

Caribbean and North American Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
Convenor's Report to Steering Committee
25 January 2010

1. I am grateful to be serving in this capacity, on behalf of the 20 member churches of this Area Council, and working alongside heads of communions and ecumenical officers, the WARC Secretariat, WARC Executive Committee members, and our CANACOM partners over the last four years. When the Area Council reconvenes in early 2011, it will have come a long way since its reorganization in March 2006. With the leadership of the Steering Committee and the generous support of member churches, the Area Council is well-positioned, structurally, infrastructurally, and financially, to lend critical leadership in this region and in the new World Communion of Reformed Churches.

2. As I publicly announced at the WARC Executive Committee meeting in Geneva in May 2009, and which I have reiterated to colleagues, I will not seek to renew my term as Convenor/Chair of CANAAC in 2011. By the time we gather again, I will have served nearly five years; I believe the task to which I was called back in 2006 will have been largely accomplished and fulfilled, namely the successful reorganization of the Area Council. I trust that the new set of leadership that will be elected next year will take the Area Council to the next level as we discover together what it means to live into the reality of being a world communion of Reformed churches, of which the Caribbean and North American Area Council is one, but vital part.

3. I have represented the Area Council in 2009 at the Expanded Planning Group meeting for the Uniting General Council at Grand Rapids, MI in February 2009; Caribbean Covenanting for Justice consultation in Jamaica in April 2009; WARC Executive Committee in Geneva in May 2009; had regular consultations with the leadership of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM); and the International Planning Committee for the Reformed Youth Forum Pre-Council. I traveled to Kolympari, Crete to represent WARC at the WCC Faith and Order Plenary Commission.

4. In a few weeks, I will travel to Vatican City with a five-member delegation from WARC for consultative talks with the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), and with delegations from the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Methodist Council, as we assess the last 40 years of ecumenical dialogues and draft principles for the next stage of bilateral dialogues. This comes at the invitation of the PCPCU, initiated by Walter Cardinal Kasper, president of the PCPCU, whose recent publication, Harvesting the Fruits (Continuum, 2009), will serve as the banner title of the symposium and which will be the centerpiece of our discussions.

5. In 2009, CANAAC provided generous scholarships for: two young adults to attend CANACOM's Young Adult Mission workcamp July/August 2009; six persons from the Caribbean and four persons from North America to attend the Calvin Jubilee conference at Montreat, NC in July 2009; forwarded \$17500 to WARC to provide scholarships for seminarians who will attend the Global Theological Institute as part of the Uniting General Council; forwarded

\$19,000 to WARC/REC to provide scholarships for Caribbean delegates to the Uniting General Council.

6. CANAAC sponsored and funded the Caribbean Covenanting for Justice consultation in Ocho Rios, Jamaica in April 2009. I am grateful to the leaders of the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands for hosting and coordinating, and the leadership/guidance of the Rev. Patricia Sheeratan-Bisnauth. We also provided funding for half the costs of producing and disseminating the resource booklet that resulted from this Caribbean consultation; I will ask the Steering Committee that we provide funding for the other half (USD \$ 5000).

7. Plans for the International Reformed Youth Forum Pre-Council are well-underway.

8. The launch of the Caribbean and North America Reformed Youth Forum will be done at the CANAAC meeting in early 2011.

9. We continue our partnership and collaboration with CANACOM. Rev. Joel Ortega Dopico (Presbyterian/Reformed Church of Cuba) and Ms. Janette McIntosh (Presbyterian Church in Canada) represented CANAAC at CANACOM's Council meeting in Trinidad in October 2009; Dopico was elected vice-chair of CANACOM's Administrative Committee.

10. CANAAC co-sponsored and provided funding (through the generous designated grant from the United Church of Canada) for a "Colloquium on the Accra and Belhar Confessions" that was held at Stony Point Conference Center in New York 8-10 January 2010.

11. For 2010, here is what lays ahead:

- Insure successful gathering of International Reformed Youth Forum Pre-Council, 14-17 June 2010, Grand Rapids, MI.
- Insure successful cultural presentation of Caribbean and North America region/churches for evening of 22 June 2010, Grand Rapids, MI
- Plan for CANAAC Assembly in 2011 – let us explore with CANACOM that this be a joint Assembly/Council meeting, parallel with the launch of the Caribbean and North America Reformed Youth Forum
- Think of creative ways to build fellowship, through news-sharing, prayers, etc. among the 20 member churches of the Area Council, for support and mutual encouragement.
- Support the Working Group, led by Oliver Patterson, to initiate discussions around the the Germany-Stellenbosch Model of Covenanting for Justice, and how that may provide a model of how to sustain Covenanting for Justice in this region.
- Expand the number of member churches who presently lend financial support to the Area Council, and encourage those member churches who have not updated their membership arrears with WARC to do so.