

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 4TH THEOLOGICAL CONSULTATION
OF THE SIX MEMBER CHURCHES OF THE BREMEN
MISSION, HO, FEBRUARY 23 - 26, 1999

1. PREAMBLE

We, the participants of the 4th Theological Consultation; Eglise Evangelique Presbyterien du Togo, The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana and Evangelical Church of Bremen, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Oldenburg, Evangelical Church of Lippe, Evangelical Reformed Church of Germany and the Bremen Mission meeting at Ho from February 23 - 26, 1999 with the theme: "GOD'S SPIRIT AND THE SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS" proclaim as very important and constructive the following:

- 1.1 That the basis of our life and witness is Jesus Christ who is the expression of the Love of God witnessed to in the Holy Scriptures.
- 1.2 That our consultation has made us more aware of our spiritual strengths and weaknesses.
- 1.3 That we wish to share the outcome of the Consultation with the entire membership of our Churches.

2. AFFIRMATION

- 2.1 We affirm that from the very beginning, our Churches have existed in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- 2.2 We affirm that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for the whole human being and touches people in their totality.
- 2.3 We also affirm that there is a wide variety of spiritual gifts for common good of all and for the edification of the Church.

OUR STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES

3. We reiterate that some of the strengths and weaknesses of our 'Main Line' Churches are as follow:

- 3.1 The Bible as our authority for faith, practice and living.
 - 3.2 The importance of our traditions and church rules or regulations.
 - 3.3 The joyfulness as well as the solemnity of our Liturgy.
 - 3.4 The Ecumenical openness towards other Churches, religions and the world.
 - 3.5 The Acceptance of life, not only as power and strength, but also the acknowledgement of a human feebleness.
 - 3.6 The importance of the Church as a larger organisation, which enables us to accept social responsibility in our Communities.
- We encourage our Churches to evaluate our weaknesses, doctrines and prejudices according to Scriptures. We must find out whether:
- 3.7 Simple and unexamined routine has become a hindrance in pastoral work, or the Evangelistic favour has vanished.
 - 3.8 The Youth and Women are excluded from the decision-making processes which affect the present state or future prospects of the Church.

- 3.9 The liturgies we use have become meaningless, repetitive, uninspiring and therefore boring.

4. EXHORTATION

We urge our member Churches to do the following:

- 4.1 To be more openminded towards the spiritual needs of Church members and towards the new charismatic and religious movements.
- 4.2 To be more tolerant of genuine and Christian emotional expressions during worship. (Reactions to these expressions may be guided by section 5 below)
- 4.3 To encourage our Churches to have dialogue on the basis, the spiritual and material needs of our Church members and to deal with them more seriously.
- 4.4 To teach our pastors, Catechists, evangelists and elders about the new spiritual streams, to examine them in light of Scripture and uphold what is good (1 Thess. 5 : 21).
- 4.5 Whereas we should responsibly and reverently use all the gifts of healing and therapy given us by God, we should also remember that suffering and failure, sickness and even physical death are part of God-given life. As Paul says, even in our weakness, God's strength is made manifest (2 Cor. 12 : 9).

5. CLINE OF REACTION TYPES

We encourage our member Churches to desist from categorical and unexamined criticism and rejection on the one hand, and glib and ill-considered acceptance of statements of faith, practice and utterances of both our members and those of the charismatic and other religious movements.

We recommend the following cline of responses for use by member churches for both self-examination and of others.

- 5.1 Certainly Accepted and Edifying
- 5.2 Challenging and Worthy of Trial
- 5.3 Comfortable but not necessarily obligatory
- 5.4 Neutral
- 5.5 Uncomfortable but Tolerable
- 5.6 Disturbing
- 5.7 Possibly Disruptive
- 5.8 Unacceptable.

6. CONCLUSION

We rejoice in the re-assurance that the Supreme gift of the Holy Spirit is Love, and without Love, we are nothing. Where there is Love, there is Peace and Unity.

Our gifts may be different but Love must bind us together in Christ.