



UCCSA BRAND GUIDELINES

United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

Brand Guidelines August 2013 Version 1

INTRODUCTION

Every member of the UCCSA family is a communicator of the UCCSA story. This booklet is a resource guide for communicators who work within the administration, regions, synods and local churches of the UCCSA.

This is *Version 1* of the UCCSA Brand Guidelines. It has emerged in this phase of our mission journey as we take seriously the need to strengthen our communications within our family and engage in life giving business and development ventures with other partners. Our conversation and interaction with our partners in the corporate world have challenged us to give serious reflection to the UCCSA brand.

If you are reading this you're almost certainly a member of the UCCSA family. We trust that this guide will prove a useful resource to you in your continued engagement with the UCCSA and your commitment to positively change the world, beginning with wherever you are placed in your local church or community.

The UCCSA Brand Guidelines is a work in progress which is likely to undergo several revisions as we clarify our identity and purpose; and as we becoming even clearer about who we are, what we do and why we are church and co-workers in God's mission.

This version of the Brand Guidelines contains the following headings and information:

- 1. The Background**
- 2. The UCCSA Brand**
- 3. The UCCSA Brand Position**
- 4. Brand Expression: Editorial Guidelines**
- 5. Brand Expression: Design Elements**
- 6. Social Media Guidelines**

We are committed to reviewing and revising these guidelines. As communications becomes embedded in our work we will add brand expression guidelines related to the visual elements such as photography, typesetting and formatting that may be useful in creating inspiring and meaningful messages for the UCCSA brand.

THE BACKGROUND

Vision Plan 2006

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa for several months was in a process of prayer, discernment and consultation with its members which began in 2005. It culminated in a gathering of representatives of all of the five countries of the church at the Moffat Mission in Kuruman, South Africa in 2006. There members developed a framework and catalyst for mission throughout the synods, regions and local churches that are part of the UCCSA family.

The Vision Plan was a three year plan spanning 2006-2009. The framework that emerged was a Vision Plan which focused on four key mission priorities for the church: *Leadership Development; Mission & Evangelism; Stewardship; and Oversight*. One of the key strategies of the plan was a clear commitment to Political, Economic and Social Justice. The church committed itself to rekindle the prophetic responsibility of the church for an appropriate response to political, economic and social justice.

The Mission Programme 2011 and beyond

The UCCSA undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the Vision Plan in August 2010 to discern the next step in its mission journey. The evaluation process resulted in the development of a Mission Programme which is to be the sequel of the Vision Plan with the theme: ***‘Christ is Calling Us: Participating in Suffering and Struggle’***. The objectives of this second phase of the Vision Plan and the UCCSA Mission Programme are to:

1. Enable Local Churches to be more faithful in their participation in the Mission of God.
2. Increase Commitment to Solidarity and Prophetic Witness and the quest for Justice.
3. Train, develop and conscientize the church for God's Mission.
4. Deepen life affirming relationships, identity and accountability.

Communications & Justice Advocacy

Effective communications is an essential part of the Vision plan and Mission programme activities of the UCCSA. One of the results of the Mission Programme is the missionary appointment of the Communications and Justice Advocacy Officer in January, 2013. The core responsibilities of the Communications and Justice Advocacy Officer is to assist the UCCSA to develop and manage communication strategies for the ministry, mission and public witness of the UCCSA; to publish the monthly UCCSA Newsletter; to manage the website, internet and social media profile of UCCSA; to facilitate communications about advocacy and justice issues; and to accompany local churches and communities in telling their stories.

THE UCCSA BRAND

What is a Brand?

One university describes a brand as “the sum total of our experience with a product, a service or an organisation, a relationship built between the entity and its audiences. Brands help us know what to expect... Each new product or service, every transaction and every message is intended to reinforce what we believe about them.”

The UCCSA brand has been around for more than two hundred years; in fact we count it from March, 1799. But we have not always consistently communicated a clear and common understanding of our work and witness as a church; and perceptions of who we are vary widely from one group to the next. And in too many cases the perceptions fall short of our reality.

The UCCSA is one of the oldest churches and mission organisations in Southern Africa. We must continue to boldly share and tell the UCCSA story.

The UCCSA Brand

The UCCSA is ***One Church in Five Countries.***

At the heart of UCCSA’s self-understanding is a commitment to Justice and *Ubuntu*. We believe in God’s preferential option of the poor and oppressed. Whether we are preaching the good news of the Gospel, teaching, or tending loving service to those in need we strive to do each of our acts of love and our deeds of faith in the spirit of the African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. In the words of one of Africa’s leading sons and statesman Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

“One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.”

We recognise the importance of stories...

The UCCSA recognises the importance and value of story-telling as part of the African culture and tradition of the UCCSA. A story is understandable, relatable and memorable. Stories are an important part of how we communicate, and *how* we share *who* we are, *what* we do, and *why* we do our work as church.

We may never be able to tell all of the stories that form the narrative of the UCCSA or even agree on the stories that make up the narrative but one thing should always be clear: Every story should reflect the fact that as a church our primary mission- and our greatest contribution- is to share the love of God and Jesus Christ with the communities in which we live, and to inspire a new generation of thinkers, doers and leaders to share God's love in word and action.

We recognise the important of context and place

The UCCSA is quintessentially an African church; in particular we are part of the innovative and resilient culture that is Southern Africa. Southern Africa is globally recognised as the cradle of humanity, and whether it's the miracle that is South Africa that has arisen from the shackles of apartheid; or the discovery of a giant fresh water aquifer in Ohangwena, Namibia; or the renowned paintings and poetry of Malangatana Valente Ngwenya of Mozambique; or the resilience of the people of Zimbabwe; or the living legacy of the UCCSA as the oldest church in Botswana with more than 240 congregations, throughout the country; we are an African church in Southern Africa. Our synergy with the Southern African region is an authentic part of who we are, that we celebrate and share with the world.

It is part of our mission calling that we know we are, what we believe and we are committed to do our best to share God's love wherever we are.

The UCCSA BRAND POSITION

The UCCSA in its mission statement makes clear what the UCCSA stands for as a Christian Church, the work we desire to do and how we will make a contribution to our members, and the people of the Southern Africa Region, the wider African region and the world.

MISSION STATEMENT

The UCCSA, a church in five countries, is called and committed to be a caring and inclusive community that bears testimony to the fullness of life in Christ, and proclaims that in Christ there is a future.

The UCCSA Mission Statement will act as a guide for the development of our communications. We will do our best to ensure that this mission statement is real for every person who is connected and who connects with the UCCSA family.

In our communications we will share stories about how the UCCSA has made a difference; about the gifted individuals both within and outside of the UCCSA church family who are champions of the cause of justice and who work in the spirit of Ubuntu for the greater good of Southern Africa.

The UCCSA Brand Personality and Attributes

The UCCSA brand personality reflects the uniqueness and spirit of Africa. To date, we have shared in mission and ministry in Southern Africa for 214 years and contributed significantly to the transformation of health, education, faith and nation building in the region. As church we remain passionately committed to justice, mission and transformational leadership as we pursue the fullness of life given by Jesus Christ. For all these years, and in the midst of many challenges, we are still a Church that is ***diverse, welcoming*** and ***hopeful*** ! We strive for true ***humility*** in our nature, but we're also learning to balance this with a sense of ***pride*** in our contributions and their far-reaching effects.

We take our stand alongside the global Christian Church. We are truly citizens of the world ***committed*** to walking together on the journey of transformation for justice, equality and human rights. We ***passionately believe*** that in Christ there is a future. And that is why we're ***optimistic*** about this next phase of our mission journey.

BRAND EXPRESSION: Editorial Guidelines

What to Communicate

The UCCSA Brand voice should ***communicate personality*** and reflect the values of the brand. Since we are diverse, welcoming and hopeful, we put high value on using language that is clear, caring and inclusive, whether in our written, spoken or web communications. Do your best to avoid using complicated words or phrases. Do your best to cross language boundaries, even by simply learning greetings and phrases in the many languages spoken throughout the church: *Dumelang, Sanibonani, Molweni, Goeie More, Absheni!* The UCCSA Brand voice should feel friendly and personal. It's important to be direct, but not to the point of being distant or insensitive. Be conversational. Imagine you're speaking with an individual or two rather than a faceless crowd. And don't be afraid to let your own personality come through.

How to Communicate

The UCCSA Brand voice should ***communicate a story*** and deliver messages that are relevant and useful to your audience. We've just outlined above *how* to communicate, let's now talk about *what* to communicate.

The content and messages you deliver may be varied according to your audience- what they care about, what questions they need to be answered. But regardless of the specific message, here are four key guidelines that can help ensure the stories we tell all share a consistency:

- 1. Remember it's about people.** The UCCSA is many things to many people, but first and foremost we are a 'local church'. So whatever you write or talk about look for ways to share the stories of the people of the local church and the communities in which they live. How is the content or message relevant to the desire of UCCSA to accompany local churches and communities in telling their stories? What are the achievements and opportunities for mission and ministry that we can share? How can we inspire people to centre their lives in God, connect with other believers in the faith, and to cultivate spirituality maturity and discipline through prayer, service to others and giving?
- 2. Be positive.** There are countless words spoken about what is wrong with our church, our region, with Africa and the world. But we should also balance this with the telling of the other side of the story, what is going right! UCCSA also acknowledges its prophetic responsibility to share the stories of people who experience marginalisation, discrimination and injustice. So share the facts as these give credibility to the message and support for the human concern being addressed. Think about the ways we share our optimism and our hope for the future?

3. Share the important facts first. In every message or story give the reader or your audience a good overview of the entire story. Any good news story gives an answer to the need to know these five key things: *Who? What? Where When? Why? How?* Ideally these should be in the first paragraph of every message to give a sense of the “big picture”. The rest of the message can then explain and expand on the beginning of the message.

4. Build better relationships with your audience and beyond. In the spirit of *Ubuntu* do your best to avoid the UCCSA being perceived as disconnected from its members or the communities in which we live. It is important to emphasise the importance of our context and place; and the synergy with Southern Africa.

Share the story of our mission and contributions. Talk about our partnerships with churches, mission organisations, ecumenical bodies, individuals and corporate organisations throughout Southern African and the world. Be sure to share how our collaboration and partnerships are resulting in meaningful contributions for God’s mission and humanity. We are connected and our “team” is bigger than just the UCCSA family.

In addition, if you are writing for external advertisers or branding, be sure that you inform and teach- as opposed to simply boasting.

Messaging by Audience

When you write or talk about the UCCSA, it is important that you shape your message to the people with whom you are communicating. Think about what’s meaningful and relevant to them. What issues do they care about? What questions do they need answered? This will help guide the content and emphasis of your message. Be useful.

The key audiences for the UCCSA include the:

- ***The UCCSA Family:*** The UCCSA family consists of the many internal audiences including: ministers; lay leaders; individual members of Local Churches and congregations of women, men and youth; church workers who are staff within the Central Office, Regions and Synods of the UCCSA; national women, men and youth groups.

These groups are already aware of and engaged with the UCCSA, so messages should provide a context for the relationship that already exists. They should remind us that we are a part of a mission movement, sharing our resources and ideas to make a difference in the communities and groups that we share.

- ***The Region:*** The Region consists of many external audiences including: individuals, policy makers, business leaders and organizations in the five countries and throughout Southern Africa who are aware of the UCCSA but may not be directly involved in its mission programmes and activities. They hold the UCCSA in high regard and respect and share our concern and commitment for justice and community transformation, they need more information before a full and inspiring image of the UCCSA can emerge in their minds.

We want to solidify and continue to build positive relationships within the Southern African Region, and demonstrate that the UCCSA is a church worthy of their continued support. So our messages should demonstrate our willingness to collaborate and our passionate commitment to be a part of the transformation of the region.

- ***Regional & Global Mission Partners:*** This group consists of churches, ecumenical and mission organisations outside of Southern Africa and across the globe with which we have connections; such as the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (UPCSA); Council for World Mission (CWM); World Council of Churches (WCC); United Church of Christ (UCC) and World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). Please see the list of our ecumenical partners below. These audiences may admire our mission legacy in Southern Africa, but often have not heard as much as they expect from a church with such a rich mission history.

We have an opportunity to share with these audiences the UCCSA story and our work for justice, mission, and transformation leadership. We can share the learning from our own mission journey and find ways to collaborate as co-workers for God's mission to share hope in the world.

UCCSA Mission Partners

UCCSA has regional and global partnerships with many churches and mission organisations, with which we work and share the witness of Jesus Christ. Some of our mission partners include:

Churches

Churches of Christ in Malawi (CCM) – *Malawi*

Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) – *Madagascar*

Disciples of Christ (DOC) – *USA*

United Church of Christ (UCC) – *USA*

United Church of Zambia (UCZ) – *Zambia*

United Free Church of Scotland (UFCS) – *Scotland*

United Reform Church (URC) – *UK*

Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa – *South Africa*

Global Mission Organisations

All Africa Council of Churches (AACC)

Council for World Mission (CWM)

Global Ministries

World Communion of Reform Churches (WCRC)

World Council for Churches (WCC)

BRAND EXPRESSION: DESIGN ELEMENTS

OUR LOGO

The logo of the UCCSA was first seen at the inaugural Assembly on 3 October 1967 when “there was a hush of expectation as the blue banner bearing the symbols of the cross and the dove, the emblem of the church about to be born, appeared at the entrance of the church.” (Harvest and the Hope page 315).



The Symbols

The Cross: A reminder of the death and sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

The Dove: a symbol of peace.

Olive Branch: a symbol of hope.

All official correspondence of the UCCSA bears this logo:



The following logo is also used and may be used for branding or advertising when it is necessary to show the name of the church:



THEME and Tagline

The current theme for this phase of the UCCSA mission journey is:

Christ is Calling Us: Participating in Suffering and Struggle

The theme is quoted on all outgoing communications, including correspondence, e-mails and promotional material. It is displayed by our Local Churches and congregations.

The suggested tagline quoted on our internet and web communications, advertising or branding is:

UCCSA. One Church. Five Countries.

and is especially useful when sharing messages with persons who are external to the UCCSA family who may not be aware that we are a transnational church.

The theme and tagline may be quoted together as:

UCCSA. One Church. Five Countries.

Christ is Calling Us: Participating in Suffering and Struggle

The suggested tagline quoted for advertising and branding specific programmes and initiatives, especially those under the Mission Programme is:

UCCSA We care...about Justice, Mission, Leadership Development and Stewardship.

So for example, the Leadership Academy may alongside the theme adopt for its branding and promotional material: *UCCSA, we care...about Leadership Development*; or the Justice & Transformation workshops may along the theme adopt for its branding and promotional material: *UCCSA, we care...about Justice*.

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended to help steer you through the process of developing and maintaining a social media strategy. This is not the UCCSA social media policy, which is still in development.

Use of social media sites:

If you're responsible for a social media strategy, you should not be restricted from accessing these sites during the work day from a work computer, with the following caveats.

You cannot use these sites:

- For personal benefit or gain.
- For the benefit or gain of any other individuals or outside organizations.
- In a way that compromises the security or integrity of UCCSA property, information or software; or violates the local laws of the country.

When representing the UCCSA in social media:

- Follow the UCCSA Brand Guidelines outlined above.
- Adhere to the any UCCSA online privacy policy available at the UCCSA website: www.uccsa.co.za
- Adhere to the terms of use of the social network you're using. (For Facebook, those are here: <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>)
- Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
- Don't pick fights.
- Correct your own mistakes.
- Verify information before you post it.
- Make sure your links work.
- Make sure you're creating dialog, not just pushing content. Give your fans something to respond to or act on.
- Thank people for input and feedback, including negative feedback.
- Be human, even when you're interacting as an entity rather than as an individual.
- Be relevant and timely and add value! That means being aware of conversations that are already going on without you.

Facebook Do's and Don'ts

- Do post fresh content regularly—at least once a week.
- Do allow fans to engage with your page via Wall postings, photos, videos, etc.
- Do include fan guidelines on your About tab. Feel free to the guidelines from the main UCCSA Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/pages/Congregationalists

- Don't allow fans to post:
 - Profanity
 - Disrespectful comments
 - Inaccurate or misleading information
 - Irrelevant comments or content
 - Content that's self-serving

If they do, you should remove the posting; if the postings are outrageously bad or offensive, you should also ban the poster. In the case of photos and videos, you can also report them to Facebook for things like spam/scams, pornography/nudity, graphic violence, attacks on an individual or group, or hate symbols.

Blog Do's and Don'ts

- Do create an editorial calendar so you can ensure that blog content gets refreshed regularly, though this should just provide a framework; it should not keep you from posting unplanned content.
- Do moderate comments.
- Do correct misinformation that's posted in comments, but keep in mind that commenters can and will do this too. Sometimes it's better to sit back and let the conversation happen rather than always being the first one to jump in and correct people.
- Don't remove respectfully written comments that are critical of your posting.

Find Us Online:

UCCSA can be found in social media online at:



tellus.uccsas@gmail.com



www.facebook.com/Congregationalists



<https://twitter.com/TheUCCSA>



www.youtube.com/user/UCCSAMedia