

A Sabbatical Opportunity for UU Ministers

with

The UU Church of the Philippines

I. The Sabbatical Program

The staff and the UU leaders of the UU Church of the Philippines seek to further develop their skills in order to offer effective ministry. Key areas for skill development are:

- Nurturance of the UU faith through teaching and articulation of theological concepts.
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry
- Project development, management and community work.
- Church administration, leadership and financial management.

Experienced UUA ministers are invited to consider applying to spend 3- 4 months of a sabbatical with the UUCP providing skill development in these and other areas. Successful applicants should expect to be engaged in this ministry for approximately 20-hours/week. Contexts will include worship services, traditional classes and less formal discussion groups. The unique skills that a successful applicant brings to this ministry will also be integrated.

The organizing and implementing body for this program will be the UU Church of the Philippines' Religious Education Committee. The UUCP will provide sabbatical program participants with housing and local transportation. Other expenses will be the responsibility of the applicant, with some assistance available from the UUA.

II. Background

The Reverend Toribio Quimada, ordained as a minister of the *Iglesia Universal de Kristo* in 1948, established communications with the Universalist Church of America in the early 1950's. By 1954 his liberal religious tendencies led to a break with *Iglesia Universal de Kristo* and to the creation of a formal relationship with the Universalist Church of America. The UUCP became a member of the International Association for Religious Freedom in 1972 and of the UUA in 1988.

Just one month before the UUCP formally became a member congregation of the UUA, Reverend Toribio Quimada was killed, likely because of his commitment to seeking justice for all people. The UUCP's commitment to justice work continues today.

The 2500 members of the 30 UUCP congregations are mostly on Negros Island, with headquarters in Dumaguete City. The UUCP Mission Statement states:

We believe in a loving God and a just, helpful and caring community. We affirm to promote the welfare of the environment and support for a just and economic, social and spiritual connection that will lead to build an open mind for a wholistic life. We affirm to uphold an equal and peaceful relationship to every person and to every religion because we are here as One Big Family

Currently, the UUCP has several programs on the area of faith, e.g. reproduction of spring-bound worship guides, production of brochures on different subjects on faith, renovation/construction of chapels; partnership church program, social services such as livelihood programs; continuing education such as conferences and seminars; social enterprise, e.g. mango plantation, sugar cane farm, energy tree farm and trucking services. To respond to the calls for growth and self-sufficiency, UUCP has created a financial program called BUILD UU Philippines wherein a 31-room two-floor ladies dormitory will be constructed in Dumaguete City to support the future of its ministry. The fund raising efforts are now in place.

The Philippines is an agricultural country. On Negros Island sugar cane planting is the most popular form of agriculture. Others also plant rice, corn, coconuts, etc. The country has only two kinds of season: hot and rainy. Although the weather pattern has been altered by global climate change, the hot season usually runs from January – June and July –December could be the we season. The country is always frequented by storms. English is a foreign language to the Filipinos, but it is the medium of instruction in schools. Those who would like or love to experience the real life of the poor people will most likely succeed in this program.

Most of the member congregations of the UUCP are concentrated on the island of Negros, though there is a UU congregation in Metro Manila as well as a discussion group. Traveling to the congregations can be challenging, but the majority of them can be reached by four-wheel vehicles. When this is not possible, the means of transportation would be habal-habal (a motorcycle used to carry passengers), tricycles, or walking. There are always rough roads, sometimes it is necessary to cross the same river several times. Though the people that are met along the way are very friendly, sensitive and curious.

When traveling to a congregation is necessary, the UUCP will make sure that the congregation to be visited can be reached by four wheeled vehicles or minimal walking, unless the visiting minister would like to experience a visit to a congregation in a remote place. The UUCP will provide an air-conditioned room in a guest inn or pension house that is closer to the area assigned. Except for the Bicutan congregation and the discussion group in Metro Manila, most of the congregations are in rural areas with farm/market roads. UUCP congregations, in other words, operate in a very different context than UU congregations in the USA. Applicants must understand that there are inherent challenges for visiting ministers, and daily life will be very different than it is in the USA. To reiterate, travel many be occasionally uncomfortable, the weather will be tropical, accommodations will be minimal, the food will be different, and great care must be taken with water to avoid illness. This is a unique and special opportunity, but applicants should enter it with a clear understanding of the challenges.

Please see *Maglipay Universalists: A History of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines* by Fredric J. Muir for further background.

III. Qualifications

Ministers applying must:

- Be planning a sabbatical during the next 24 months,
- Be in Final Fellowship with the UUA and in good standing with the UU Ministers Association,
- Submit a complete application at least 6 months before their sabbatical begins.

Strong consideration will be given to applicants who

- Have experience working in an international context,
- Demonstrate commitment to collegiality,
- Have experience as educators,
- Understand Universalist history and theology,
- Demonstrate proficiency in Preaching, Religious Education, and Pastoral Care.
- Ability to provide assistance in the UUCP's priority program areas

Applicants will be interviewed by UUA staff and recommended to the UUCP for selection.

Sabbatical Opportunity with the UU Church of the Philippines

APPLICATION

To be filled out by applicant Please print clearly or type!

Confidential

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Gender (optional): _____ Date of Birth: _____

Please describe your cultural, racial or ethnic background (optional) _____

Current Ministry: _____

Are you a member of the UUMA: _____

Your application must include

1. An essay with information describing the applicant's
 - experience working/living in an international context,
 - motivation to serve as a sabbatical minister,
 - demonstrated commitment to collegiality,
 - experience as an educator,
 - depth of understanding UU history and theology,
 - proficiency in preaching, religious education, and pastoral care.
2. A sermon and prayer suitable for a UUCP worship service
3. A letter of recommendation from a colleague

**Please send your application to
Office of International Resources
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02180**