that the Church, by the grace of God, is happily also enlivened by His presence, it can perhaps be said in assurance that UCCP's successful resolution in the 1950's of many of its internal concerns was possibly only because of the constant leading of the Holy Spirit."⁹¹

This resolution falls under the missiological theme of proclamation as it tells the government specifically the Department of Education to recognize the church's need for worship. Worship is where people has the opportunity to communicate with God. According to missiologist Kramer, "Communication of the message is the crowning category of which all activities of the Church in evangelizing, preaching, teaching, and witnessing to all fields of life are part. It is also a task that must constantly be restarted. There is no part of life, nor of the world, which is ever definitely evangelized. This incessant communication of the Christian message is what we presently call the missionary

⁹¹ Sitoy, *Several Springs, One Stream*, 1997, 2:805.

or apostolic obligation of the Church...The sending of his Church into the world is the continuance and reflection of the worldwide divine urge which became manifest in Jesus Christ even until the death on the cross.”⁹²

1960 General Assembly

On May 19-24, 1960 the UCCP had a General Assembly at Legazpi City. In the 60’s the world was undergoing a drastic change. “As the 1960’s progressed, all Churches everywhere could not escape the pressure to make quick changes of generally 17th century, if not medieval ecclesiastical structures and attitudes, which were increasingly seen to be ineffective in a 20th century world. Alongside these new developments was the growing need to review the historical relationships between what were then called the ‘sending Churches’ in the West and the ‘younger Churches’ of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.”⁹³

Statement of Social Concern. In this document, the UCCP is concerned of the trend of Asian governments to fast track industrialization. “Immediate economic development is today a pressing problem for all Asian countries. To meet the demands of their people for a more abundant life, the governments of Asia have concentrated their energies in discovering and alleviating their nation’s economic poverty.”⁹⁴ The statement listed seven issues that have great concern of the churches: Population Trends, Modern Technology, Need for Agricultural Development, Industrialization and Rapid Social Change, Urbanization, Unemployment, Trade Union Movement and Management Relation. The

⁹² Kraemer, *The Communication of the Christian Faith*, 23.

⁹³ Sitoy, *Several Springs, One Stream*, 1997, 2:1025.

⁹⁴ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 37.

church is concerned that the preoccupation of technology and pursuit of economic development will push the religious spirituality of the people. The document ended emphatically with this statement: “We recognize the importance of the layman’s witness in his work and call upon our people to live out their Christian calling responsibly in the political, social and economic realms of daily life. We declare that the lord of the church is also the lord of the factory, the farm, and the office, and is sovereign wherever men live and work.”⁹⁵

This statement can fall under the missiological theme of mission as development. It warns of the danger of relying too much on humanity’s capacity to bring about development particularly under the system of capitalism. Dr. Muriel Montenegro warned of the dangers of this. “In the Philippines, it used to be said that the dollar sign signifies the cunning snake that climbs up the tree, tempting individuals and nations to take the capitalist bait. The almighty ‘Dollar’ and the powerful Euro have replaced God as the universal power. This makes capitalism a material religion indeed, but not without creeds and doctrines...Capitalism has no conscience and instills the attractive doctrine of consumption, salvation and life abundant with money. It imparts the doctrine of unquenchable desire to acquire and accumulate.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁶ Orevillo-Montenegro, “Capitalism as Religion: When Does the Cycle End?,” 126.

1962 General Assembly

This General Assembly happened in the Visayas where delegates converge in Cebu City on May 21-27, 1962. In this assembly two statements came about. Two were in regards of ecumenical unity and the third one is an appeal to Congress.

On the pronouncement of the World Council of Churches Concerning relationship with other Christian bodies. This resolution deals with how the UCCP deals with other Christian bodies. As different denominations will have their own traditions and practices, it is understood that respect must be given. Although they may be different but because they are serving under one Lord and believes in the one Body of Christ, it is the obligation of the churches to speak the truth in love. This also deals with members transferring to other churches or denominations with the intent of not proselyting members but guiding them to maturity. “That we recognize it as the primary duty of every awakened individual to strive prayerfully for the renewal of that church in which he is a member. That we recognize the right of the mature individual to change his church allegiance if he becomes convinced that such change of allegiance is God’s will for him.”⁹⁷

This statement falls upon mission as proclamation because it deals with being a witness to the world in terms of unity. Missiologist David Bosch explained why unity is important in mission. “Ultimately unity in mission and mission in unity do not merely serve the church but, through the church, stand in service of *humankind* and seek to manifest *the cosmic rule of Christ*. The church is ‘the sign of the coming of mankind’. The 1989 San Antonio Conference of CWME concurs: ‘The church is called again and again to be a prophetic sign and foretaste of the unity and renewal of the human family as envisioned in

⁹⁷ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 48.

God's promised reign'. The reign of God is not only the *church's* final fulfillment but also the *world's* future."⁹⁸

Resolution urging the passage of H.B. 2141 calling for the creation of a Moral Commission. This resolution urges Congress to do something of the immorality that is becoming prevalent in society. "KNOWING that the fight against vice of all forms, more particularly gambling, white slavery, traffic, prostitution, and all other forms of traffic in person is one of the major objectives of civic and religious groups, which the government would want to assist and intensify."⁹⁹

This statement can fall under the missiological theme of mission and human rights. It is because it deals with the problem of the human dignity of persons especially those who are trafficked for sex, money and power. Missionary Charles Taber said that every human as created in the image of God and should never be exploited. "Alternatively, one can make a claim for universal human rights on the transcendent ground that human beings- every human being, all human beings-are created in the image and likeness of God and therefore possess an inalienable and innate dignity that no one can rightly take away on any pretext whatever."¹⁰⁰

1964 General Assembly

On May 31 until June 5, 1964 the United Church of Christ in the Philippines had a General Assembly. Four statements were issued in this gathering.

⁹⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 466-467.

⁹⁹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 52.

¹⁰⁰ Taber, "In the Image of God," 102.

Statement on Christian Unity and Statement on Relations with Roman Catholics.

This was a declaration of unity to other churches especially the Roman Catholic church, the predominant Christian church in the country. “This General Assembly expresses gratitude to God for the growing manifestations of progress in Christian unity; commends the efforts at better understanding already made by our Church; and encourages its members, ministers, institutions and agencies to join with others, including, Roman Catholics, in fuller expressions of that unity which is God’s gift in Jesus Christ to all believers.”¹⁰¹

The missiological statement falls under mission as proclamation as it deals with church unity and a common witness to the world. The improving relationships between Roman Catholics and Protestants was made because of the ecumenical spirit prevalent in Vatican II. Bosch observes, “The impulse to a common witness, it is claimed, does not flow from strategy; rather, ‘awareness of the communion with Christ and with each other generates the dynamism that impels Christians to give a visible witness together’. The renewal of the Holy Spirit spawns in Christians and in their communities ‘centres in Christ and calls forth a new obedience and a new way of life which is itself a witnessing communion’.”¹⁰²

Statement of responsibility concerning economic development. This statement again deals with the economic development that is taking place in the country. “The development of a sound economy is a major concern of the Filipino people. Three-fourths of the people receive less in goods and services than is necessary to live in health and

¹⁰¹ UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990), 53.

¹⁰² Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 463.

decency. The maintenance of a democratic system of government depends on an economy that will provide the needs of the people.”¹⁰³ This statement issued a challenge to the economic development plan of the country. This theme falls under mission as development. Missiologist Michael Amaladoss said that telling society where development is to take place is the mission of the church because of the eschatological goal of the Reign of God. “Mission is call to conversion, a challenge to change, an invitation to realize the Reign of God, an urge to enter into the creative dynamism of God’s action in the world, making all things new. This is the focus of mission I wish to capture by calling it prophecy.”¹⁰⁴

Statement on responsible citizenship. In this statement it was a call for members to participate in the elections and remind them of their calling to be a responsible citizen and serve as a witness for Christ. It encourages the members to participate “For the development of a deep concern for the affairs of government, including the election of responsible and dedicated citizens to public office. Toward this end, it is suggested that a program of non-partisan political education be conducted by the **United Church Men**, the **National Christian Women’s Association**, the **Christian Youth Fellowship** and other groups within the Church.”¹⁰⁵ This attitude of participating in electoral exercise emphasizing in non-partisan politics is reminiscent of the Protestant American evangelical influence of the UCCP. Charles Smith who interviewed lay evangelicals in America has this to say. “The great majority of evangelicals we interviewed think the proper means of

¹⁰³ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 55.

¹⁰⁴ Amaladoss, “Mission as Prophecy,” 68.

¹⁰⁵ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 58.

exerting political influence are voting regularly, electing good people to office, and perhaps tactfully lobbying elected officials. Very few mentioned the need to mobilize a broad-based Christian political movement to challenge secular humanism in the halls of power. In fact, more often than not, these evangelicals expressed a strong distaste for confrontational, disruptive politics.”¹⁰⁶ For this statement, this falls under the missiological theme of mission as proclamation as being a responsible citizen is part of being Christian witness.

Relationship with non-united church groups. In this statement, while the UCCP has welcomed the ecumenical spirit especially to the Roman Catholic Church, it issued a different understanding with regards to non-united church groups. It did this because these churches were proselytizing their members and spreading literature that goes against the faith understanding of the UCCP. “In the light of our ecumenical concern, we as a United Church must not close a continued dialogue between these penetrating groups and us...In our dialogue with them, we must seek earnestly to frame our relationship with them from the perspective of our theological orientation. No superficial ties with them will do”¹⁰⁷ This statement, because it deals with unity and witness, is mission as proclamation.

Differences and conflicts especially for churches who believes in ecumenism will always come, according to David Bosch. “Our differences are genuine and have to be treated as such. Whenever the church takes seriously its mission in respect to various communities which stand in conflict with one another – whether these conflicts are

¹⁰⁶ Smith, *Christian America?*, 108–109.

¹⁰⁷ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 61.

doctrinal, social, or cultural in nature, or due to different life situations and experiences – there is an inner tension which cannot be disregarded.”¹⁰⁸

1970 General Assembly

At Baguio City on May 24-28, 1970 was another General Assembly. To provide context on the situation of the country during this time, let us take a look at an article by Robert Tilman of the journal *Asian Survey*. “The year 1970 in the Philippines was marked by difficulties of both natural and man-made origins. In a single year nature inflicted on the country floods, typhoons, and earthquakes, but man proved to be an able competitor. There were the usual number of political murders; student protests resulted in deaths for the first time; and an unusually bitter series of jeepney, bus, and taxi wage and fare disputes throughout the year. Demonstrations, devaluation, and inflation imposed new burdens on all, but the Philippines survived, and as the long December season approached there was again the characteristic air of festivity and optimism. Yet, 1970 was a sobering year. There were many events to remind Filipinos that the decade of the seventies promises to be more difficult than the decade of the sixties.”¹⁰⁹

With this background this study looks closely at the two statements that happened in this General Assembly.

Statement on Missionary Concern, Law, Order, and National Unity. This document states, “The General Assembly views with deep concern the outbursts of

¹⁰⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 464.

¹⁰⁹ Robert O. Tilman, “The Philippines in 1970: A Difficult Decade Begins,” *Asian Survey* 11, no. 2 (1971): 139.

lawlessness and the rampant disregard of order which disrupt national unity and solidarity. These have become barriers in the united effort of our country and people to pursue the goal of progress and national development.”¹¹⁰ This statement calling for the church’s concern of the disintegration of society and hope for a national unity and identity for progress and national development leans towards the missiological theme of mission as development.

Bishop Nacpil defines development this way. “Development is of course a complex phenomenon. Essentially it is a process of socio-economic change which aims at the fuller realization of freedom for men enabling them to affirm and realize their destiny and to renew society so that community, justice and peace may be achieved in fuller measure.”¹¹¹ As the statement aims for national development and expresses the church’s concern of is hindering the goal of progress and national development, the statement was made urging the government to maintain order.

Statement of Social Concern. This statement was just a reiteration of the Statement of Social Concern made in the Genral Assembly at Legazpi City made in 1960. “Social change, which has always been a part of man’s existence, has accelerated greatly during the past decade. The Philippines, which is feeling the impact of this change, has set herself to the task of modernizing her society. There is a need for the church as we enter the decade of the 70’s to assess the changes taking place in the Philippines and to define goals and to

¹¹⁰ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 82.

¹¹¹ de Achutegui, *Mission and Development*, 107.

provide guidelines for the action of the Church and individual Christians in the process of national development.”¹¹²

Again this statement is categorized as mission as development. This concern of the national development of the country reflects the church’s relationship with society. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin said that the church’s actions to the church depends on its context and the movement of the Spirit. As circumstances change, the church responds to the situation as best as they can base on the gospel. “The ways by which the truth of the gospel comes home to the heart and conscience of this of that person are always mysterious. They cannot be programs and they cannot be calculated. But where a community is living in alert faithfulness, they happen.”¹¹³

1974 General Assembly¹¹⁴

On May 16-20, 1974, Cebu City hosted the General Assembly for the second time. There are a total of five statements coming from this General Assembly. For brevity we will just put the first three statements under the missiological theme of proclamation and the reasons why.

Statement on Ecumenical Relations. “The whole body of Christ, local, national, and universal, is the witness, the mission of God’s loving concern here on earth. To live in division is sin. Where there is no unity, the vision is blurred, and the evangelistic task of liberating men from sin is doomed. In the pursuance of our evangelistic task we affirm

¹¹² *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 84.

¹¹³ Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 137.

¹¹⁴ “Our Story – UCCP Web,” accessed July 24, 2016, <https://uccpchurch.com/our-story/#!> According to the historical sketch this was declared as the 1st Quadrennial Assembly

unity in the midst of diversity. We shall join to witness an ecumenical life together, and local congregation, denomination, religious or non-religious bodies where God is active in love, hope, and faith for the glory of God and salvation of mankind.”¹¹⁵ This statement sees unity among churches crucial in proclaiming the gospel.

African missiologist Sanneh said, “Mission is essentially praxis, and that entails not only upholding the truth but also relationship and communication. Whatever the question about the essence of the message, the specific and the concrete foundations of mission are set in cultural particularity and historical specificity. Christianity is a religion of historical events that are decisive in the meaning people ascribe to them. The process of attaching meaning to events contains the seeds or personal as well as cross-cultural engagement, and it defines the task of mission.”¹¹⁶ Since churches sprout from all over the world, cultural diversity is recognized in order for partnerships happen working towards the same goal of proclaiming the gospel.

Statement of policy on evangelism. “That evangelism is the proclamation by word and by life of the unbounded love of God in Jesus Christ, for the world to the end that Man may be persuaded to accept Christ, our Lord and Saviour and to relate himself to the ‘body of Christ: - the Church and its mission for man and his society of reconciliation and liberation.”¹¹⁷ Dutch Missiologist Hoekendijk said that for evangelism to happen it is not only verbal proclamation that needs to be done but community and service. “The *kerygma* is the proclamation that the shalom has come. Christ is there. We have not to look for

¹¹⁵ UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990), 95–96.

¹¹⁶ Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 33.

¹¹⁷ UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990), 96.

another. We have entered upon the days of total renewal. But, with the *kerygma* alone, in isolation, the evangelist soon becomes a more or less interesting orator. He needs the manifestation of the *koinonia* of which he is a part and he has to justify himself as a witness of the Messiah-Servant in his *diakonia*.¹¹⁸ What the Dutch Missiologist said above is also true on the next statement.

Statement of policy on stewardship. “We believe that God is the Creator and Owner of all things. We believe that God is the ruler and sovereign of all things and rules with justice and love. We serve and worship God with all these things or token of our thanksgiving for the redeeming power of the love of Jesus Christ. So we offer to God in service and our worship, our time, talent and influence.”¹¹⁹ In this statement, the church affirms God’s sovereignty and stewardship is an expression of thanksgiving. It is by living a life of thanksgiving that God is exerting influence to the fallen world.

Professor Beale of Wheaton College in his study of the biblical studies offered an insight, that from Genesis to Revelation, God is continuously trying to exert influence and expansion to the cosmos which is corrupted by sin and death. “Consequently, the new creation and new Jerusalem are none other than God’s tabernacle. This ‘tabernacle’ is the true temple of God’s special presence portrayed throughout chapter 21. It was this cultic divine presence that was formerly limited to Israel’s temple and then the Church, which will fill the whole earth and heaven and become co-extensive with it. Then the

¹¹⁸ Hoekendijk, “The Call To Evangelism,” 171.

¹¹⁹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 96.

eschatological goal of the temple of the Garden of Eden dominating the entire creation will be finally fulfilled (so Rev 22:1-3).”¹²⁰

Statement on responsible parenthood and family planning. This statement deals on the issue of overpopulation. “While over-population is a great danger to the nation as a whole, too many babies may be catastrophic for an individual family. It may frustrate the possibility of further education for the father; it may ruin the mother’s health or sanity; and it may make it impossible for the children to receive the care and education that will enable them to develop their God-given capacities and be assets to society.”¹²¹ This can be under the missiological theme mission as development because it is concerned of how overpopulation can affect the development of families and society.

African and female professor Alawode believes that development can be mission. “One can argue that there has always been a developmental dimension to mission. This is so, amongst others, for three reasons. Firstly, mission aims at ensuring that the human being is fit for every good work (2 Tm 3:16–17) – an aim which is developmental in essence. In the second place, from its earliest beginnings in history mission included healing and educational dimensions, without which no development can take place. And finally, mission harbors an unquenchable eschatological dimension, waiting for and working towards a new heaven and a new earth.”¹²²

Statement on Martial Law and expression of concern on related issues. This statement was issued after two years have passed since Philippine President Marcos

¹²⁰ Beale, “Eden, the Temple, and the Church’s Mission in the New Creation.”, 25.

¹²¹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 97.

¹²² Alawode, “Mission, Migration and Human Development,” 2.

proclaimed Martial Law in September 21, 1972. This urges the churches to be engaging in the challenging times of the period and wanted freedom of speech to be respected. It also states that they are concerned of the rapid growth of multinational corporations and the growing strength of the military and demanded a speedy dispensation of justice.

Dr. Aguilan in his thesis on the church's response during Martial Law had this to say. "The Statement actually described the role of the church and its members in the New Society. It pledged cooperation and support but never subservient to the government. It was a springboard to the Church's active engagement with the Marcos government. It provided a trajectory on what issue or issues the UCCP and Marcos Government may disagree. It was a significant action of the Assembly. The Church has finally begun to speak publicly under an authoritarian regime."¹²³ This statement because it deals with freedom of speech and justice wary of the military strength which can lead to human rights abuses. This can be under the category of mission and human rights.

The church is to deal with oppression and suffering because of its faith. Professor Newlands elaborates. "Faith remains decisively opposed to evil in all forms, to contempt for human rights and human life...the clearing away of injustice is an integral element of the Christian vision, not least where the vision has been clouded by human rights violations in the name of religion or by abusive ideological zeal."¹²⁴ From here on the church took an active role in human rights during the time under Martial Law.

¹²³ Aguilan, "A Critical-Historical Analysis of the Church-State Relations under Martial Law from the Perspective of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines," 54.

¹²⁴ Newlands, *Christ and Human Rights*, 155.

1978 General Assembly

The region of Mindanao finally hosted the General Assembly on May 21-26, 1978 at Cagayan de Oro City.

On the Church and Development. This statement talks about the need of the church to take seriously the development of Philippine society by making programs and projects on development. It recommends “For the church on all levels to review the Evangelism and Development program thrusts, re-examine policies on self-reliance, and see whether this is expressive of our development direction during this interim period as we work towards attaining self-reliance rather than dependence of foreign funding.”¹²⁵ It also recommend the creation of a desk on Research and Documentation, encourage conferences to conduct seminar, and encourage churches on all levels to have a budget for community development programs.

There seems a shift of focus on the UCCP in doing mission from proclamation to development based from this statement. As the church reflects on the situation especially during Martial law it began to look for practical ways to be relevant as a faith witness to society. Bishop Nacpil believes that because of the church’s faith understanding towards history’s movement towards the Kingdom of God, it promotes the progress of human society. “By the fact that it is a process of deliberate change, development presupposes a dynamic and historical view of reality. By the fact that it arouses hope and promises a better life, it is future-oriented and therefore has an implicit eschatology.”¹²⁶

¹²⁵ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 114.

¹²⁶ de Achutegui, *Mission and Development*, 108.

On the Mindanao Situation. This statement acknowledges the complexity of what is happening in Mindanao and the church's own ignorance on the issue. It then proposes to create a Muslim Desk of the UCCP with the aim to educate the members of the complexities of the situation in Mindanao; to present a program to create awareness especially to those who are directly affected; collection of relevant data, and to represent the church officially in seminars and conferences related to it. The statement ends, "Only when the body of Christ moves from its position of status quo to its high calling for exodus based on its vision for the last quarter of the century can it be transformed and transforming as well."¹²⁷ This statement is equipping the members in Christian-Muslim dialogue.

The study of Amran Simangunsong about inter-religious dialogue in Indonesian context gives us an insight on how to determine what kind of missiological theme this statement falls under. In his conclusion he said, "The theological warrants for dialogue are based on the principle that church is an inclusive community which is aware of religious plurality, therefore church should be open to relationship and dialogue as Christian service; the human person is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Christians should respect the dignity of human person regardless of race or religion. Christ salvation is to bring about relationships to allow people to live together."¹²⁸

Ethna Regan, a lecturer in theology at the Mater Dei Institute of Education, Dublin City University in Ireland discuss why human rights is essential in building community. "Belief in the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of Catholic social

¹²⁷ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 119.

¹²⁸ Simangunsong, "Interreligious Dialogue in Indonesian Context: Missiological Challenge to Huria Kristen Indonesia (The Indonesian Christian Church)," 101.

teaching and the starting point for its vision of society. Human rights are recognized as essential for the protection of human dignity and the building of community.”¹²⁹ Because it talks about respecting the dignity of a human person the statement above falls under the missiological theme mission and human rights.

*Epistle to the Christians of Today.*¹³⁰ This statement was adopted by the General Assembly when 30 participants who attended a study seminar sponsored by the Office of the Bishop in UCCP Mindanao Jurisdiction in Davao City. It highlighted the increasing divide of the rich and the poor, the preferential treatment of multi-national corporations that caters to foreign interests and exploitation of natural resources. Violation of basic human rights; the suppression of freedom of speech and the helplessness of the people. The political inequality especially in Mindanao and even the reinforcement of the institutionalized church to the status quo.

Although it tackled the issue of human rights, the overall missiological theme of the statement is more oriented to the political, economic and even cultural development of the country.

Feminist theologian Montenegro that the oppressive conditions is not unique to the Philippines but in other developing countries as well. “In the Philippines and other so-called developing countries, the commodification of everything is seen in the conversion of prime land into theme parks, golf courses and resorts and the scouring of the earth’s bowels by big foreign mining companies. It is evident in the commodification of the bodies and labor of overseas contract workers, especially domestic helpers and entertainers

¹²⁹ Ethna Regan, *Theology and the Boundary Discourse of Human Rights* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 23.

¹³⁰ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 120–121.

sacrificed at the altar of capitalism. Such sacrifice involves collateral damage in the form of the loss of an individual's self-worth, broken families and the degradation of the earth."¹³¹

A resolution on the restoration of civil liberties and the dismantling of the machinery of Martial Law. In this statement it basically says the UCCP is calling for the dismantling of the Martial Law and the return of civil liberties and restoration of democracy. "[T]his church body is against the perpetuation of a one-man rule in the country; that it is for the immediate restoration of all civil and political liberties of the citizens; and that it is for the immediate dismantling of the machinery of Martial Law in the country."¹³²

Because it called for the restoration of civil liberties this statement can be categorized as mission and human rights as its missiological theme. Scottish theologian George Newlands noted that Christianity must be concerned of human rights because of how Jesus related with other persons. "If human rights are so very important to human well-being, then it is clearly incumbent on all traditions of thought and action, religious or non-religious, which believe they have a contribution to make to the human future, to engage seriously with rights issues. For Christianity this involves theology and practice. Since Christology is at the center of Christianity, it should be engaged in this process."¹³³

*Resolution for the Creation of the Human Rights Desk.*¹³⁴ This resolution basically formed a body within the church to deal with human rights as an issue and human

¹³¹ Orevillo-Montenegro, "Capitalism as Religion: When Does the Cycle End?," 127.

¹³² *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 123.

¹³³ Newlands, *Christ and Human Rights*, 7.

¹³⁴ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 124.

rights become a major thrust in the next general Assembly. It must be pointed out that the UCCP was one of the few churches to make a stand against the human rights abuses committed under the Martial law era.

As the missiological theme for this resolution it is obviously mission and human rights, Aguilan reflected that the 1978 General Assembly the church was engaged in the political situation at that time. “The formation of the Human Rights Desk of the UCCP gave the Church a concrete means of responding to the increasing incidence of human rights violations. It provided the Church a relevant expression of its prophetic ministry under an authoritarian regime. The safeguarding of human rights became one of the main thrusts in the over-all program of the UCCP as mandated by the General Assembly. The human rights thrust of the Church has clarified the nature of the UCCP Church-State relations specifically under Martial Law.”¹³⁵

1986 General Assembly

In this period, the Filipinos just overthrew the Marcos dictatorship in a peaceful and bloodless revolution. The UCCP who was very involved in the struggle for democracy came up with a statement of faith that marked her identity as a genuinely Filipino Protestant church. On May 20-24, 1986 this General Assembly occurred in Quezon City.

*UCCP Statement of Faith.*¹³⁶ Looking at this statement, it can be divided into six parts. The understanding of the Trinitarian God (theology), the understanding of humanity

¹³⁵ Aguilan, “A Critical-Historical Analysis of the Church-State Relations under Martial Law from the Perspective of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines,” 108.

¹³⁶ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 134–135.

(anthropology), the understanding of the church (ecclesiology), the understanding of the Bible, the understanding of mission (missiology), and the understanding of Jesus' death and resurrection (eschatology).

Feliciano Cariño, the Chairman of the Faith and Order Committee that made the Statement of Faith said, "A Statement of Faith is important, in other words, because it links the Church to the living historical faith of the Church as it has been expressed through the ages, at the same time that it opens the way by which the Church in the present can fulfill its mission relevantly, and by which also the future is opened to ever new and more abundant expressions of witness to the God who is the only authentic Foundation, Lord and Head of the Church."¹³⁷ As the statement of faith is more of a declaration of faith to the public, it takes on the impression of proclamation as the missiological theme.

Filipino anthropologist Maggay said that the church should have a visible presence in proclaiming the Gospel. "The proclamation of the Kingdom has a verbal as well as a visual aspect. For this reason, the Church must be both a *herald* as well as a *sign*. It must serve as a context in which the saving power of God is made visibly present in all areas of human life. In doing so, the Gospel is wholly preached, and men and women are enabled to adequately respond to the prophetic demands of the Gospel."¹³⁸

Toward a policy statements on UCCP ecumenical views and relationships. In this statement the UCCP expressed their ecumenical heritage and how to relate with non-UCCP churches. "As such the UCCP is open to the spirit of new ecumenism which goes that

¹³⁷ Feliciano V. Carino, ed., *Like A Mustard Seed: Commentaries of the UCCP Statement of Faith* (Quezon City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1987), 4.

¹³⁸ Maggay, *Transforming Society*, 16.

traditional denominational lines to the new and progressive sectoral groupings. This new ecumenism has come out of the people's quest for justice, peace, human dignity, genuine freedom and democracy. Its objective is not primarily the survival of the churches but the welfare of Filipino masses especially those most depressed and oppressed."¹³⁹

Again because this is ecumenical in nature and partnerships with other churches, the missiological theme is mission as proclamation. Indonesian Siahaan's thesis which dealt with her Indonesian church and foreign partner churches is relevant to this topic. "Partnership in mission is working together in doing mission with mutuality in power sharing, mutuality in repentance, mutuality in participation, mutuality and transparency in relationships, mutuality in accountability, mutuality in trust and mutuality in structures. Each church is part of the Universal Church irrespective of its material wealth and capacity to give money. The capacity for sharing is reflected in the mutual relations of equality and selfhood. Working together is vital to the success in helping weaker, younger Churches to grow without creating dependency. Partnerships must lead to interdependence and commitment to giving priority to building solidarity."¹⁴⁰

1990 General Assembly

For the third time Cebu City was the venue of another General Assembly on May 21-26, 1990. Four missiological statements were issued here.

¹³⁹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 141.

¹⁴⁰ Siahaan, "The HKBP Perception of Its Existing Partnership in Mission with German Churches: A Missiological Evaluation," 164.

Resolution urging the implementation of the constitutional declaration of a nuclear-free Philippines and the withdrawal of all the military bases and facilities in the country. To provide context for this resolution, U.S. military bases has been stationed in the Philippines since it was granted independence by the United States. At the height of the Cold War and the Vietnam War the U.S. has continuously used the bases in the country in its war against communism. With nuclear capability, the bases have always been suspected of harboring nuclear weapons. The defeat of the U.S. in the Vietnam War and the economic troubles of the Soviet Union which led to its collapse in 1991, the call for the removal of the military bases was gaining popular support. The church in this resolution was one of the groups calling for its removal. “Be it resolved, that the 4th Quadrennial General Assembly of the UCCP urge the implementation of the Constitutional Provision of a nuclear free Philippines and the withdrawal of all U.S. military bases and facilities in the country.”¹⁴¹

The missiological theme of this statement is mission as development. It is because it talks about the national sovereignty of the country from a foreign power. The presence of the military bases is a sure sign of the global economic and military might of the United States. This is what Montenegro describes “development” according to U.S. interests. “By taking the new pill called “development,” governments in the global South, such as that of the Philippines, tried to follow the ways of the West. They borrowed significant amounts of money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) for development projects, not only to create infrastructure (such as highways, cultural centers, tourist destinations, golf courses and irrigation dams for vast tracts of lands owned by

¹⁴¹ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 204.

multinational corporations), but also to buy military hardware. Consequently, the citizens had to carry the burden of an enormous foreign debt.”¹⁴²

For the next two statements we will combine the two because basically it talks about preservation of the environment.

*A Resolution of Environmental Concerns and A Statement of the Preservation of the Integrity of God's Creation.*¹⁴³ Both resolutions raise the alarm of environmental degradation especially in the rural and urban areas. The loss of coral reefs and forest cover in the name of development. It also talked about the use of pesticides that is harmful to the environment and the mining operations that caused damage to creation. The drive for profit at the expense of the environment is what these statements are challenging and calls for the environmental preservation.

The study of Maruhum Simangunsong on how his church is responding to the issue of environmental degradation is helpful in determining the missiological theme of these statements. “Stewardship of environment is consistent with loving God and neighbor. We cannot say we love God or neighbor by destroying what is good and what is intended to give life to others. The church needs to empower its members so that they can get involved in the process of greening of civil society. In achieving continuing development, the green civil society develops as the conscience of the environment. This could be achieved by formal or informal education.”¹⁴⁴ Because it deals with genuine development instead of development based on profit, these statements can be called mission as development.

¹⁴² Orevillo-Montenegro, “Capitalism as Religion: When Does the Cycle End?,” 124.

¹⁴³ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 205–211.

¹⁴⁴ Simangunsong, “The Environment in the 1996 Confession of Faith of the Huria Krite Batak Protestan (HKBP): Missiological Implication,” 49.

A resolution condemning the operation and legalization of Small-Town Lottery (STL), Jueteng, and other gambling activities. This resolution was a reaction of the government's policy of legalizing the practice of legalizing such as Small-Town Lottery and Jueteng a form of gambling popular to the masses. Since gambling corrupts the morals of the people and is a form of escape from the harsh realities of life relying on luck and chance instead of the gifts and blessings that God has given us. "[W]e call on the government to address itself to seek creative solution to the roots of our problems instead of legalizing STL and other forms of gambling, in addition to the unleashing of the sword of total war as means of these ends. We also call on all Christian Churches to unite and wage war on all forms of gambling which corrupt morals and distort Christian values."¹⁴⁵ Since it deals with lifestyle and morals the missiological theme for this statement is mission as proclamation.

The above statement is the prophetic call of the church to stop legalizing gambling as it degrades the morality of the people. Yuzon said that being prophetic is part of proclamation of the gospel. "The prophetic message of the Good News is an announcement of God's judgement upon evil structures and upon those who create and sustain them, and that conversely the Gospel is Good News to the poor, the exploited, the weak and the oppressed. Christ himself was engaged in prophetic evangelism."¹⁴⁶

A resolution urging the creation of a comprehensive peasant program. This statement is calling the church to address the concerns of the peasant whose main source of living is farming and comprises the majority of the country. It is centered of urging the

¹⁴⁵ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 213.

¹⁴⁶ Yuzon, "Towards a New Understanding of Evangelism," 126.

churches to minister to the peasants and have programs that will uplift the condition of these peasants. “WHEREAS, the major problems of the peasantry include: a) landownership b) high cost of production and low prices of farm products c) high interests of loans from lending institutions and from big businessmen d) government policies not responsive to the plight of peasants due to lack of genuine representation in policy-making bodies e) unjust sharing and high land rentals f) weak peasant organizations.”¹⁴⁷ This statement can be under the missiological theme of development since it address the need of developing the conditions of the peasants. “Not only must our experience of Christ from below be tested against a past historical criterion (the life, ministry, and the death of Jesus), and vice versa, but it must also be verified in the transformation of the present situation of the oppressed.”¹⁴⁸

1994 General Assembly

Ozamiz City was the second city from the region of Mindanao to host a General Assembly which happened on May 22-26, 1994.

Statement Against Lotto. In this statement, it was a call to protest of the introduction of Lotto a legalized form of gambling by the government. “There is no question that this notorious project, if implemented, will further despoil the moral values of our people, particularly the young.”¹⁴⁹ It was ironic because this was under the administration of President Fidel V. Ramos, a member of the UCCP. While the legislation

¹⁴⁷ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 214.

¹⁴⁸ Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom*, 16.

¹⁴⁹ “UCCP General Assembly Statement Against Lotto,” *The United Church Letter*, July 1994, 41.

for the passage of the law was awaiting decision from the Supreme Court, the General Assembly issued this statement urging members to oppose the passage of such law. The church here is doing mission and the missiological theme is proclamation since it is denouncing a lifestyle that goes against Christian values.

Maggay said that a call to repentance is to recognize the Lordship of Jesus in one's life. "To speak of Jesus as Lord is to demand subjection of personal and social life under his kingly rule. To call for repentance is to ask people to turn away, not simply from their individual vices, but from participation in the collective guilt of organized injustice. To invite people to come in faith is to challenge them to walk in trusting obedience, to now God in the agony of commitment and concrete engagement in the life of the world."¹⁵⁰ Gambling relies on luck which contradicts the Christian's faith and trust in God.

Statement on Indigenous People. In this statement the General Assembly highlighted the case of indigenous people suffering from the developmental projects of foreign investors. "The continuing building of hydro-electric dams that will submerge the homes and lands of thousands of indigenous people such as Casecnan River Basin Project in Nueva Viscaya, Agbulo Dam in Kalanasan, Kalinga-Apayao, Dompoc Dam in Imelda, Zamboang del Sur, Pulangi Dam II of San Fernando, Bukidnon, the Agusan River, Basin Project and other indigenous people, submerging their established villages and destroying their sources of livelihood, without assurance of any benefit from these infrastructure projects...Furthermore, these establishments deny their rights to enjoy a clean environment and decent living."¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Maggay, *Transforming Society*, 13.

¹⁵¹ "Minutes of the 5th Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines" (Ozamiz City, Philippines, 1994), 31.

Although the resolution talked about the dangers of infrastructure projects which is indicative of development, it zeroes in on the plight of the rights of the indigenous people. Missiological theme for this resolution is mission and human rights.

Malaysian Kam said that religions carry much weight in critiquing governments who sacrifices human rights for economic development. “In particular, Asian Christians are keenly aware that religion in general and Christianity in particular provides moral resources for social critique. The challenge is for Christians to develop social institutions in civil society that will promote a culture of human rights that is resilient and resistant to encroachment by authoritarian governments seeking to restrict human rights.”¹⁵²

1998 General Assembly

On its 50th anniversary, the UCCP held its General Assembly where the UCCP was founded at Ellinwood Malate Church on May 25-28, 1998.

Resolution on Child Labor. This statement highlights the issue of Child Labor in the Philippines. It urges the churches to “...a) Raise awareness on child labor, its human costs and adverse consequences b) Be involved in efforts to immediately put an end to intolerable forms of child labor c) Implement plans and / or support activities aimed at improving the situation of working children and their families d) Link-up with local and national authorities in developing and executing effective policies towards the progressive elimination of child labor e) Promote and sustain access of working children to basic education and primary health care.”¹⁵³

¹⁵² Ng, “Human Rights and Asian Values,” 161.

¹⁵³ “Minutes of the 6th Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines” (Malate, Philippines, 1998), 165.

Because it deals with the dignity of children being violated as they are forced out of poverty to work, the missiological theme of this statement is mission and human rights. The reason why the church should take into account the plight of the marginalized especially children is how Jesus accepted and acted towards them. “A Christology of human rights can be articulated in a number of ways. If it is to enrich our understanding of the goals of human rights, then it should encapsulate the nature of the Christian understanding of the love of God...It should illuminate the self-giving, self-dispossessing nature of divine reality as a pattern for human relationships.”¹⁵⁴

Statement of Concern on the Effect of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

This statement was in opposition of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 (Republic Act 7942). “This law provides the unhampered entry, control and exploitation of big foreign mining companies to the Philippines...this law mocks the sovereignty and the national patrimony of the nation, by favoring the interest of foreign monopoly control and the country’s mineral resources. This sell-out is happening at the eve of the country’s celebration of the Philippine Revolution makes this mockery all the more insulting to our nationhood.”¹⁵⁵

As this statement is a critique of a law that has economic and environmental consequences not to mention national sovereignty, the missiological theme is mission as development. Third-world countries are always subject to exploitation from First World multinational companies. This is also true to African experience and Alawode reflected on

¹⁵⁴ Newlands, *Christ and Human Rights*, 146.

¹⁵⁵ “Statement of Concern on the Effect of the Philippine Mining Act 1995,” in *State of the Mission* (6th Quadrennial Assembly, Malate, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 1998), 158.

this. “The loss of traditional values and whole cultures through the cultural imperialism of westernization is increasing. Modernization has provided a radical improvement for one-fourth of the world’s population, but is complex. However, we will not fail to point out that though development necessarily involves structural transformation, which implies political, social and economic transformation, primarily, development should start from where the people are.”¹⁵⁶

Resolutions on Peace Process and Opposition to bury Marcos’ remains in the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Although the exact of the copy of these resolutions was not found by the researcher, based from the minutes of this General Assembly it said, “To adopt the resolution that strongly urge the Estrada government to pursue and strengthen the peace process in Mindanao. To adopt the resolution opposing the granting of the right to bury the remains of former President Ferdinand Marcos in the Libingan ng mga Bayani.”¹⁵⁷

To provide context, this happened during the administration of Joseph Estrada, the 13th President of the Philippines. In his administration he conducted an all-out war to the Muslim insurgents in Mindanao and he favoring the return of the remains of former President Marcos. Marcos was the 10th President of the Philippines who declared Martial Law and was ousted by a popular and peaceful revolution and fled to Hawaii USA, where he died. His dying wish was that he buried in the Libingan ng mga Bayani (Heroes’ Cemetery) where soldiers and past presidents are buried.

¹⁵⁶ Alawode, “Mission, Migration and Human Development,” 7.

¹⁵⁷ “Minutes of the 6th Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.” Voted 98-067 and 98-068

Based on the General Assembly action it can be implied that since the peace process involves war which will ultimately lead to the rise human rights violations. In the case of denying the burial of former President Marcos, it might be because of the failure of the Marcos family to return the ill-gotten wealth they have amassed during the dictatorship and out of respect to the victims of human rights during his reign. Although the researcher has reservations since the church is supposed to be forgiving and loving. David Bosch recognize this tension of justice and love. “In the Protestant *ecumenical* movement, and to a lesser extent in contemporary Catholicism, it seems it is the *prophetic* motif that predominates. In some manifestations of ecumenism, however, it seems that the rational ethic, which aims at justice, is more powerful than the religious ethic of love.”¹⁵⁸ However, the goal of this study is to gauge the missiological theme of said statement not to put it under judgement. This is mission and human rights.

Adopt Southern Tagalog Conference Resolution on Ecological Advocacy and Campaign. This resolution is an adoption made by one of the conferences in Luzon with regards to environmental degradation. “Development must be in the context of providing the necessary life support of our people while maintaining the delicate balance of nature and must therefore be holistic and comprehensive.”¹⁵⁹

Development should take into account the people’s welfare and not for profit alone. ““Social development is a process of gradual change in which people increase the awareness of their communal capabilities and common interests, and use this knowledge

¹⁵⁸ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 402.

¹⁵⁹ “Minutes of the 6th Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines,” 160.

to analyze their needs; find solutions; organize themselves for cooperative efforts; and mobilize their human, financial and natural resources to improve, establish and maintain their social services and institutions within the context of their own culture and their own political system. One can say that from a Christian perspective, the aim of holistic development (social, economic, political, etc.) should be to form human beings ‘who understand and appreciate their integral role in society as both Christians, good and responsible citizens’, in line with their Christian vocation to promote gospel values.”¹⁶⁰ This statement is mission as development as its missiological theme.

2002 General Assembly

In this General Assembly held at Baguio City on May 20-26, there were six resolutions made by conferences that were adopted by this body. The actual statements are not found but they were reflected in the General Assembly minutes.¹⁶¹

Resolusyon ng Pagtutol sa Globalisasyon Kumperensya Timog Kanlurang Katagalugan (KTKK) expressing their opposition to Globalization and Paninidigan Hinggil sa Iskemang Globalisasyon SELC Statement on their stand on the issue of Globalization. These two statements are resolutions made by two conferences against the advent of globalization. No copies of the documents could be obtained but was reflected on the report made by the Faith and Order committee to the National Office. Based on the report the quadrennial theme was “The Gospel and Globalization and the Call to Unity in the Ministry”. “[The theme] calls attention to the realities surrounding Church and society.

¹⁶⁰ Alawode, “Mission, Migration and Human Development,” 4.

¹⁶¹ “Minutes of the 7th Quadrennial Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines” (Baguio City, Philippines, 2002), 35.

We must anticipate dramatic interruptions in our journey as the economic and political situation in the Philippines worsen. The government's support of the US war on terror further increase our vulnerability as a nation. Wars and conflicts in various parts of the country continue to bring pain and suffering, and build hostility and animosity among people and groups."¹⁶²

The missiological theme of these statements is mission as development. It is focused more on addressing the issue of globalization and the effects it has on the development of people. The church is even influenced by globalization and this is what prompted Bessenecker to write his book *Overturing the Tables* to warn churches of this danger. "In the world of corporate-styled capitalism, growth is king. It is the chief gauge of health and is the altar on which everything is sacrificed. But in a living organism there is a medical term for unabated growth – cancer."¹⁶³

Resolution Against Balikatan Exercises 02-01. Western Visayas Conference (WVC) and Supporta sa Kapahayagan ng Council of Bishops Hinggil sa Balikatan Exercises 2002 Southeast Luzon Conference (SELC) expressing their support to the statement issued by the COB concerning Balikatan exercise. Statements three and four can be dealt together as they are talking about the same issue the "Balikatan Exercise" a war games of the U.S. military and the Armed forces in the Philippines held in the country. The open letter by the Council of Bishops reflect much of what been said in this Assembly. "The US-inspired war on terrorism is affecting our lives and our nation. We are deeply concerned that the Arroyo administration has allowed the shifting of the country's national

¹⁶² "Report of the Faith and Order Commission to the National Council," Committee Report (La Union, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, October 23, 2002), 2.

¹⁶³ Bessenecker, *Overturing Tables*, 161.

budget priorities away from much needed social services toward more military spending. It has allowed our Constitution to be trampled upon by permitting the Balikatan exercises to take place in the combat and war torn areas of Basilan. It has been more than willing to embrace a definition of the ‘enemy’ prescribed by the United States and adopt anti-terrorism strategies that are encroaching on our civil liberties.”¹⁶⁴

The Balikatan Exercises was during the time of the September 11 attacks on US soil that prompted the global war on terrorism. The United States and its allies waged an all-out war on terrorist groups all over the world. Gloria Arroyo the 14th President of the Philippines was one of the leaders who allied with US President George Bush Jr. in this “War on Terror”.

Since this issue tackles the global military offensive these statements have the theme mission and human rights. Christians have always been opposing war because of their understanding of agape love. “They love one another and do good to and for one another. Failing that, there is no compelling reason for the world to pay attention. Which is to say that the only means by which Christians can commend a truly godly vision of human rights is to incarnate them in their individual and collective lives, to announce God’s actions and intentions that constitute the Gospel, and to act justly in the name of God.”¹⁶⁵

Mungkahing Resolusyon Hinggil sa Pakikiisa sa Pagsuporta sa Isasagawang Isang Matahimik na Kilos Protesta nga mga magsasaka sa Timog Katagalugan (SELC Ministry Statement). The rough translation of this statement: Resolution of Solidarity and Support to the Peaceful Protest of the Peasants in South East Luzon Conference. From the

¹⁶⁴ Council of Bishops, “Neither They Shall Learn War No More,” *The United Church Letter*, September 2002, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Taber, “In the Image of God,” 102.

title we can see that it was a statement of support to the peaceful protests of peasants in said location. The missiological theme of this statement is mission and human rights because it dealt with the peasants right for protest.

Female anthropologist Nadeau who studied the Basic Christian Community Movement in the country said, farmers are always at the receiving end of the consequences of forced development. “Physically destructive forms of development aggression can be characterized as a political process wherein police and military forces work in cooperation with local governments to dislodge poor farmers from their land, while depriving the urban poor of homes and jobs, all in the name of development.”¹⁶⁶

Statement Denouncing Military Atrocities in General Santos City and Suburbs (SCSDC). From the title it is obvious that the missiological theme is mission and human rights. It is because of the phrase “Military Atrocities”.

It is quite interesting that this General Assembly issued statements usually coming in the form of mission as development and mission and human rights. It might be because some of the leaders during this time are quite involved in the progressive movement that was the result of the experience happened in Martial Law. Nadeau expounded the involvement of the UCCP in her study. “The Basic Christian Community movement was formalized at the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference, in Davao City, Mindanao, in 1971 after the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellin, Colombia in 1968. The Catholic Bishops Conference, the National Secretariat for Social Action, and the United Church of Christ (a coalition of Protestant churches) endorsed the movement in 1977. The annual Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference provided a forum for bishops to discuss their

¹⁶⁶ Nadeau, “Christians Against Globalization In The Philippines,” 335.

ideas with other clergy and lay participants organizing the Basic Christian Communities. These communities encouraged people to solve their own problems by using local resources, whenever possible, to meet their own needs.”¹⁶⁷

This observation is affirmed in the study of Harris where she focused on the unique Philippine version of liberation theology. “Throughout all this, Christians did much to legitimize the struggle for people at the grassroots even though, in retrospect, some lament a failure to exert greater religious influence. Over time, sensing a loss of identity, Christians regrouped as a community of people involved in the struggle as a result of their faith commitment. In 1982, the theology of struggle was born, giving a name to a movement of progressive church people that had, in reality, prevailed in the Philippines for some time.”¹⁶⁸

2006 General Assembly

Digos City was the third city from Mindanao to host the General Assembly which happened on May 24-29, 2006.

Resolution of Great Concern Regarding the Current Explosive Breakout in Human Rights Violations particularly. This statement was adopted by the General Assembly which originally coming from the Southern Luzon Jurisdiction. This was highlighted by the murder of human rights lawyer, Atty. Noli Capulong a member of the UCCP. What was tragic was he on the process to donate his kidney to his brother, Dr. Noriel Capulong, who is now pastor of Silliman University Church. “[The church] strongly

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 322.

¹⁶⁸ Harris, “The Theology of Struggle,” 100–101.

decry and denounce the ongoing unmitigated killings of militants and activists in our society, and hereby call upon the military leadership, especially the Commander-in-Chief, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to immediately cause the stopping of these extrajudicial executions, and to employ all means to bring justice, without delay, all those responsible in the commission of the crimes.”¹⁶⁹ This statement’s theme is mission and human rights.

The UCCP who was one of the few churches critical of the government since the dictatorship of Marcos, is no stranger to opposing government initiatives especially when it goes against nationalist and Christian principles. The church especially its leaders have always been establishing working relationships with progressive groups because of the influence of liberation theology. “Progressive liberation theology in the Philippines stands in a complex and unclear relationship to Marxism, one more political in practice than in the literature. Practitioners employ Marxist analysis to solve social problems. They are not blindly calling for the overthrow of society through bloodshed and revolution. Rather, they engage in actively non-violent means of protest.”¹⁷⁰

2010 General Assembly

On May 25-30, 2010 Silliman University Church hosted for the second time the General Assembly of the UCCP.

¹⁶⁹ “Resolution & Statement of Great Concern Regarding the Current Explosive Breakout in Human Rights Violations,” *The United Church Letter*, August 26, 2006, 5.

¹⁷⁰ Nadeau, “Christians Against Globalization In The Philippines,” 320.

Adopting the South Cotobato Sarangani District Conference on Mining. This statement was in response to the operations of Sagittarius Mines Incorporated who operated in Tambakan, South Cotobato. “[It] poses serious threats to the environment and to the livelihood of farmers and fisher folks which will be affected by the mining operations. WHEREAS, it has been made known publicly that the company will employ Open Pit Mining, a method which has been cited to have caused serious environmental disasters.”¹⁷¹ According to the statement the company in its feasibility study is planning to cover a total area of 9,000 hectares affecting the barangays of Danlag, Pulabato and Tamblu in the municipality of Tampakan. Just like with other statements whose topic is mining and environmental protection, the missiological theme is mission as development.

It is noticed by the researcher that statements whose theme is development or human rights are usually negative to the government. Almost most of them are reactionary to official policies and perhaps there is another way. The study of Elmerck Kigembe whose focus is a critical analysis of prophetic mission advocacy of the church provides an interesting alternative the paradigm of reconstruction. “The basic assumption in the paradigm of Reconstruction is that the church in collaboration with the government establishes the dialogical forum in which they work together in a mutual basis. Both are stake holders in the development of the nation, but they invite other stakeholders to be part of the forum. They discuss the socio-political and economic issues together. The church is not above the state and vice versa but both join hands to public spirited people.”¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ “A Resolution Expressing Opposition To Large Scale Mining Operations by Sagittarius Mines Inc.- Estrata Plc & Other Corporation in the Provinces of Sarangani & South Cotobato” (South Cotobato Sarangani District Conference, March 2010), 1.

¹⁷² Kigembe, “The Evangelical Lutheran Church and Other Organizations’ Perception of Grand Corruption in Tanzania’s Public Service: A Critical Analysis of Prophetic Mission-Advocacy and Its Implication for Church-State Relationship,” 100.

*Context and Challenges of the Mission of the UCCP for the Next Quadrennium.*¹⁷³ This statement was more on a call of the church in facing the challenges in the years ahead. It talked about how the church is to be vigilant in three areas: political, economic, and social. In the political, the church is to be vigilant in the human rights issue and in the peace process. In the economic sphere, the issue of poverty and unemployment that distorts the family has to be addressed. In the social aspect, technology that caused dramatic change in human communication and relations especially among the younger generation are to be seriously considered. This statement can have many missiological themes but the researcher would lean to mission as proclamation. It is more looking inward at the church in meeting the challenges of the world by serving as witness for Christ. “To evangelize is ‘to incarnate the Gospel in time’, that is, in concrete situations, or to address the Gospel to the whole person in his / her context.”¹⁷⁴

Adopt the 8th NYA Resolution No. 5 Series of 2010 on the Illegal Arrest of Dr. Alex Montes; Adopt the Resolution from Kumperencia Katalugan Hinggil sa Morong 43, Pagpalaya kay Dr. Alex Montes at 42 Kasamahan at paglulunsad ng mga pag-aaral at talakayan sa lahat ng saklaw ng kumperensya hinggildito at iba pang kaugnay na usapin para sa higit na pagkaunawa ; Adopt the statement of concern regarding Dr. Amelito Elio and others in their alleged involvement with the New People’ Army. Statements 3-5 can be grouped together because it talks about the same thing. The arrest of UCCP members by the military who has been suspected members or involved in the

¹⁷³ “Minutes of the 9th Quadrennial General Assembly of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines” (Dumaguete City, 2010), 51–52.

¹⁷⁴ Yuzon, “Towards a New Understanding of Evangelism,” 127.

rebel and communist organization, the New People's Army. These statements' missiological theme is mission and human rights as members of the church were arrested by the military government accused of being communist rebels. Harris tried to explain the tension of why some Christians get involved in the struggle for national liberation. "As Christians moved from advocating nonviolent techniques to accepting armed struggle, they stressed that the decision did not necessarily mean that they, personally, would take up arms. They knew what they stood for but the heavily censored media and Church hierarchies ensured that others judged them harshly for their stance."¹⁷⁵

2014 General Assembly

Legazpi City also hosted for the second time the General Assembly of the UCCP on May 24-29, 2014. During research the minutes of the General Assembly was not yet available but the researcher got hold of the Policy Statements that was approved.

Policy Statements on New Religious Movements (NRSMS) within the UCCP. The first policy was regarding the New Religious Movements that have sprouted in all churches including within the UCCP. The policy stated that these movements seem to de-emphasized the prophetic dimension 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 NRM's in its local churches."¹⁷⁶ It urged the churches that programs and activities initiated by the NRM's are closely monitored and regulated by

¹⁷⁵ Harris, "The Theology of Struggle," 90.

¹⁷⁶ "Proposed Policies" (10th Quadrennial General Assembly of the UCCP, Legazpi City, Philippines: United Church of Christ in the Philippines, 2014), 2.

the church pastor guided by the policies of the local church and the conference. It also encouraged them out to highlight the hymns and unique history of the UCCP

For this statement the missiological theme is mission as proclamation. It is because it highlights how the unique story of the UCCP in Philippine society and how to hold on to the historical faith in its faith and witness. “The gospel calls us back again and again to the real clue, the crucified and risen Jesus, so that we learn that the meaning of history is not immanent in history itself, that history cannot find its meaning at the end of a process of development, but that history is given its meaning by what God has done in Jesus Christ and by what he promised to do; and that the true horizon is not at the successful end of our projects but in his coming to reign.”¹⁷⁷

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

This statement is the church’s stand on the issue of LGBT which has been gaining popularity and acceptance world-wide. “The LGBT’s, as a group has long been an object of ostracism and judgement, 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...Jesus has long denounced and rejected such a narrow, legalistic, patriarchal, pharisaic, self-righteous outlook and even hypocritical perspective. Within this purview of the teachings and work of Jesus, the LGBT’s can be considered as well embraced, affirmed and upheld by the gracious and loving presence of God in Jesus Christ.”¹⁷⁸ The statement also includes a code and moral conduct to be observed by the LGBT as expected from any other person in

¹⁷⁷ Newbiggin, “The Logic of Mission,” 24.

¹⁷⁸ “Proposed Policies,” 7.

the community. It also calls for seminars and gender-awareness seminars on the issue. Because this statement deals with the dignity of humans especially for the LGBT's the missiological theme is mission and human rights.

Jesus died for the marginalized. "The first missiological implication of the incarnation is that of a new and fresh experience of Jesus Christ from within the harsh reality of the hurt, destitute, and marginated of the earth. This proceeds from the fact that, in Jesus Christ, God became related with humanity in a radically new way. This meant that the Son of God humbled himself to the extent that he took the form of a servant and thus the identity of the poor, powerless, and oppressed. This identity reached its climax at the cross where Jesus died as a rejected criminal, suffering not only for but with humanity in the lowest and most horrible form of death."¹⁷⁹

UCCP Paper on Climate and UCCP Statement on Large-Scale Mining. This statement is the UCCP's stand on the environment. "We should actively participate in the building and transforming 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 will grow 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."¹⁸⁰

As on the other statement on mining, the UCCP has been consistent in opposing it. Mining seems to come from the motivation of greed that proved destructive to the earth.

¹⁷⁹ Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom*, 13.

¹⁸⁰ "Proposed Policies," 10.

“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*).”¹⁸¹

Because it looks forward to the building and transforming of this world according to God’s will particularly in preserving the environment, this is mission as development. The whole world, both from the margins and the center need to actively participate in the preservation of the world. “When we empower the margins, we want to create strict barriers so that those from the margins do not mess with the finances and leadership of organizations created by the center. The dichotomy that we must either absorb locals into our structures or allow completely local structures to emerge is a false one... We need one another, and we need each other’s gifts, talents and differences in order to adequately reflect the image of God and to accomplish God’s purposes. Even if that means accepting others’ liabilities and limitations”¹⁸²

Memorandum of Understanding: Mutual Recognition of Ministries between the UCCP and the UC Canada. This statement is an agreement between the church of the UCCP and the United Church of Canada. Both churches have a common denominational heritage coming from a union of churches coming from the Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist traditions. The agreement was due to the fact that a significant Filipino community is growing in Canada. “The Filipino population in Canada is now the third largest in the world outside the Philippines and continuing to grow significantly. The UCC is deeply concerned about connecting with this growing population so that it might receive

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸² Bessenecker, *Overturning Tables*, 152.

their gifts and be transformed into a church that would better serve God's purposes in the new Canadian reality."¹⁸³ This statement which basically is partnership between UCCP and UCC is mission as proclamation as its missiological theme.

Christ's followers in all nations was the vision seen by John in Revelation. "The fact that the apostles are part of the foundation whereas the tribes of Israel are part of the gates in the wall that is built on the foundation stones highlights the conviction 'that fulfillment of Israel's promises has finally come in Christ, who, together with the apostolic witness to his fulfilling work, forms the foundation of the new temple, the church, which is the new Israel.' The foundation of the new Israel is not the historical Israel of the OT but the apostles, that is, the witness of the apostles to the reality and efficacy of the work of Jesus Christ."¹⁸⁴

Synthesis

Distribution of themes. The researcher has interpreted a total of 53 statements from the General Assemblies of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines considered missiological in nature. The graph next page illustrates what statements belong to a theme in relation to the time when the General Assembly happened.

¹⁸³ "Proposed Policies," 14.

¹⁸⁴ Schnabel, "Israel, the People of God, and the Nations," 57.

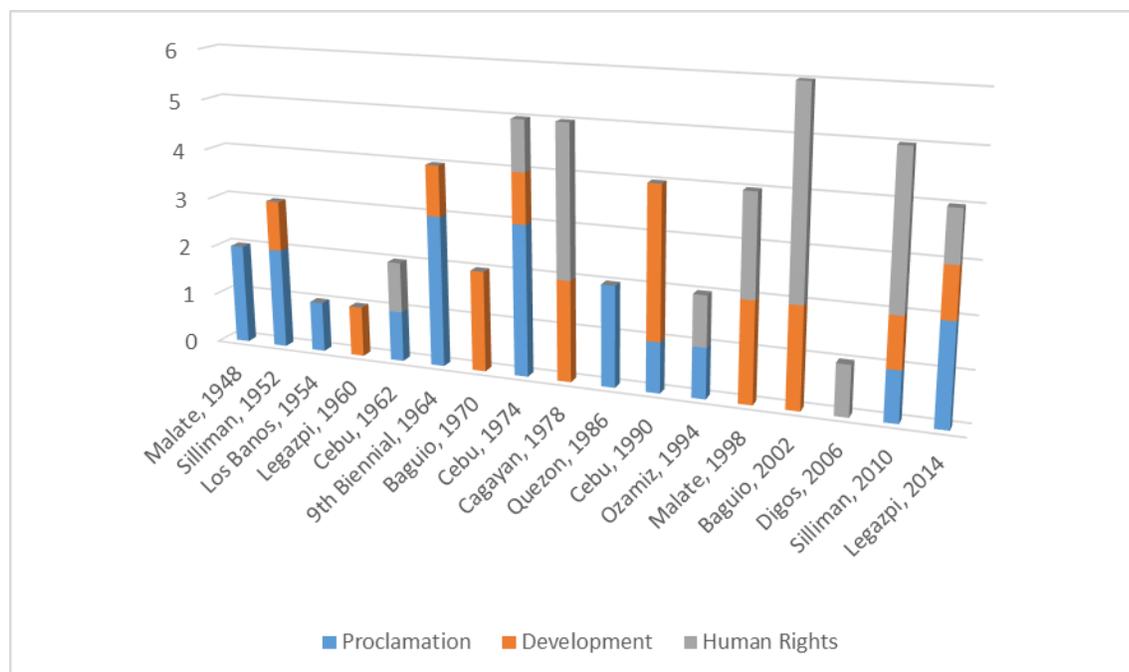


Figure 2. Number and kind of statements in each General Assembly

From the graph we could see that the most statements the UCCP which is missiological in nature happened during the 2002 General Assembly held in Baguio City. In that particular assembly four out of the six statements, was mission and human rights in nature. Statements about human rights was not issued until the General Assembly in Cebu on 1962.

Missiological statements which is proclamation in theme has been issued at most three times in 1964 and 1974. Human Rights have a total of eight assemblies where such theme was unable to reach in the formal statement stage while both proclamation and development has six assemblies where it did not make the official statement stage.

Furthermore, as we could see human rights as a missiological theme entered late in the discussion of the UCCP's highest policy making body. Yet it has become prominent in the beginning of the mid-70's until today. Mission as proclamation has been strong in

the beginning, faded at the middle but is making a comeback lately. Mission as development has been fairly consistent in appearance throughout.



Figure 3. Distribution of statements per theme

In totality the UCCP has managed to issue missiological statements equally in themes of proclamation development and human rights. In fact, mission as proclamation has a total of 19 statements while both development and human rights have 17.

Mission as proclamation. The statements under proclamation are the following arranged chronologically: Basis of Union (1948), Declaration of Union (1948), Resolution Expressing Belief in and Adherence to an Ecumenical Church (1952), Resolution Condemning Gambling and Liquor (1952), Resolution Requesting the Secretary of Education to Ban ROTC and PMT Drills, Teachers' Meetings, and other activities on Sundays (1954), On the pronouncement of the World Council of Churches Concerning relationship with other Christian bodies (1962), Statement on Christian Unity & Statement on Relations with Roman Catholics (1964), Statement on responsible citizenship (1964), Relationship with non-united church groups (1964), Statement on Ecumenical Relations

(1974), Statement of policy on evangelism (1974), Statement of policy on stewardship (1974), UCCP Statement of Faith (1986), Toward a policy statements on UCCP ecumenical views and relationships (1986), A resolution condemning the operation and legalization of Small-Town Lottery (STL), Jueteng, and other gambling activities (1990), Statement Against Lotto (1994), Context and Challenges of the Mission of the UCCP for the Next Quadrennium (2010), Policy Statements on New Religious Movements (NRSMS) within the UCCP (2014), and Memorandum of Understanding: Mutual Recognition of Ministries between the UCCP and the UC Canada (2014).

Based from these statements, the understanding of the UCCP of mission as proclamation revolves in the understanding of Christian unity and witness. Although in the Statement on Evangelism issued at the Executive Committee Action # 71-171 in 1971 it states “To witness to the concerned love of Jesus Christ is to live a life in the given world of God. Participating in human development and nation-building is the Christian’s witnessing life. As Christians, our earthly citizenship should be a manifestation of our citizenship of the Kingdom of God.”¹⁸⁵ Churches should not be competing but strive for unity. In its basic form, the UCCP is a church that firmly believes Jesus’ prayer of the unity of believers. “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also in behalf of those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20-21)” It is the reason why the UCCP came into being because of this prayer and the biblical basis of the church’s ecumenical spirit, seeking meaningful partnerships with other

¹⁸⁵ *UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)*, 93–94.

churches. This biblical text is imbedded in the UCCP Constitution and By-Laws in its Declaration of Principles Article II Section 3.

In Section 1 in the same Article II it states “The United Church of Christ in the Philippines is an integral part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.” It means that the UCCP recognize that the church is a part of a wider body of Christ and continues to establish meaningful partnerships with other churches. In its Statement of Faith it says, “WE BELIEVE, that the Church is the one Body of Christ, the whole community of persons reconciled to God through Jesus Christ and entrusted with God’s ministry.” In the book *Like a Mustard Seed*, a commentary of the UCCP Statement of Faith, it says, “The Church does not and cannot be applied to one denomination because no denomination can lay claim to a monopoly of God’s truth. Thus, the church refers, in its generic sense, to all believers in Jesus Christ and who acknowledge His Lordship and Sovereignty in all aspects of life. The Church, in this sense, is one Body but has many parts.”¹⁸⁶ This explains why the UCCP released a statement on evangelism to which the church do not engage in proselytizing and many more statements focusing on strengthening ecumenical relations with other churches.

Why the emphasis in church unity and ecumenical relations in UCCP’s understanding of mission as proclamation? Again we go back to Jesus’ prayer “that they may be one”. Unity and strengthening of ecumenical relations with other churches, is UCCP’s witness to the world. Witnessing includes a Christian lifestyle and UCCP has released statements against gambling activities and liquor, calling on the government to allow members to be free on Sunday for worship, and be responsible citizens. However,

¹⁸⁶ Carino, *Like A Mustard Seed: Commentaries of the UCCP Statement of Faith*, 25.

based from the statements, UCCP is more focused on church unity and ecumenical relations in its witness.

Mission as development. The statements under development are the following arranged chronologically: Resolution in the Formation of the National Federation of Credit Unions (1952), Statement of Social Concern (1960), Statement of responsibility concerning economic development (1964), Statement on Missionary Concern, Law, Order, and National Unity (1970), Statement of Social Concern (1970), Statement on responsible parenthood and family planning (1974), On the Church and Development (1978), Epistle to the Christians of Today (1978), Resolution urging the implementation of the constitutional declaration of a nuclear-free Philippines and the withdrawal of all the military bases and facilities in the country (1990), A Resolution of Environmental Concerns & A Statement of the Preservation of the Integrity of God's Creation (1990), A resolution urging the creation of a comprehensive peasant program (1990), Statement of Concern on the Effect of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 (1998), Adopt Southern Tagalog Conference Resolution on Ecological Advocacy and Campaign (1998), Resolusyon ng Pagtutol sa Globalisasyon Kumperensya Timog Kanlurang Katagalugan (KTKK) expressing their opposition to Globalization (2002), Paninidigan Hinggil sa Iskemang Globalisasyon SELC Statement on their stand on the issue of Globalization (2002), Adopting the South Cotobato Saranggani District Conference on Mining (2010), and UCCP Paper on Climate and UCCP Statement on Large-Scale Mining (2014).

As it has been discussed, development is the progression of the Kingdom of God on earth. As Jesus said in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come", the church understands that history will eventually end up in God's reign. In Luke 17:21 Jesus was asked when

the kingdom of God will come. He answered it cannot be observed "...nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you." Based from this any human claim of a utopian vision will fail unless ushered by God. And the core biblical message of John 3:16 reflects a loving God who saves the world. Not just humanity but the whole cosmos which includes creation.

The UCCP understands mission as development should include the protection and stewardship of the environment. In its Constitution and By-Laws Article II Section I2 it states "As stewards of God's creation, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines shall protect, promote and enhance the ecological balance and the integrity of creation." UCCP also has been aiming for quality of life for all. In Article II Section 8 it states "The [UCCP] affirms its historic faith and its pastoral and prophetic witness in the life and culture of the Filipino people. The church supports the people's aspirations for abundant life and holistic redemption from all forms of bondage, in accordance with the vision of the reign of God.

Looking at the statements with development as theme, the UCCP are against the following issues: globalization, mining, destruction of the environment, immoral social order, the uncomprehensive peasant program, and overpopulation. These things contradict the values of the kingdom of God because it is fueled mainly by greed.

In the UCCP's Statement of Faith it says, "WE BELIEVE God is working to make each person a new being in Christ and the whole world His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is present where faith in Jesus Christ is shared, where healing is given to the sick, where food is given to the hungry, where light is given to the blind, where liberty is given to the captive and oppressed, where love, justice and peace, prevail." In its commentary of the passage Cariño said, "The preaching and teaching of Jesus were all centered on the

Kingdom of God as God's hope for the world. Jesus' parables were almost entirely parables of the Kingdom, prefiguring in human life and in the life of society the shape of human relations, the demands, the perspectives, the orientations and the hopes that life in the Kingdom exemplify."¹⁸⁷ It is pro-people and pro-poor as the lowest of society was given special attention by Jesus himself. Development should benefit the poor. What are these values that the Kingdom exemplify? The UCCP believes these are love, justice, truth and compassion as reflected in its Constitution and By-Laws. Article II Section 5 says "The fundamental values, of love, justice, truth and compassion are the heart of our witness to the world and our service to the church."

Mission and Human Rights. The statements under human rights are the following arranged chronologically: Resolution urging the passage of H.B. 2141 calling for the creation of a Moral Commission (1962), Statement on Martial Law and expression of concern on related issues (1974), On the Mindanao Situation (1978), A resolution on the restoration of civil liberties and the dismantling of the machinery of Martial Law (1978), Resolution for the Creation of the Human Rights Desk (1978), Statement on Indigenous People (1994), Resolution on Child Labor (1998), Resolutions on Peace Process and Opposition to bury Marcos' remains in the Libingan ng mga Bayani (1998), Resolution Against Balikatan Exercises 02-01. Western Visayas Conference (WVC) (2002), Supporta sa Kapahayagan ng Council of Bishops Hinggil sa Balikatan Exercises (2002), Southeast Luzon Conference (SELC) expressing their support to the statement issued by the COB concerning Balikatan exercise (2002), Mungkahing Resolusyon Hinggil sa Pakikiisa sa

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 50.

Pagsuporta sa Isasagawang Isang Matahimik na Kilos Protesta nga mga magsasaka sa Timog Katagalugan (SELC Ministry Statement) (2002), Statement Denouncing Military Atrocities in General Santos City and Suburbs (SCSDC) (2002), Resolution of Great Concern Regarding the Current Explosive Breakout in Human Rights Violations particularly (2006), Adopt the 8th NYA Resolution No. 5 Series of 2010 on the Illegal Arrest of Dr. Alex Montes (2010), Adopt the Resolution from Kumperencia Katalugan Hinggil sa Morong 43, Pagpalaya kay Dr. Alex Montes at 42 Kasamahan at paglulunsad ng mga pag-aaral at talakayan sa lahat ng saklaw ng kumperensya hinggildito at iba pang kaugnay na usapin para sa higit na pagkaunawa (2010), Adopt the statement of concern regarding Dr. Amelito Elio and others in their alleged involvement with the New People's Army (2010), UCCP Statement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Concerns (2014).

How does UCCP understand human rights? It is rooted to the biblical concept of persons created in the image of God. When Jesus said that those who serve the least in society is serving, he is introducing a radical concept about the dignity of the human being. It must be taken into account that in Jesus' time, majority of the people were slaves and only 1% of the entire population have the power economically and politically. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus narrated how he will judge the nations in the second coming, and he will judge them on how they treat the lowest of the low. In verse 40 he said, "And the [I] will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" What we do to the least of God's family, we do it to the divine. And out of this the UCCP upholds the modern but secular concept of human rights.

In Section 11 of the UCCP Constitution and by Laws is states, “In accordance with the biblical understanding that all persons are created in the image of God, the Church affirms and upholds the inviolability of the rights of persons as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human R and other agreements on human rights...” In the UCCP Statement of Faith on regards to the understanding of what is a person, “WE BELIEVE, persons are created in the image of God and destined to live in community with God, with other persons and with all creation...” In the commentary Like a Mustard Seed, “Being created in the ‘image of God’ would also mean that the human person is created with dignity. And it is in the context of a human community that such dignity should be enhanced and preserved. A human person should not be treated like a property nor valued for a peso or a dollar. It is inhuman indeed to exploit people for the sake of monetary gain.”

With these imbedded to the belief of the church, the statements issued on the General Assemblies are basically a stand against human rights abuses, church members accused of being communists, the abuse on indigenous people, Martial Law victims, child labor, military abuses, war games, and even abuses against the LGBT community. As a theme UCCP is strong on human rights issues because of the belief of human dignity.

While this is the understanding of UCCP on the themes proclamation, development and human rights, it must be stressed that these are parts of their whole understanding of mission. Separately, proclamation, development and human rights does not constitute the entire mission and even the three is not entirely the themes that can comprehensively describe mission. But as far as seen in the UCCP General Assembly documents these are the themes that is UCCP’s contribution to the wider mission of God.

Missio Dei is God's mission and the UCCP has participated and continues to participate in their contextual understanding of mission. And because of this there is no need to elevate a theme higher than the other as all three are equally valid as expression of mission. Perhaps in the life and ministry of the church a particular theme rose in prominence based on context. But as we can see from most of the General Assemblies' statements, the three themes are fairly equally expressed.

It is just what the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – we were all made to drink of one Spirit." The UCCP is just part of the one body of Christ. As an analogy, the UCCP is like the nervous system of the human body. Within that system are bits and parts that compose the whole system. But the nervous system is not the whole body. It has specific function for the entire body. Now if the spinal column is shattered, the whole system and the entire body suffers as those below the spine would not be able to respond to the brain signals sent to that part. As in the church, if the UCCP argues of which theme is supposedly the correct mission, its mission work will suffer affecting its ministry and service to the wider community.

Implications

What are then the missiological implications of these documents to the life and mission of the UCCP? The first implication is that the United Church of Christ in the Philippines is more closely inclined to the Missio Dei concept rather than the traditional understanding of mission as proclamation specifically on evangelism alone. This means

that the UCCP do have proclamation in its participation of God's mission and to say that UCCP has no evangelism is simply untrue. It is more correct to say that UCCP does not focus exclusively on the theme of proclamation alone as it also deals with mission as development and mission and human rights.

Second, it has important implications on the various ministries of the churches. In every local church there are basically three committees Christian Witness and Service (CWS), Christian Education and Nurture (CEN), and Christian Stewardship and Resource Development (CSR) that handle the programs of the church. If all of these programs are rooted to the mission understanding of the UCCP then there is direction and cohesion in the implementation of the programs. For example, the missiological theme emphasized is proclamation. In the Christian Witness Committee, they could come up with programs focus on strengthening ecumenical relations with other churches by doing activities together. One such activity is the Vacation Church School. But they could initiate programs such as doing evangelistic activities showcasing the unified effort of the churches in the community in their witness to Christ.

The same missiological theme can be expressed in the CEN committee. Educating the members on why the ecumenical spirit is important and why doing witness and service to the community is part of the life of a follower of Christ. Instead of highlighting the differences of the various churches, why can't we teach the similarities and commonalities of following Christ helping us to relate and work well with other churches in the community.

In the CSR committee, they could implement programs to uplift the poor in their members as they are a valuable resource. Usually church development is focused on the

development of the physical edifice of the church but almost have no programs for the development of the human resource especially the poor. They too can contribute in the mission of God but remains untapped as the churches focus on physical development alone. Allowing the poorest member of the churches to be equipped to do service for others will empower them as they will feel they are part of the mission of God. Strengthening their witness through service. If the lowest members are equipped to do service, then the whole church can be effective as other members will be challenged to do the same.

All three committees can have cohesion in their programs with the other two missiological themes mission as development and mission and human rights.

Third, the study is a challenge to the UCCP leadership to seriously have a cohesive unified understanding of mission based on the life and story of the UCCP. This study is just a step towards increasing awareness of how we do mission as a church. The presence of so many conflicts in local churches and the conferences with regards to the understanding of mission points to the reality that there is no cohesion because of the lack of appreciation or knowledge to the statements throughout our history in relation to Philippine history. Although the study has its own limitations, its findings will help facilitate conflicts within the church as based from the General Assembly the highest policy making body of the entire church, the missiological character of the church is fairly balanced among the missiological themes of proclamation, development and human rights. There is no need for competing one another as the UCCP is a part of the Body of Christ participating in God's mission.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

“The church’s mission flows from the identity of God and his Christ. When you know who God is, when you know who Jesus is, witnessing mission is the unavoidable outcome.”¹⁸⁸ The United Church of Christ in the Philippines since its inception has been a united and uniting church, seeking other churches and other organizations to be united in doing God’s mission. It is because of its diversity stemming from various Protestant traditions, ecumenical spirit and witness in a predominantly Roman Catholic country opens itself to various misunderstandings and conflicts both internal and external that forge its identity as a church. It is in this context the researcher aims to find out the missiological character of the UCCP in order to provide a unified understanding of how the church participate in God’s mission.

In order to find this missiological character of the UCCP, this study studied the official statements coming from the highest policy making body of the church, the General Assembly. It is this body where representatives of local churches and conferences and the UCCP National Council officers. Both lay and clergy converge after a number of years to issue statements that give direction and meaning to the life and ministry of the church. Only those statements missiological in nature are being analyzed and the context of every statement is considered to get a better understanding of why the church issued such a

¹⁸⁸ Wright, *The Mission of God*, 66–67.

statement. Although there were some General Assemblies where the researcher could not get a hold of, most of the assemblies' statements have been analyzed and studied.

Mission is the act of sending and *Missio Dei* gives us the understanding that God is a missionary God. Not only does God is the authority behind the sending of people, but actually goes ahead in doing mission. In the Old Testament witness, although the history of Israel was not concerned of sending out missionaries to worship Yahweh, they have the understanding that it was God's act of converting people to worship the one true God in Jerusalem. The God's redemptive work beginning in the Garden of Eden culminating to the eschatology of having a new heaven and a new earth is the vision where God's influence is expanding culminating in everything under divine rule.

In the New Testament, the person of Jesus is the paradigm of being sent by God, who was God in human flesh, and sending his followers to preach the good news of God's love. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, the church continued the ministry and message of Jesus and even encountering the workings of the Spirit where the gospel was well received and convicted people of God's love. From Jerusalem, the gospel began to take root in Europe and out emerged Western civilization. Conquering lands in the Africa, Asia and Latin America, Christendom became a global religion and the gospel took root in various cultures.

In the aftermath of World War II, former colonies of Western countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America gained their independence. Nationalism and indigenous Christianity began challenging Christian Western theology and the concept of mission was radically changed. Instead of Western "mother churches" sending support to "missionary churches" in the Third World, the relationship and doing mission changed. With these changes in

doing mission, missiological themes began emerging especially on how churches relate with one another and do mission in the world.

While doing mission still retained the idea of the church's participation in God's mission, various themes came about especially in the witness of the UCCP.

The first missiological theme is mission as proclamation. Evangelism generally falls into this category. In this theme it focuses on the lifestyle of Christians and the moral order of churches as an effective witness to people outside of the church. It focuses on the verbal and non-verbal proclamation of churches and Christians. Proclamation also includes the strengthening of ecumenical relations among churches and cooperative efforts of churches to witness to the world the unity of Christ's followers in doing mission.

The second missiological theme is mission as development. Believing that the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached is a process of development that humanity and the whole creation will be leading into. As God acted in history no less evident in the historicity of Jesus, churches in participating in God's mission looks at development in all aspects society as reflection of God's movement. Economic development, stewardship of God's creation and the upliftment of society is seen as going towards or straying from God's eschatological vision.

The third missiological theme is mission and human rights. Human rights is a modern secular concept that is important for the church to be engaged into. It closely relates to the human dignity and the Christian concept of persons created in the image of God. The reality of the oppression and suffering of people by race, creed, gender, class and even sexual orientation have challenged the life and ministry of the church. As God love all kinds of people, the church also has to love them as well. Hence, churches are

engaging in human rights issues with other secular and even interfaith organizations in promoting human rights as part of doing God's mission.

Conclusion

Analyzing the General Assembly documents of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, the researcher made the following discoveries. First, the missiological themes found in the documents can be categorized under mission as proclamation, mission as development and mission and human rights from the General Assembly missiological statements. All throughout the years of the existence of the General Assembly, statements with mission as proclamation has been identified as having the most number with 19, while the other two themes have the same 17 statements all in all.

The UCCP understand of mission as proclamation in the spirit of strengthening ecumenical relations and church unity as its witness to the world. Believing in Jesus' prayer that "they may be one", the church emphasized cooperation with other churches and not proselyting as a more effective way of witnessing.

The UCCP understanding of mission as development is towards the eschatological vision of the kingdom of God. The core values of love, truth, justice and compassion is what the UCCP believes are characteristics of this kingdom. Any human development that contradicts these values are to be challenged as they do not provide the life of abundance promised by Jesus.

The UCCP understanding of mission and human rights is biblically rooted to the concept of persons created in the image of God. Because of this they promote human rights because all persons are worthy in God's sight and can be redeemed.

All three themes are expressions of UCCP's participation of God's mission. Being sent by God to do mission in Philippine society and to the Filipino people, based from the General Assembly missiological statements is how UCCP does mission.

Recommendations

With that this study makes the following recommendations which will really benefit the whole church.

First, the findings of this study will be disseminated to each conference of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines especially when the issue of the understanding of mission is hotly debated in a local church. By knowing the history and the context of how these statements came to be helps in the identity of the church in doing mission.

Second, the Office of the Clergy have a copy of this study for the office to help in sharing the information of the missiological character of the UCCP. It can then create programs educating and nurturing the clergy equipping them to discussing to the members how the UCCP does its mission in its history.

Third, the result of this study be discussed and analyzed in the theological formation centers of the UCCP and other seminaries who may be interested in the missiological character of this church. It is beneficial for the formation of the pastors to be rooted in the missiological character of the UCCP and even encourage other seminaries of other denominations to study their own churches.

Fourth, a soft-copy of this study be available to the mission partners of the UCCP. It will help foster better understanding in our partnership with other churches and seek opportunities where a partnership is viable especially when there are so many members who are working outside of the Philippines.

Finally, an organized and proper documentation of the General Assembly documents be undertaken especially at the National Office. The researcher noticed several documents missing and has to rely on other sources in order to get a gist of what the statements were. An improved documentation of documents is vital to the witness and story of the UCCP.

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