

**A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE JOINT MEETING OF
THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(CRCN) AND THE REFORMED CHURCH OF CHRIST IN
NIGERIA (RCCN), HELD AT GRCN NO,1. TAKUM, ON
SEPTEMBER 10, 2002:**

INTRODUCTION:

The CRCN and the RCCN were each ably and adequately represented at this meeting. The two denominations had issued a communiqué sometime in the second quarter of this year (2002), in which they resolved, through the grace of God, to pursue peace and peaceful coexistence, and leave no stone unturned in this bid. They resolved to embark upon deliberate and calculated moves and strategies which they expect to culminate in the mending of the fences broken by intra, anti-cohesive forces in the early 1970s.

Series of meetings and contacts have been made in pursuit of this noble and godly gem, sometimes orchestrating selfless and sacrificial endeavors, hopeful of their final anticipation. This day, the 10th September 2002, appears to be the climax of the whole peace-making process. A reading from Genesis 22:1-13 and a brief exhortation captioned, "Reaching the blessed mountaintop" added a fresh breath to the process, especially now that each group had to take the difficult task of telling the other the truth, and to take and give words of regret and forgiveness. Heart-beats sounded unusually love. Felt pulse indicated much anxiety and the fear of possible ignition of a conflagration that might ruin this intricate process of breaking down the wall of hostility and shaking hands of brotherly love and peace over the ruins of the former dividing wall. However, thanks be to the most high God, the following resolutions were reached at the end of the meeting after both had painfully gotten to the mountain top where it is said, **"ON THIS MOUNTAIN, THE LORD SHALL PROVIDE;** for the Lord did provide on His mountain of grace:

1. CRCN NEVER HELPED TO HAVE RCCN JOIN TEKAN:

On this came the explanation that TEKAN has in her constitution a provision that she will not admit into her membership any church formed through schism. CRCN and RCCN came to a common understanding on this. But for a way forward, it was resolved that RCCN should apply for membership in TEKAN. CRCN will support this move by RCCN with all

her might and endeavor to convince TEKAN for her admittance. This was unanimously applauded.

2. THE CRCN CHURCH BIKA LUPWE

CRCN had tabled a complaint that RCCN snatched her Lupwe congregation' with all the assets. Responding, RCCN said the people invited her for fellowship and membership. She never snatched the people and the CRCN assets but only bowed to the wish of the people. On this, it was resolved that the Presidents of the two denominations, their General Secretaries and a trustee from each side should come together, visit the Lupwe Church and resolve the problem.

3. ON TAKUM CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL:

Responding to the allegation that CRCN collected compensations from the government and never cared to remember RCCN. CRCN's submission revealed that no compensation has been received on this asset, mainly because of the misunderstanding that was between the two churches (CRCN/RCCN). This meeting resolved that the trustees of both CRCN and RCCN would henceforth speak with one voice in demanding compensation for the Hospital. Also, through their trustees, CRCN and RCCN will both indicate their displeas~~ure~~ with the government's utilization of their asset without proper understanding and resolves, and now, the complete demolition of the hospital without due cognizance to the owners of the hospital, or even seeking their consent to do so. Both CRCN and RCCN consider this a flagrant abuse of power, a deliberate adjudication of the government's responsibility to protect the personal effects of her citizens, an unfortunate act of trespass, and a slap on the face of justice.

4. ON CRCN DOCUMENT ON THE TAKUM CRISIS:

CRCN leadership took a posture of regret of the inconveniences this document has caused her brethren in the RCCN. She urged forgiveness here and urged that as people of the Lord, we henceforth keep our weather eye open against such moves that are usually pregnant with the momentum to disperse than bring together for unity, peace and love. It was resolved that where possible, the Church should make only such utterances and publications that engender support for peace, love and unity, especially in view of the cardinal causes of the crisis in the Takum – Ussa geo-political area.

5. COMPENSATION ON THE DEMOLISHED CHURCH ON TAKUM CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL:

CRCN responded to this allegation by accepting that of a truth she collected compensation on this asset, but used it to build another Chapel (Church) on a ground just a stone-throw from the demolished one, so as to still leave a sign of the kingdom on that land. RCCN accepted this and indicated her regret over the misunderstanding, which could have been otherwise but for the rift that had long been there.

6. ON WUKARI DIVISION COMBINED SECONDARY SCHOOL:

No compensation has been collected on this as alleged by RCCN. She regretted her position on this. It was resolved to forgive and forget this matter. But the trustees of both Churches will pursue the issue of this compensation.

7. ON THE PASTORAGE AND CLINIC IN CRCN # 1 TAKUM:

These were jointly owned by CRCN and RCCN. RCCN indicated her pains over how the Pastorage which was a primary School building, and the Clinic which was a sanctuary were all converted to their present status without due regard for RCCN's feeling. After CRCN's explanation's on these, it was also resolved that these be forgiven and forgotten, and that this be never allowed to impede brotherly love and peaceful coexistence any longer.

8. ON STATIONS HANDED OVER TO CRCN DAISSA, SERTI, WUKARI:

The RCCN registered her aches over CRCN's seeming lack of brotherly concern which she hoped should have been demonstrated in CRCN inviting her to share in what they once owned together, but this was not seen. CRCN replied that because her brother walked away from home (EKAS) she felt so demoralized to invite him back because he might rebuff this gesture too. However, it was resolved unanimously that since both Churches have each progressed extensively, there would be no need to revisit the past that might only amount to reopening Pandora's box. On this note, the resolution to nail the cuffing of this matter was further maintained and finalized.

9. ON RCCN – MISSION (CRWM-CRCNA) RELATIONSHIP:

On this, CRCN resolved to write to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA), to intimate her on this great development and victory. In this resolution, she will call on the CRCNA and all her ministries to relate officially and openly with the RCCN now, unlike before when much was done in hidden and unofficially.

10. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

In a joyous and jubilant mood, the meeting resolved that, sequel to 1-9 above, the CRCN and RCCN have forgiven each other. The words, ***“WE HAVE FORGIVEN ONE ANOTHER. LET THE DIVIDING CURTAINS OF THE PAST THREE DECADES NOW FALL BECAUSE GOD HAS CUT THE ROPES THAT HOLD THEM UP. NOW, LETS WALK UP TO EACH OTHER TO SHAKE HANDS OF VICTORY AND PRAISE, TO EMBRACE EACH OTHER IN OUR WORKS OF LOVE, PEACE AND BROTHERLY COEXISTENCE. LET GOD BRING BACK THE HEDGES THAT ONCE STOOD AROUND HIS GARDEN. LET THE GARDEN OF THE LORD BLOSSOM WITH LIFE AGAIN. LET ITS BEAUTY AND FRAGRANCE RADIATE ALL DIRECTIONS. LET THE NAME OF THE LORD BE PRAISED IN ALL AGES!”***

11. CONCLUSION:

After virtually three decades of grudges, shame and painful treatment of each other, the Lord has reconciled His people. It was resolved that every Church should bear this good news to her members and that the following be informed:

- a) Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA).
- b) The Christian Reformed World Mission (CRWM)
- c) The Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC)
- d) The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRCWRC)
- e) TEKAN (Churches of Christ in Nigeria)
- f) The SUM – CRC, Jos
- g) The world Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC).
- h) The Reformed Ecumenical Council of Nigeria (RECON).
- i) The Christian Association of Nigeria.
- j) The Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN).

On the conclusion still, the meeting resolved that **March 1, 2003** would be the day this huge victory will be celebrated. A Committee of

Six people were set up to prepare for this great celebration. The Committee has the following people:

1. Rev. Dr. Caleb O. S. Ahima (CRCN) – Wukari
2. Rev. Iliya D. Shamaki (CRCN) – Takum
3. Rev. Yakubu Ishaya Tsojon (CRCN) – Wukari
4. Rev. J. U. Rika (RCCN) – Wukari
5. Mr. Obadiah Kaigama (RCCN) – Lupwe
6. Rev. Bulus Yerima (RCCN) Mutum Biyu.



Rev. Istifanus B. Bahago
(CRCN President)



Rev. J. E. Kukwen
(RCCN President)



Rev. Yakubu I. Tsojon
(CRCN General Secretary)



Rev. Musa A. Manasseh
(RCCN General Secretary).