



Churches' Reparations Action Forum (Jamaica)

Rationale for 7-point Reparations Plan

Introduction

Having been established in 2019 to become a conduit for church action, the Churches' Reparations Action Forum (CRAF) is committed to supporting churches across the Caribbean in their efforts to engage the issues arising from the legacies of the enslavement of African people and the Reparations cause. That period of colonial history and the ensuing post-Emancipation years have left indelible marks which surface in many aspects of life in the nations of the region.

In carrying out its mandate, CRAF seeks to engage and accompany churches and para-church organizations in the UK and Europe in their search for effective actions towards restorative justice. More and more, churches are seeking to adequately reflect their pain in recognizing their complicity in the system of slavery which perpetrated such egregious wrongs for centuries. There is increasing recognition that the legacies of slavery continue to haunt post-colonial societies in many spheres of life. Practical actions of reparation are possible, which, when applied with conscientious effort can bring healing and restoration to persons, relationships and communities.

CRAF has designed and adopted a 7-point Reparations Plan which, it is believed, captures the essence of lingering effects of the trauma of slavery in Caribbean churches and their wider societies. The plan is based on the premise that:

- denominations played varying roles and participated in the era in different time spans
- current understanding and appreciation of the issues at stake vary from church to church

- churches vary in the approach to and extent of the study of their histories to inform their current structure of their historical roles and the implications
- as churches' leadership and their structures become increasingly open to interrogate their past and as findings are shared more freely between denominations and across continents, sound programmes and projects towards actions of restorative justice may be derived
- the church can play a unique role in this issue of confronting slavery's legacies as it uniquely provides brothers and sisters across the continents who claim oneness in the Body of Christ. In a renewed push towards collaborative action, the church can become an exemplar for other non-governmental organizations, business entities and states parties.

Context

Many denominations have been engaged in the search for credible historical information to undergird their urge to confront the unpalatable truth of church complicity at many levels. With the internationally publicized, cruel killing of George Floyd and the upsurge in the international influence of the Black Lives Matter movement, more commercial and civic organizations including many churches and para-church agencies have intensified their search for truth and healing, with voices being amplified from many parts of the globe.

It is a time in which persons of goodwill must be deliberate about focusing their efforts towards collaboration with like-minded individuals and organizations. Many a gap may be bridged as Christians intensify their work of building partnerships for a common cause.

There is a wind of change blowing. Conscientious actions aimed at restorative justice will contribute to a tide towards reconciliation on a level not before experienced. CRAF humbly submits this plan as a contribution towards crafting a path towards truth, justice, healing and reconciliation.