

**UNIDAD CRISTIANA DE IGLESIAS MENONITAS - UCIM**  
**(CHRISTIAN UNITY OF MENNONITE CHURCHES)**

**Constitution and By-laws**

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## **Preamble**

Unidad Christiana de Iglesias Menonitas (UCIM) is a unity of congregations forming a region affiliated with South Central Mennonite Conference (SCMC) and all the congregations that form UCIM are thus part of the Mennonite Church USA (MC USA). Together they form a Christian front that works for God's Kingdom and are at the vanguard in the work for peace and justice. Hereafter, in this document, the association is referred to as UCIM.

## **Article I. Name, Address, Area**

- A. The name of the region will be Unidad Christiana de Iglesias Menonitas.
- B. The address will be the address of the current moderator of UCIM.
- C. The area of the Region will be South Texas.

## **Article II. Purpose**

- A. Promote our faith according to the Scriptures, our cultural context, and the Confession of Faith of the Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective.
- B. Promote unity in terms of service, worship, doctrine, and testimony participating in activities of mutual edification and sharing resources (interchange of pulpits, giving and receiving help and counsel.)
- C. Focus vision and give initiatives, counsel, available resources, and support to projects of the affiliated congregations.
- D. Facilitate the dialogue of the Mennonite churches of South Texas and the South Central Mennonite Conference.
- E. Serve as mediator and provide resources in situations of conflict.

## **Article III. Membership of Congregations**

- A. Requirements:
  - 1. Be located in South Texas.
  - 2. Have a clear understanding and acceptance of the Christian doctrine as interpreted by the Anabaptist –Mennonite Confession of Faith from the Mennonite-Anabaptist perspective, using the Bible as a foundation.
  - 3. Be in agreement with the Constitution and By-Laws of UCIM
- B. Expectations and Responsibilities:
  - 1. Support the programs and projects of UCIM and SCMC with prayers and participation.
  - 2. Send a representative to all meetings of the Executive Committee and Annual Business Assembly and a delegate to the Annual Business Assembly.

3. Commit to financially support with ten percent (10%) of its income to the programs and projects of UCIM.
  4. Subscribe to the norms of ministerial and congregational leadership of MC USA. (A Mennonite Polity for Ministerial Leadership)
  5. Seek the counsel and participation of UCIM and SCMC when pastoral vacancies occur, so persons selected share the faith and mission of the SCMC and IM USA, and are eligible to be credentialed by SCMC.
- C. Admission:
- A. Congregations seeking membership will submit a solicitude including relevant information of the organization and structure, current activities, a statement of faith, and a membership list. This should be submitted four months (preferably six months) leaving sufficient time for discernment and processing by the Executive Committee previous the Business Meeting of UCIM.
  - B. Membership will be accepted by a two thirds majority vote of the Executive Committee and acknowledged in the Business Meeting.
- D. Separation:
1. A congregation may request separation from membership from UCIM and SCMC by presenting a written request to the Executive Committees of UCIM and SCMC indicating the motives.
  2. The committees will respond with an effort to establish or maintain communications that can result in as complete an understanding possible, seeking to create a spirit of harmony and mutual respect.
  3. If the separation takes place, it will be announced to the congregations of UCIM.

#### **Article IV. The relation between UCIM and SCMC**

- A. The relationship between UCIM and SCMC fraternal, of mutual support, and respect, maintaining maintaining reciprocal communication, giving and receiving reports of business concerning both.
- B. Both will maintain a relationship loyal to their principles.
- C. UCIM has the privilege of having a representative named by the Executive Committee in the Northern Regional Representative Council of the Conference (NRRC.)
- D. Every congregation has the right to send a delegate for every 25 members or fraction thereof to the Annual Delegate Assembly of SCMC. Active licensed or ordained pastors recognized by SCMC are delegates.
- E. UCIM will support SCMC with a tithe (10%) of the income received from the congregations.

## **Article V. Government**

- A. The government of UCIM is representative through the delegates in the Annual Business Assembly which determines the vision, goals, and needs of the Region.
- B. The Executive Committee attentive to the voice of the Assembly, will fulfill the mission established by the Assembly. The Administrative Committee facilitates the carrying out of the mission.

## **Article VI. Annual Business Assembly**

- A. The Business Assembly will be held the second weekend in the month of January. The notice of the meeting will be given 30 days previous to the Assembly.
- B. Delegates will be active members in the congregations of UCIM which includes
  - 1. the congregational representatives to the Executive Committee from each congregation.
  - 2. an additional representative from each congregation,
  - 3. the pastors and their spouses,
  - 4. the officials of the Administrative Committee.
  - 5. In addition, two members of the Executive Committee of SCMC.
- C. All delegates will represent the interests of their own congregations in the assembly. They have the privilege of voice and vote in the Assembly.
- D. Quorum is established with the representation of the majority of the congregations.
- E. Other persons from the congregations are welcome and will be given participation in the discussions if the moderator acknowledges them. They will not have the right to vote.
- F. The program will include
  - 1. Receive reports of the congregations, of the officers and of others.
  - 2. Evaluate the work of UCIM, searching for and discerning vision, needs, and the direction of the Lord in planning the ministry and program of UCIM.
  - 3. Elect the officers of the Administrative Committee that have been nominated by the Nominating Committee.
  - 4. Evaluate and approve the annual budget presented by the Executive Committee.
- G. An Extraordinary Business Assembly may be convened for urgent situations with the approval of the Executive Committee.

## **Article VII. The Executive Committee (The Southern Regional Representative Council - SRRC)**

- A. The function of the Executive Committee is to listen to the voice of the assembly to discern and fulfill the vision, needs, and guidance of the Lord in planning the ministry and its programs.

- B. It will be composed of the Officials of the Administrative Committee, a representative of each congregation, the pastors of the congregations, and the Regional minister (ex-official). The members will have voice and vote.
- C. The SCMC Executive Committee will send at least one representative to the Executive Committee meetings.
- D. Duly convened meetings of the Executive Committee can take place with the majority (half plus one) of the members present at the hour the meeting was scheduled.
- E. The Executive Committee will have the right to form commissions, committees, or other positions in order to fulfill its obligations required by the Annual Assembly.
- F. In the meetings, a visitor will be given the courtesy of speaking if the moderator of the meeting acknowledges him. Visitors do not have the right to vote.
- G. The Committee will meet every four months.
- H. Congregational Representatives
  - 1. will be members in good standing in the congregation they represent,
  - 2. will be chosen by the congregation,
  - 3. will meet with the Executive Committee to contribute to the development of the programs and activities of UCIM,
  - 4. will present reports to their congregations of the happenings of UCIM,
  - 5. will serve for a term of two years.
- I. An Extraordinary meeting may be convened with two weeks' notice for urgent situations with the approval of the Administrative Committee.

### **Article VIII. The Administrative Committee**

- A. The Administrative Committee will be composed of the moderator, moderator elect, secretary, treasurer, the Congregational Life Coordinator, and the Regional Minister (ex-official).
- B. The Administrative Committee carries out the administrative functions under the direction of the Executive Committee:
  - 1. all actions taken must be approved by the Executive Committee
  - 2. receive the financial reports and consult with the Executive Committee when necessary.
  - 3. prepare the agendas of the Executive Committee advising the Executive Committee members before the meetings.
  - 4. maintain the members of the Executive Committee informed of its actions.
- C. It will meet monthly. Meetings may be conducted through telephone conference calls.

### **Article IX. The Officials and their Functions**

- A. 1. It is a requirement that nominees for offices be active members of a Mennonite Church for a minimum of one year.

2. Recommendations: It is preferable that the nominees to serve as officials have the following qualifications.
  - a. be bilingual in Spanish and English
  - b. have the ability or a resource with the availability of a computer.
  - c. be willing and available to travel in and outside the region
  - d. have honest character, knowledge and convictions of the Biblical Anabaptist faith.

B. Moderator

1. Convene and lead the regular and extraordinary meetings and of the annual business assembly.
2. Oversee the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of UCIM.
3. Write reports and documents concerning the organization.
4. Respond promptly to the correspondence to UCIM.
5. Keep the congregations informed regarding decisions, program, and activities.
6. Will only vote to break a tie.
7. Represent UCIM at the Northern Regional Representative Council of SCMC.
8. Serve for a period of two years.

C. Moderator Elect

1. Take the responsibilities of the Moderator in his absence or if the moderator requires it.
2. Serve for two years as moderator Elect and Two years as Moderator.

C. Recording Secretary

1. Records the minutes of the meetings and maintain the files up to date.
2. Sends notices and reminders about the meetings and planned activities.
3. Serves for two years with option to be re-elected.

D. Treasurer

1. Manages the bank accounts of UCIM.
2. Maintains the accounting and checking accounts up-to date.
3. Presents monthly financial reports to the Administrative Committee, to the Executive Committee meetings, and annually to the Annual Business Assembly meeting, sending a copy to SCMC.
4. Proposes ideas for the annual budget that will be designed together with the Executive Committee to be considered and approved by the delegates in the Annual Business Assembly.
5. Serves for three years with option to be re-elected.
6. Unbudgeted expenses of more than \$3000.00 must be approved by the Executive Committee.
7. The checking account can be signed by the treasurer or a designated member of the Executive Committee.

E. Congregational Life Coordinator

1. Motivates the inter-congregational participation in programs and fraternal activities for the education of all believers and to stimulate unity and service.
2. Plans and carries out events such as hymn sings, Christian worship concerts, summer camps, marriage retreats, seminars about themes of Christian life with emphasis practical for today, etc.
3. Promotes ministries with emphasis on children, youth, men and women, giving ideas and resource to the churches.
4. Designs and publishes a bulletin of news and activities of UCIM every two months for distribution in the congregations.
5. Visits to encourage congregations, especially new congregations.
6. Finds persons who can help collaborate in the functions needed for the Congregational Life committee.
7. Serves for two years with option to be re-election.

**Article X. Regional Conference Minister**

- A. Serves the pastors and leaders of UCIM maintaining contact regularly with them.
- B. Participates in the search for pastors, pastoral reviews and evaluations, and pastoral transitions.
- C. Serves in situations of conflict that will benefit from outside counsel and support.
- D. Meets with the Executive and Administrative Committees in their meetings.
- E. Appointed by SCMC in coordination with the Executive Committee of UCIM.
- F. Responsible to the Executive Committee of UCIM and report to the Executive Committee of SCMC.

**Article XI. Nominations Committee**

- A. Composed of three persons nominated by the Administrative Committee and approved in the Annual Business Assembly.
- B. Considers, evaluates, and recommends the candidates for open positions, and will recommend a candidate to complete the term of vacant positions of elected officers.
- C. Meets three times a year and as needed before the Annual Business Assembly.
- D. Members will serve for three years in alternating terms.

### **Article XII. Vacancies**

In case of a vacancy of one of the elected officials, the nominating committee will recommend a candidate to the Administrative Committee for its approval and that person will serve until the next Annual Business Assembly.

### **Article XIII. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year will be from February 1 through January 31 of the following year.

### **Article XIV. Representation in Other Organizations and Agencies**

The Executive Committee will name representatives from within the Executive Committee to represent UCIM to other organizations or agencies. The representative will keep the Executive Committee informed of the organization/agency.

### **Article XV. Amendments**

Amendments to be considered must be presented by a delegate three months before the Annual Business Assembly to the Executive Committee for their study and consideration. After consideration, they will be sent to the delegates 15 days before the Annual Business Assembly for their discussion and approval.

Approved in Extra-ordinary Assembly April 9, 2011.

Felipe Almodovar, Moderator

Leona Diener, Secretary

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. Eph. 4:11-12 NLT*