

2015 Tumekutana Testament

VENUE: Accra, Ghana

THEME: *“Freedom in Christ: From Slavery to Empowerment”*

SCRIPTURE: *“Woman, you are freed from your ailment”. Luke 13:12 (NRSV)*

1. We, as Presbyterian/Reformed women Church leaders in Africa, gathered at the Presbyterian Women’s Center, Abokobi, Accra, Ghana, 19-25 September, 2015, state as follows:
 - We give God thanks that God has allowed Tumekutana to grow wider and deeper in connections within and outside our gathering. Our whole existence is founded in God and led by the Holy Spirit.
 - We recognize that Tumekutana is a God-given platform for us as Presbyterian/Reformed women to strengthen our faith, to fortify our courage, to amplify our voices and to multiply our efforts.
 - We confess our negligence to recognize and celebrate the efforts undertaken at regional and local levels in response to prior Tumekutana Testaments.
 - We grieve that, in these modern times, slavery is still a reality for many African women, be it in the family, the community, the church, society and continent-wide.
 - We deplore that women are enslaved through harmful traditions that take the form of sexual violence, economic exploitation, cultural practices and ecclesiastic marginalization. Women are considered property, their labour a commodity, and their bodies merchandise or battle grounds.
 - We observe that some cultural practices which harm women and children are perpetuated by African sisters as custodians of our traditions, others condoned by traditional leaders to gain influence, and reinforced in our own churches as those affected submit for fear of repercussions in the spiritual realm.

- We deplore rigid interpretations of Biblical passages that withhold basic rights and responsibilities for women in our Churches.
- We decry that, despite being the majority in the church, women are under-represented in governing bodies and marginalized or ignored in decision-making processes because of the patriarchal system currently in place.
- We regret the gross underrepresentation of women leaders in the political establishment across Africa.
- We encourage our African sisters to participate in legislative processes and to sensitize their fellows about existing legislation to ensure gender mainstreaming.
- We rejoice in the statement made by the African Union through the launch of its campaign to end child marriage.
- We are saddened that, in society, our rights continue to be denied with regard to employment opportunities, education, health care, safe water and sanitation, food and accommodation, and the possibility to pursue our dreams and ambitions.
- We understand that empowerment is a process and recognize, that looking forward, we must empower the younger generations of African women to become leaders in the church and in Tumekutana.

2. We therefore commit ourselves

- To grow Tumekutana into a vibrant continent-wide network in support of the women we represent and to collectively raise their voices to higher levels in the ecumenical and political realm.
- To pray with and for each other, to encourage one another, to share on an ongoing basis our joys and concerns, to exchange information with each other, to strengthen our communications, and also to capture our success stories and lift up role models.
- To encourage a dynamic reading of the Bible to bring out the full sense of God's Word and Will with regard to the role of women in the Church and in Society.

- To participate actively in Tumekutana's regional bodies, making them thus functional, and to identify ways to collaborate with each other closer to home on issues that perpetuate slavery in the 21st century.
- To make women aware of damaging cultural practices, educate them about modern enslavement and embark on a process of empowerment.
- To encourage women leaders in the church to engage in dialogue with traditional and Church leaders about issues of modern-day forms of slavery, and to include men in the conversation.
- Encourage women and men to engage in the Thursdays in Black Campaign in the face of rampant gender-based violence.
- To turn this and the Testaments from 2007 and 2011 into legacy for which we are accountable through evaluation and reporting.

3. We call on:

- National leaders of member States of the African Union to ensure the implementation of the AU's campaign to stop child marriage in Africa.
- Leaders of Presbyterian/Reformed denominations to speak up against harmful cultural practices and other forms of women's enslavement and marginalization.
- Tumekutana leadership to continue the process of organizational development, to nurture synergies at the regional levels and create concrete opportunities for joint action in a preventive approach to ending modern-day forms of slavery.

By God's Grace and our own efforts, Tumekutana 2015 doesn't stop here and today - this is where it starts!

AFRICAN NATIONS IN ATTENDANCE:

Cameroon
Democratic Republic of Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia
Ghana
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Madagascar
Malawi
Mauritius

Mozambique
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sierra Leone
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Togo
Zambia
Zimbabwe