

## **Statement Africa Consultation August 2005**

### **GLOBAL CHRISTIAN FORUM**

#### **AFRICA CONSULTATION**

##### ***'Jesus Christ in Africa – Our Journey with Him'***

We, being around seventy Christians from a broad range of traditions and organisations – including African Instituted, Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Evangelical, Lutheran, Orthodox (Eastern and Oriental), Pentecostal, Protestant, Reformed, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventist, African Theological Fellowship, All Africa Conference of Churches, Association of Evangelicals in Africa, various National Councils of Churches, International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, United Bible Societies, the World Student Christian Federation and World Vision, and also the Global Continuation Committee – came together in Lusaka, Zambia, from 9 to 13 August 2005 for the purpose of reflecting together on our journey with Jesus Christ in Africa.

This unprecedented gathering was the initiative of the Global Christian Forum process. Its unique breadth included Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone participants. It provided space for us as African Christians from different traditions to meet with one another and to listen to each one's 'faith journey,' our particular struggles and challenges in different situations in Africa. We experienced a fresh sense of unity under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and a shared passion for participating in His mission in the world.

Arising out of this sharing we developed a new awareness and understanding of one another's existence and spirituality, and with it the importance of each other in being church in Africa. We affirm that we need to build bridges that would facilitate co-operation in order to have a united voice in confronting the various issues facing Africa. This in no way means that we would lose our individual identity or distinctiveness. We acknowledge the need to respect and uphold this diversity, among those who confess that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ as perfect in his divinity and humanity. In this spirit, we need to establish and deepen trust, openness, honesty, love, and humility as we work with one another.

We affirm the need for an emphasis on holiness of life, prayer and the centrality of Scripture for the fostering of unity among us, and a deepening and strengthening of our participation in God's mission in his world. We commit ourselves to explore together models for working, studying and addressing issues which are of common interest, and to maintaining and broadening networks of communication that arise from our fellowship with one another.

We discussed issues of mutual concern, among them the inclusion of marginalized groups; HIV/AIDS; history, contextualisation, inculturation and the promoting of the publication and dissemination of the work of African theologians; Islam; and the Church in the world, including corruption, election monitoring, promoting good governance, advocacy and civic education. We also addressed the

terminology surrounding relationships between churches and Christian bodies, and the difficulties that may arise from such vocabulary as 'ecumenical,' 'evangelical,' 'charismatic,' and 'pentecostal.'

We are encouraged by the existing levels of co-operation, particularly at the grass roots, in both worship and social action. We affirm the need to develop these further. We acknowledge that in many areas, the greater the degree of unity, the more effective our witness and the more influential our voice.

We further affirm the need to work together, and continue this initiative at the continental, regional, national and local level. We urge the Continuation Committee for Africa to proceed with the work that it has been mandated to undertake, and so to explore ways of taking forward the Global Christian Forum process in Africa. We appreciate the effort of the Global Continuation Committee in launching this initiative.

We offer thanks to the Lord for all He has done for us through the Global Christian Forum process. To God be the Glory!

**Lusaka, 13 August 2005**