



The Caribbean and North American Area Council

CANAAC is the regional expression of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in the region of the Caribbean, USA and Canada

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Report of Meeting of CANAAC Steering Committee and Joint Planning Committee of CANAAC-CANACOM East Coast Demerara, Guyana January 24-25, 2007

2 February 2007

Dear Friends and Colleagues in Ministry,

The CANAAC Steering Committee, jointly with a delegation from the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM), recently concluded a planning meeting in Guyana to lay the groundwork for our Joint Assembly/Council meeting there in February 18-22, 2008.

We spent one day visiting with area churches, made site visits to possible venues for the Joint Assembly/Council meeting, and met with the leaders of the Guyana Presbyterian Church, the Guyana Congregational Union, and the Presbytery of Guyana. These three churches have embarked on a remarkable joint educational ministry called FMM, Formation for Mission and Ministry, to equip lay people and those sensing a call to ordained ministry, to further theological education and pastoral formation.

ASSEMBLY PLANNING

CANAAC and CANACOM will convene next February under the theme, "Break the Chains" using several Old Testament prophetic texts to lift up the vision of the WARC core calling of Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth.

Four sub-groups are presently at work in the following areas: Worship & Bible study; Contextual Learning; Interactive Dialogue; Theological Institute for Young Pastors/Seminarians.

During the February 18-22 joint Assembly/Council meeting, there will be several opportunities for CANAAC and CANACOM delegates to:

- Worship with the liturgical richness of the Guyana churches and the broadness of our Reformed tradition
- Engage in the biblical texts through a community-oriented study and discussion
- Visit various mission sites
- Participate in two plenary sessions and workshops
- Form “intentional communities” to discuss common areas of work/ministry/interests and begin networking as intentional communities
- Celebrate with the Guyana Congregational Union their 200th Anniversary
- And for 10 young pastors/seminarians – participate in contextual learning and sustained theological reflection through a Theological Institute

As details and plans for this Joint Assembly/Council meeting develop over the coming months, I will keep you posted. When you constitute your church’s delegation, we encourage you to give special consideration to include one young adult pastor or seminarian (under the age of 30) so that they can participate in the Theological Institute and other proceedings of the Joint Assembly/Council meeting.

Youth Assembly @ Trinidad (October 13-17, 2007)

CANAAC Steering Committee member, the Rev. Tara Tyme (United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands), is spearheading and organizing an effort to have a gathering of young people from our CANAAC churches prior to the WARC Executive Committee meeting in Trinidad. Tara will be traveling to Trinidad within the next few weeks to meet with local youth leaders and pastors to discuss local planning arrangements.

Some of you may have already received an e-mail note from her. Please consider the names of youth in your churches who may be interested and willing to participate in dynamic and meaningful worship with other young people, engage in relevant and challenging Bible studies, form new relationships and networks, and be challenged and affirmed in their own contexts and work towards transformation.

Because the CANAAC Steering Committee so firmly believes in investing in this opportunity to engage our young people in mutual fellowship around our common work of transformation and covenanting for justice, we increased the budget for this Youth Assembly to \$30,000. When the costs of local arrangements and general expenses of this Youth gathering are defrayed, the remaining funds will be used to subsidize scholarships for your young people.

Attached to this communiqué is a letter on how your church can provide financial support towards this Youth gathering, and other projects sponsored/organized by CANAAC.

For more information on the Youth gathering, please feel free to contact Tara, theresetyme@yahoo.com

200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

WARC Executive Committee member and CANAAC Steering Committee member, Dr. Oliver Patterson, has been working actively over the past several months in envisioning how might CANAAC provide leadership in the observance of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. This is an opportune time for us in CANAAC to give considerable attention to this observance, particularly as we live into the WARC core calling of Covvenating for Justice, and historically, as African slaves were transported across the Atlantic Ocean to North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, and the British empire.

The draft plan presented to us conceptualizes a planning committee, headed by Dr. Patterson, to be a clearing-house of information of events, seminars, and gatherings in the Caribbean and North American region and Ghana. The planning committee will facilitate and coordinate communication with churches as to regional and local events where church members can attend and participate.

For more information on the Observance of the Abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, please contact Dr. Oliver Patterson at GOPJ@aol.com

Financial Report

We received the end-of-year 2006 financial report from our Treasurer, the Rev. Ralph Kendall. We ended 2006 with total assets of about \$97,000. The total income received for 2006 was about \$78,000, of which about \$77,000 was grants from four member churches: the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the United Church of Christ in Canada. Thank you!

I have attached a letter to this communiqué discussing the avenues that your churches can take in providing support to specific programs and projects of CANAAC.

For more information on the finances of CANAAC, please contact our Treasurer, the Rev. Ralph Kendall, at ralphkendall@sympatico.ca

Merger of WARC with REC

The Steering Committee received and unanimously endorsed the proposal to merge the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council into one successor body, the World Reformed Communion (WRC). This official action was communicated to WARC General Secretary, the Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, and WARC President, the Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick.

CANAAC-CANACOM

Our meeting in Guyana together with a delegation from the CANACOM leadership represents a major, visible step towards a closer working relationship between the two organizations. We were blessed with the participation and presence of the Rev. Verna Cassells (Education in Mission Secretary for CANACOM), the

Rev. Ron Wallace (Associate Secretary for International Ministries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada), and the Rt. Rev. Rawle Sukhu (moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago, who also serves as moderator of the CANACOM Administrative Committee and jointly serves on the CANAAC Steering Committee). These three colleagues will continue their leadership in our joint planning efforts during this year. Although Verna will be retiring in June after many years in service to CANACOM, you will see her at our Joint Assembly/Council meeting next February.

The CANAAC Steering Committee met with the Rev. Patrick O'Connor, chair of the CANAAC delegation to CANACOM, by teleconference in New York; we were also joined by the Rev. Keith Haynes of the Presbytery of Guyana, who served as CANAAC's official observer at the CANACOM Council meeting last October. These two brothers, together with Rawle, discussed with us the tangible expectations and hopes between our two organizations as agreed upon by both bodies in Toronto last Fall.

This includes:

- Joint planning of the Joint Assembly/Council meeting in February 2008 in Guyana;
- Mutual invitation of a youth representative to one another's youth gatherings
- Appointment of a representative from each body to sit on the Steering/Administrative Committee of the other
- Commitment to further bilateral talks on how to strengthen collaboration in mission work and theological engagement after the 2008 Assembly

As we move forward, the CANAAC Steering Committee reiterated that whatever future outcomes result through our mutual work and discussion with CANACOM, that CANAAC must maintain and strengthen its identity as the regional expression of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and WARC's Core Callings.

Final Thoughts

In closing, I wish to thank you for what you and your churches do for the cause of the liberating, transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I remain excited and hopeful for the year ahead and what the Lord will do in, through, and among us so that, indeed, all may have life in fullness.

Until we meet in Guyana, may God richly bless you.

Sincerely,



Rev. Neal D. Presa
CANAAC Convener

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