

Affirming the Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth
A Resolution approved by General Synod XXVII, 2009

Summary

In 2004, the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, meeting in Accra, Ghana, adopted *The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth*. Through this Resolution, the Twenty-seventh General Synod affirms the importance of this document and commends it to the whole church for study, reflection, prayer, and action so that we may live into a more just system of economic globalization.

The full text of the Accra Confession is online.

English text: http://warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/side.jsp?news_id=1154&navi=45

Spanish text: http://warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/side.jsp?news_id=1195&navi=24

Background

Over the past two to three decades, the economies of nations around the world have become much more interconnected. Goods, services, and money move rapidly and quickly across national borders. National and international laws and practices have been revised and newly created to facilitate and govern these developments. The hope held out before citizens of major industrialized nations and less economically developed ones was that these changes, which might be difficult and disruptive, would lead to greater well-being for the world's people. The reality, however, has fallen far short. The current system of economic globalization has brought:

- growing economic inequality among people within countries in both the economically less developed and more developed worlds, and growing inequality between countries;
- greater economic instability and crises such as the one currently wrecking havoc in the U.S.;
- slower economic growth in most countries with the exception of China, India, and a handful of other nations that have not followed the dominant economic policies;
- ongoing destruction of the environment; and
- the tragic destruction of people: poverty kills over 20,000 people each day and stunts the bodies, minds, and opportunities of countless others. The past 25 years have witnessed a slowdown in the rate of improvements in infant and child mortality, life expectancy, and primary and secondary school enrollments and expenditures.

After a 15-year process, *The Accra Confession* was adopted in 2004 at a meeting in Accra, Ghana, by delegates to the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. WARC is composed of 214 denominations and faith bodies of Reformed and United churches, including the United Church of Christ, with a combined membership of some 75 million people in 107 countries.

WARC delegates believe that the economic and environmental injustices of today's global economy require the family of Reformed and United churches to respond as a matter of faith

and engage injustices as an integral part of our churches' witness and mission. The *Accra Confession* declared that working to create a more just global economy is essential to Christian faith: "We believe that the integrity of our faith is at stake if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization;"

Biblical and Theological Rationale

God is sovereign over all creation. "The earth is the LORD'S and all that is in it" (Ps 24: 1). We are called to share with our neighbors out of the abundance that God gives to the world. God's economy is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the marketplace (Matt 14:13-21; 15:32-38). God's economy of life provides abundantly for all God's people.

The poor and marginalized are special members of God's community and we are called to put justice for "the least of these" at the center of the community of life and the mission of the church. (Matt 25:40). God's vision for the earth is of justice and peace. God calls the Church to "loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6).

Rules devised to benefit some segments of society should not stand if they also disadvantage or harm the poor. "Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, . . . we will make the ephah small and the shekel great, and practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, and selling the sweepings of the wheat" (Amos 8:4-6).

The Resolution

Whereas, delegates at the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) meeting in Accra, Ghana, in 2004, adopted *The Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth* based on the theological conviction that the economic and environmental injustices of today's global economy require the family of Reformed and United churches to respond as a matter of faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ;

Whereas, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has long supported greater justice in the international arena as expressed in Pronouncements and Resolutions including:

- *Calling for a More Just, Humane Direction for Economic Globalization* (A Pronouncement adopted by GS XXIV, 2003) <http://www.ucc.org/justice/pdfs-1/A-Faithful-Response-Calling-for-a-More-Just-Humane-Direction-for-Economic-Globalization.pdf>;
- *Affirming Democratic Principles in an Emerging Global Economy* (A Resolution adopted by GS XXI, 1997) <http://www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/AFFIRMING-DEMOCRATIC-PRINCIPLES-IN-AN-EMERGING-GLOBAL-ECONOMY.pdf>;

Whereas, the General Synod affirms that global economic justice is essential to the integrity of our faith in God and discipleship as Christians;

Whereas, the General Synod seeks to be in unity with our family of Reformed and United churches around the world in standing with those persons who are harmed by the current system of economic globalization and in calling for and working toward justice for all people and the environment;

THEREFORE be it resolved that the Twenty-seventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirms the importance of the *Accra Confession: Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth* which was previously affirmed by UCC delegates to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches General Council 2004.

Be it further resolved that the Twenty-seventh General Synod urges all United Church of Christ members, churches, associations, conferences, and institutions to:

- read and study the *Accra Confession* and use it in worship and as a focus for educational forums;
- learn about neoliberal economic globalization, as defined by the *ACCRA Confession*, and other economic systems which impoverish and oppress people around the world and in the U.S., and study the impacts of these economic systems;
- pray about and discern the implications of the *Accra Confession* for our daily life as individuals, and for our life together in our homes, churches, and institutions; and
- engage in advocacy around national and international policies that will bring the reality of globalization more in line with God's vision for God's world;

Be it further resolved that resources created by the WARC North American Covenanting for Justice Working Group will be made available (primarily online) for use by all settings of the UCC (including online resources that describe the WARC process and detail its history posted at http://warc.jalb.de/warcajsp/side.jsp?news_id=1154&navi=45).

Funding

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

Implementation

Justice and Witness Ministries and Wider Church Ministries are requested to implement this resolution.

October 21, 2008