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What is the basic theological grounding of your church group?

Rev. Rebecca Quimada Sienes the former president of the UUCP and Presently the Chairperson of the Planning and Finance Department of the Church and daughter of the UUCP founder explains; Since Roman Catholicism has been the religion our forefathers knew and learned in the Philippines, so, I would say we are liberal Christians. Among the pioneer Philippine Universalists, they preached God is Love, preached the message of Jesus of love and compassion, use the Bible, sang the common hymns sung by Protestants, etc. We don't worship images, saints, say the rosary, etc.

The Founder Rev. Toribio Quimada in his understanding of the Bible pitched his message at the central point that “God is Love” with this affirmation he preached that in the realm of god’s love there is no eternal condemnation. Therefore in God’s love everybody is saved. With this theological position the Christian teaching of hell fire or eternal damnation is irrelevant. The UUCP affirms that Love is the doctrine of this Church.

Bob Guerrero Congregational President of the Bicutan Congregation in Manila says: The theological grounding of our church is Christian. We read the Bible at every worship and everyone here comes from some form of Christian background.

The Roman Catholics adopted the native religious beliefs and practices giving most of them a different meaning. And such religious practices such as fiestas and homage to saints, religious rites at burials. Rituals at name giving at birth and building houses, Harvest festivals and faith healing are still widely practiced in the Philippines. With the introduction of Protestant Christianity more progressive thought in faith and belief systems have shaped the society.

Majority of our UU membership is drawn from depressed farming communities. Characteristically, their faith is shaped by their surroundings and life situations. Their lives are sustained by their farms. So, their lives and their farms are intertwined with nature. They look up to the sun and rain to be fair to them and hope that no calamity do harm to them and their farm. A people who have seen unjust powers and structures that has treated them badly and with having many past experiences with civic and political authority make vain promises and abandon them have lost trust and have pledged hope in the source they identify as God from whom they draw their strength. So, including UUs a particular social class in the Philippines is in the struggle to liberate them selves and is inspired by certain teachings I in the scriptures and hold to certain theological positions. This is affirmed by Joseph Santos Lyons and I quote “..they are conscious of the ideas of liberation theology that from time to time gives them joy amidst suffering. They find this within Unitarian Universalism, in ways that I believe to be amazing as an American middle-class UU.”

Tet Gallardo from the University of the Philippines says “I would personally term "spiritual humanism". I believe that faith should adhere to both the material and the intangibles such as faith, hope, love not just among people but among all universal systems and non-systems...” At present among UUs there are those who are spiritual Humanist. And they make a great contribution by constantly reminding the community of its social responsibility.

To summarize I may say that UUs at present, as they are found in all stages of faith are willing and open to the process that it takes in the movement towards spiritual maturity.

Are there emerging theological issues for your church group?

While we share and draws from many sources; Direct experience in all cultures, words and deeds of prophetic men and women, wisdom from world religions, and humanist teachings as the bases for our authority, we continue to treat issues raised for more clarity such as Tet Gallardo asks “If there is no doctrine, what are the bases for authority and what are the parameters for authority on all church practices?”

Rebecca Quimada says: Homosexuality and social status of guys and lesbians is an issue. This may be so within the religious circles. Still there is no serious social awareness of respect acceptance and equal treatment.

On the other hand Guys and lesbians make their way in the larger community and it is a struggle.

Reproductive Health education is an issue as there is opposition from the Roman Catholic Church and connected groups against educating youth.

There is less prominence given to youth in society. There is little or no attention paid to the voice of youth in society.

Addiction to drugs is becoming a major issue in society. These social issue are issue for our church group.

What does your church group believe Unitarian Universalism shares internationally?

Tet says: I believe UUism intentionally shares equality, respect, community among fellow human beings. I like this church because it is evolving and people are so involved in the unfolding of our faith in the present.

Rebecca Says: UUCP believes that the principles of religious tolerance, equity and compassion, justice and peace are the tenets that UUs share globally.

Bob says: I would say that UU in the Philippines and the world is an alternative to traditional, conservative, and dogmatic religion. The contribution it makes to the

world is that it encourages understanding and dialogue among different people and different groups, which ultimately translates into greater peace.

I say Unitarian Universalism provide space for every person to be the best person possible and create the environment in which a person can search for truth and meaning in life and free one's self in to wholeness.