



ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES (AACC) CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE (CETA)

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First Theological Symposium

Theme: Misleading Theologies

October 23rd –27th 2019, Nairobi, Kenya

STATEMENT FROM THE SYMPOSIUM

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

(Matthew 28: 19 –20)

Preamble

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) “*The Spiritual Pulse of the African Continent*” was founded in 1963 as a continental ecumenical body for different Christian confessions. It is a fellowship of 193 Church Denominations and Christian Councils in 42 African countries with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya.

We, theologians from the five sub regions of Africa, namely; Southern, Eastern, Western, Northern and Central Africa with some from diaspora and ecumenical partners, arising from the maiden All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) 1st Theological Symposium that focused on Misleading Theologies (MT) held in Nairobi Kenya from 23rd to 27th October 2019;

Expressed appreciation and support for the initiative of the AACC in promoting relevant contextual theological engagements and discourses with theologians within and outside member churches and institutions towards promoting theologies that promote life with dignity;

Noted with concern the emergence and surge in theologies that could be classified as misleading on the continent of Africa. Such misleading theologies undermine the sovereignty of Christ, fundamental biblical doctrines and sound theological ethos, but evidently exploit and violate the God-given dignity of vulnerable Christians;

Observed with profound indignation the countless people adversely affected by these harmful beliefs and practices induced and sustained by misleading theologies;

Recognized the gaps in our churches on wealth and poverty, health and healing, leadership styles, power and authority, gender justice and different government regulations that created spaces and opportunities for the emergence, perpetuation and consumption of misleading theologies, teachings and practices in Africa, taking into cognizance the pivotal role that religion plays in the

continent, knowing its susceptibility to elusiveness and fluidity, thereby misused to oppress and inflict pains on unsuspecting adherents;

Proclaimed with strong affirmation that Christ through the Holy Spirit gives and sustains life without demands for payment on the part of the human recipient, but a humble response with gratitude that inspires humanity to deal with kindness and respect with each other and continue to stimulate theological and ecumenical dialogue on issues that militate against fullness of life in Africa.

We, therefore,

Call on all those who create, import and export all forms of misleading theologies, teachings and practices to humbly denounce, renounce and repent of such acts;

Call on all adherents of Christian faith to be wary of such perverted and misguided teachings and practices perpetrated and perpetuated by religious merchants in the guise of bearers of gospel message;

Call on all ecumenical fellowships at different levels of our society to put in place helping mechanisms that will safeguard innocent believers from falling preys to these religious misleaders that target the vulnerable population in the name of God;

Call on governments at all levels in the continent to promote and safeguard religious freedom and rights of religious minorities as well as to safeguard lives of people put at stake by misleading theologies and practices;

We, therefore,

Having been further equipped with knowledge on misleading theologies as teachings, doctrines and practices that challenge and misrepresent the sovereignty of Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and apparently violate the inherent human dignity, putting life of people in danger;

Commit to promote and popularize true teachings of the word of God, renew and reclaim the prophetic voice of the Church in addressing emerging societal issues that offer prospects for misleading theologies, teachings and practices to thrive in the continent;

Commit to sound biblical teaching on health and healing that addresses misleading theologies at local congregations through sensitization and enhancing theologies that empower local congregations in their learning and understanding of theological interpretations on health and healing. Constantly highlighting violations of human dignity resulting from misleading theologies and promote holistic healing practices based on Biblical teachings. Further reiterating the role of holistic pastoral care in accompanying the vulnerable and advocating for justice;

Commit to practice and advocate for biblical principles of power and authority that recognize that God is the ultimate giver of power and that religious leaders hold delegated powers. As such, there is need for humility, stewardship and servanthood leadership in leading the church. This is in order to curb outward shows of personalized power and authority, which manipulates and exploits the vulnerable. To further deconstruct misleading theologies relating to women and leadership, people with disabilities and pledge commitment to end discrimination of women and

people with disabilities at all levels of church leadership and progressively work to enhance the space for articulation of the effects of MT on women in the church. That power and authority should not be used as tool of oppression and subjugation rather for the glory of God and selfless service to humanity;

Commit to continually teach on wealth and poverty that inspire development of relevant contextual and life enhancing theologies of holistic prosperity, which are sustainable, empowering participatory and inclusive. These theologies emphasize positive work ethic, critical thinking, spiritual discernment and stewardship. To also rethink and address in succinct ways the normalization and glorification of poverty as well as the exaltation of materialism as indicators of God's favor upon humankind;

Commit to theological training, pastoral and spiritual formation to meet the needs of the people. Reforms in theological teaching to address issues of misleading theologies, promote ecumenical hermeneutics; develop clear theological roadmaps on the thematic issues of power and authority, health and healing, wealth and poverty, regulation of ministry practices, teachings of stewardship and servant leadership; developing pastoral care models which cater to the holistic human needs;

Commit to promote collaborating, consensus on ecumenical issues. Further call for the respect for and adherence to national laws in the pursuit of Religious freedoms. Also, recall and emphasize the role of the umbrella bodies to self-regulate the practice of theology by setting minimum standards on pastoral care.

Commit to use every opportunity to address manifestations of misleading theologies in ways that glorify God and restore victims and perpetrators to wholeness.

Therefore, in order to achieve our commitments we ask AACC:

To initiate and lead a study process to develop a publication that articulates a positive theology of wealth, prosperity and sustainable development;

To organize similar symposium as an annual theological event that addresses agreed thematic issues informed by prevailing circumstances based on the existential realities of the people of Africa;

Ephesians 4:15 "...speak the truth in love..."

Nairobi, October 2019

AACC is a fellowship of 155 member Churches and 25 Christian Councils in 42 African countries.

La CETA est une communauté de 155 églises et 25 conseils chrétiens dans 42 pays d'Afrique.

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