



An open letter to the WCRC, with proposals for action for CANAAC and CANACOM:

As we, the Consultation on the Accra Confession, gathered in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, from 20-22 March 2014, we had occasion to reaffirm the tenets we confess in the confession. What was acknowledged in the “Letter from Accra” is as true now as it was at its creation: “In today’s world the divisions between the North and the South, the rich and the poor, and the powerful and the powerless, grow sharper and seek to isolate us from one another.”

As we began, we were led in study of Mark 10, in which many of the themes of the Accra Confession find biblical expression. As we reflected together, we were encouraged to examine our present reality, the losses we grieve as we consider the ten years since the creation and adoption of the Accra Confession and the hopes we continue to hold for a new reality of social, economic, ecological and political justice. Finally, we considered the call to action for the church in the Caribbean and North American context.

The Present Reality

In the ten years since the Accra Confession was adopted, nothing much has changed; in fact,

- many of the economic, ecological, social and political realities have deteriorated and become deeply entrenched
- there still is a disconnect between North and South
- among member churches there is a general lack of awareness of what the Accra Confession is and what it calls us to do
- in North America, there is the reality that people are being paid to ignore the negative effects of empire (trade agreements and recessions, unemployment, inequality, and erosion of democracy and sovereignty)
- in the Caribbean, with its history of colonization, slavery and resistance, the Accra Confession’s statement is still true, that “the cries of ‘never again’ are put to the lie by the ongoing realities of human trafficking and the oppression of the global economic system”
- often church perpetuates empire, so church also is complicit in continuing inequities
- empire is not clearly delineated between North vs. South; ideologies of empire are present in both regions.

The Things We Grieve

- Our failure to live according to the Accra Confession as a region
- Our failure to raise awareness of the confession within local contexts to the extent that we could
- Our failure to translate belief into action
- Instead of improvement, we have seen a worsening in economic and political realities.

The Hope Which Sustains Us

- We desire restoration of relationships
- We seek security and abundant life for all
- We recognize the need for redistribution of power

- The Bible calls us to confess not only what we believe but also the ways in which we have harmed one another; through such confession and subsequent action we can forgive and be restored
- To that end, we call ourselves to awareness, advocacy and action which will again focus us upon the Accra Confession's call to social, economic, ecological and political justice.

We therefore propose these three areas of partnership toward justice that can bring action to the tenets we confess in the Accra Confession.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking exploits persons socially, economically and physically, turning persons into commodities for economic and sexual gain. The Accra Confession calls us to reject this exploitation and commodification of persons; in the words of the confession, "We believe that God is a God of justice. In a world of corruption, exploitation and greed, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor, the exploited, the wronged and the abused (Ps 146:7-9). God calls for just relationships with all creation."

We must address this injustice through awareness, advocacy and action:

- Network with civil agencies with existing resources to address this issue
- Provide resources for education and sensitization: bring awareness of subliminal messaging (song lyrics and the like); church resources for recognizing signs of abuse and exploitation within itself and the wider context; ad campaigns against human trafficking to build awareness
- Develop/contribute/utilize resources for the WCRC's "Broken for You" campaign (Lent, 2015)
- Distribute CWM and Cuban resources developed about human trafficking.

Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment

As the Accra Confession says, "We reject the current world economic order . . . and any other economic system . . . which defy God's covenant by excluding the poor, the vulnerable, and the whole of creation from the fullness of life."

- Develop Cottage industry: making use of internet capabilities: mentoring; micro-lending; expertise-sharing and capacity building; opportunities for marketing
- Expand fair trade
- Living wage: advocate for a wage that allows people to thrive; join campaigns elsewhere with resources regarding living wage.

Seeds for Life

As the Accra Confession states, we "reject any ideology or economic regime that puts profits before people, does not care for all creation and privatizes those gifts of God meant for all." Therefore we support efforts to de-centralize control of food and farm systems and work with global civil society to strengthen local and regional food economies that are just and sustainable. Therefore we will support:

- efforts to shift control of food and farm systems back into the hands of people and communities
- work with civil society to build just and sustainable local and regional food economies everywhere
- ensure abiding access to water, land and resources necessary to ensure sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food, fair prices for producers and abundant livelihoods for all.

Seeds for Life as gifts from God—not for privatizing and commodifying—can serve as a universal theme around which member churches can contribute, teach, preach and act according to their context. We will:

- develop resources for preaching and teaching using the central touchstone of Seeds for Life and including related issues, such as trade, corporate consolidation, commodification, etc.
- join other faiths, alliances and people's movements and take advantage of and contribute to existing resources and campaigns
- support local, national and global efforts to promote and scale up small and medium-scale farming, fishing and livestock production using agroecological approaches.

Finally, as stated in the "Letter from Accra": "If confessing what we believe as Christians requires our spiritual and practical resistance to economic injustice as well as environmental destruction, then we need new depths of spirituality. This isn't mere political activism; we're being called to a spiritual engagement against evil, and for that we need our lives to be deeply rooted in the power of God's Spirit. To put it simply, we need, as never before, the transformation of our lives promised through Jesus Christ."

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