

FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Justice, Peace, and
the Integrity of Creation



CONTENTS

- 2 The United Evangelical Mission –
Common faith, common life, common action!
- 3 Justice, peace, and the integrity of creation
- 4 Human rights
- 5 Peace, reconciliation, and interfaith dialogue
- 6 Social and economic justice
- 7 Commitment to climate and environmental justice
- 8 Climate protection in practice: Energy-efficient stoves
- 8 Credits

The United Evangelical Mission – Common faith, common life, common action!

The United Evangelical Mission is an international communion of 35 churches in Africa (Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania), Asia (China, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka), and Germany. The v. Bodelschwingh Foundation Bethel is also included. The roots of the UEM date back to 1828. Most of its member churches emerged from the work of three German missionary societies. Once the churches in Africa and Asia had become independent, they continued to maintain close bilateral relations with Germany and the mission headquarters in Wuppertal. The UEM has been an international communion since 1996, in which the equal participation of all members in all decisions on finances, content, and structure is not only set down in writing, but practised on a daily basis.

Today this communion overcomes barriers between people, ethnicities, nations, and denominations. Together we stand up for a consistent commitment to the global challenges of our time: advocacy (reconciliation, peace, human rights, climate, environment), diaconia, development (education, women, volunteer and scholarship programme), evangelism, and partnership. The UEM rests on these five pillars and participates in God's mission in the world.

The head office is in Wuppertal, Germany. The UEM also operates regional offices in Africa (Dar es Salaam), Asia (Medan), and Germany (Wuppertal).



The pilgrims on the “Ecumenical Pilgrimage for Germany (Wuppertal): Climate Justice” arrived in Wuppertal on 24 October 2016.

In a meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Berlin in September 2015, the HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM (FORUM MENSCHENRECHTE), a network of over 50 German human rights organisations, called for human rights to be made the guiding principle of German foreign policy.



Justice, peace, and the integrity of creation

Together the members of the UEM advocate for peace and justice. Many UEM members were and remain directly affected by violent conflicts and wars: Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Moreover, the situation in almost all UEM member countries is characterised by social and economic injustice and poverty. Broad swathes of the population have no access to education, health care, land, or food. Worryingly, the UEM community is also witnessing increasing violence in Germany against migrants, as well as the isolationist policy of the European Union.

THE UEM SUPPORTS PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH:

- Advocacy work
- Education and training
- Project assistance
- Networking and international programmes
- Public awareness campaigns

OUR PRIORITIES ARE:

- Human rights
- Peace and reconciliation work
- Interfaith dialogue
- Social and economic justice
- Climate and environmental justice

»
We believe that human beings are created in the image of God and therefore have inalienable dignity and rights. Therefore we promote and defend human rights, we support initiatives to solve conflict peacefully, we join efforts to achieve just social and economic conditions and good governance, and we strive for the protection of the environment.





Pastor
June Ver Mangao
(front row centre)

» Human rights

Another UEM priority is solidarity with churches that have been affected by serious disasters. This primarily refers to solidarity with churches in the Philippines, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia (West Papua). Through solidarity visits, project support, education, and training, the UEM strengthens the work of these churches as they champion human rights and protect victims from injustice and violence. Since 1996, the UEM has presented an annual human rights campaign on a specific topic in order to raise public awareness of human rights issues.

The current campaign can be found at:
www.vemission.org/themen/advocacy.html

EXAMPLE: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS UNDER THREAT

Since 2005, the UEM has supported the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) in its work to end human rights violations such as political assassinations, intimidation, torture, and impunity. People like Pastor June Ver Mangao are repeatedly exposed to human rights violations and repression. The church commissioned Pastor Mangao to work with political prisoners and support their families. Pastor Mangao was monitored, threatened, and persecuted by members of the military again and again. Even though the perpetrators are known, no action has been taken against them. Despite international interventions, Pastor Mangao had to go into hiding to protect himself and his family.

The number of political killings and forcible disappearances has decreased, but many cases remain unresolved. The UEM supports the UCCP through legal assistance and helps to educate children whose parents have been killed for political reasons. In 2007, the UEM and other (religious) organizations in Germany founded the "German Action Network Human Rights – Philippines". The network is an effort to raise awareness in Germany of human rights violations in the Philippines. It promotes international dialogue between the Philippine government and civil society organizations, parliamentarians, and government officials in order to put an end to political killings and impunity.

» Peace, Reconciliation, and Interfaith Dialogue

The UEM uses projects and exchanges of personnel to support initiatives to overcome violence, xenophobia, racism, discrimination of any kind, and intolerance towards members of other religious communities.

EXAMPLE:

RECONCILIATION PROCESSES

At least 800,000 people died during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Members of the Hutu ethnic group fell upon the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutus and killed men, women, and children in scarcely a hundred days. In 2014, the Presbyterian Church (EPR) launched a victim-perpetrator group to initiate a reconciliation process. Another highlight has been the APRED network (Initiative for Peace, Reconciliation, and Sustainable Development in Africa's Great Lakes Sub-region). This joint project by the churches in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo is supported by the UEM and promotes peace initiatives in the region.

Such initiatives include a theatre project, "Badilika", with young actors and actresses from all three countries. By working through their experiences and prejudices together, they set reconciliation processes into motion. Special attention is placed on the cooperation of the churches in the region.



The African theatre group "Badilika" performs for peace and reconciliation.



In November 2016, the "Badilika" theatre group was awarded the Ecumenical Peace Prize for Central Africa by Günter Nooke, Chancellor Angela Merkel's Personal Representative for Africa.



The participants at the conference in Stellenbosch were unanimous in their opinion that the churches and their congregations play an important role in bringing marginalized people into the mainstream of society.

» Social and economic justice

In almost all countries of the global South, where UEM members are located, many people suffer social and economic injustice and extreme poverty. Many have no access to education, land, health care, or adequate food. The UEM encourages networking and experiential exchanges about the initiatives and programmes from churches that are advocating for social and economic justice in the context of globalization.

EXAMPLE:

THE CHURCH AS A PLACE OF INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

Social injustice is present in all communities. There are marginalized people all over the world, and the reasons for their exclusion are many: extreme poverty, no access to education, escape and expulsion, traditional customs, disabilities, and diseases such as AIDS.

In 2014, the UEM invited church leaders from Africa, Asia, and Germany to an international conference in Stellenbosch, South Africa for an exchange of insights about inclusive communities. The aim of the conference was to find a common path towards an open and inclusive community, to bring marginalized people back into the mainstream of society and to involve them in the discussion. Churches must once again be a place of home and refuge for the marginalized. The UEM and its member churches want to collaborate on developing models for inclusive communities and thus also provide an incentive to create inclusive societies. Everyone with experience designing inclusive communities was invited to participate in the process.



Congolese-Rwandan-Burundian exchange for the 2014 UEM Youth Climate Day



National Youth Camp in Windhoek – tree planting for the 2012 UEM Youth Climate Day

» Commitment to climate and environmental justice

The UEM is committed to climate justice and environmental protection. The international church community wants to make people more aware of the devastating consequences of climate change for the people of the UEM member churches in the global South. The effects are particularly severe for those who live below the poverty line. The UEM is a member of various ecumenical networks for climate justice, such as the German Klimaplattform (climate platform) and Climate Alliance Germany, comprised of religious and secular non-governmental organizations. Together they want to influence the German government and the European Union to significantly reduce CO2 emissions in the coming years.

EXAMPLE:

CLIMATE PROTECTION WORLDWIDE!

The UEM supports climate protection projects worldwide, for example the 2015 climate pilgrimage from Flensburg to the UN climate change conference in Paris. A broad ecumenical alliance urged politicians from around the world to agree on sustainable and binding climate targets. The UEM held the Mountain Festival (Bergfest) in Wuppertal in honour of the pilgrimage, with many campaigns and discussion events, as well as a cultural programme. In 2014, the UEM hosted the World Council of Churches' Working Group on Climate Change at its facilities in Wuppertal. The group toured various environmentally friendly congregations in the area, as well as one of the biggest polluters in Germany, the brown coal (lignite) open-cast mining operation in Greifswald.

The UEM and other ecumenical partners have celebrated Youth Climate Day since 2012. Young people from around the world organize bicycle demonstrations, street theatre, and much more to draw attention to the continuing destruction of the environment and make climate protection a reality. The creativity here knows no bounds, and everyone can join in the fun. At the same time, the UEM assists with the climate and environmental programmes of its member churches and with exchanges of views on eco-theology and climate spirituality.



EXAMPLE:

CLIMATE PROTECTION IN PRACTICE: ENERGY-EFFICIENT STOVES

In Rwanda, the Anglican Church distributed 1,050 Canarumwe-brand stoves to low-income families in the region. The stoves save both time and money, since they need less wood, and they are easier on the environment.

CO₂ savings: up to 40 per cent
Time savings: 37 hours per month
CO₂ savings (per year): 3.22 tonnes –
equivalent to the CO₂ emitted by a car
over 10,000 kilometres.



Canarumwe stoves



United Evangelical Mission
Communion of churches
in three Continents

IMPRINT

Published by

United Evangelical Mission
A IconCommunion of Churches on Three Continents
Department for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation
Rudolfstrasse 137 • 42285 Wuppertal • www.ve-mission.org

+49 202 890 04 - 168

+49 202 890 04 - 179

jp-pic@ve-mission.org

Text: Janis Geschke

Edited by Brunhild von Local

Translation: Casey Butterfield

Cover photo: Arendra Wiemardo / UEM

Photos: Thomas Trutschel / phototech / Auswärtiges Amt,
Pascal Santos Mazirungu, UCCP, Marion Unger / UEM,
Claus Schrowange / UEM, Uli Baege / UEM,
Ramona Hedtmann / UEM

Layout: MediaCompany GmbH

Print:

Circulation: 300

© United Evangelical Mission, Wuppertal, January 2017

The United Evangelical Mission follows a resource-efficient and sustainable production method for prints.



Dr. Jochen Motte
Member of the UEM Board
Executive Secretary of the department for
Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation



Katja Bähr
Assistant

