

Historical Perspectives
on the Caribbean and
North America Council
for Mission
(CANACOM)
Commemorating 30
Years of God's
Goodness

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all the persons responsible for the conceptualization, formation, establishment and development of CANACOM.

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Acknowledgements

The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission expresses appreciation to the Council for World Mission for underwriting the printing costs of this book. The CWM has journeyed with CANACOM for its entire life. We are truly grateful to God for enabling this strong and ongoing collaboration.

CANACOM'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

It was agreed **unanimously** that the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission be constituted as coming into being.

It was **unanimously** agreed that the Rev. H. Earl Thames and the Rev. Sam Smellie continue to serve as Chairman and Secretary respectively until the election of Officers.

Meeting held on September 11, 1986 at Pax Guest House, Mt. St. Benedict, Trinidad.

Present were:

The Rev. Earl Thames	(Chairman, CARC) United Church of Jamaica & Grand Cayman
The Rev. Sam Smellie	(Secretary, CARC) U.C.J.C.
The Rev. Oswald Best	Presbytery of Guyana
The Rev. Leonard Bhagwandi	Guyana Presbyterian Church
The Rev. Brian Rutterford	Church of Scotland, Trinidad
The Rt. Rev. Everson Sieunarine	Presbyterian Church, Trinidad
The Rev. John Rollins	Guyana Congregational Union
The Rev. Joseph Reed	Presbyterian Church in Canada
Dr. David Young	Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Observers:

The Rt. Rev. Raymond Coke (U.C.J.G.C.)
The Rev. Maitland Evans (U.C.J.G.C.) representing CWM
The Rev. Gus Keuther, United Church of Christ U.S.A.
Dr. P. Arnold C. Downers, Netherlands Reformed Church



Photograph taken by Mrs. Karen Francis

Miss Leslene Laing, Administrative Assistant at CANACOM presenting Rev. Dr. Collin Cowan, General Secretary of the Council for World Mission with a copy of CANACOM's Birth Certificate.

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Preface

This work, **“Historical Perspectives on CANACOM Commemorating 30 Years of God’s Goodness”**, is presented as a tribute to the visionaries and founders and all who have contributed to the healthy survival and growth of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission over three decades. At this time we also remember with appreciation, the work of the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches (CARC). In the 1992 Minutes of CARC, it is described as the parent body of CANACOM. At the same meeting of this body a resolution was passed for the Member Churches to study and make recommendations concerning the future of CARC as it was found that there were some evolving areas of overlap in the agendas of both entities.

Finally, after considered deliberation, a decision for the dissolution of CARC was arrived at. However, CANACOM continues to be grateful for the groundwork which CARC had undertaken.

The formation of CANACOM was deeply influenced by the desire to create a new paradigm in mission partnerships between the Caribbean and North America. In a letter dated 30 October 1992, the then Chairperson told the Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao that:

CANACOM is not intended to be ‘yet another regional structure where church leaders meet’, but rather a platform for common mission action, reflection and learning. The hope is that by concretely practicing partnership - by mutual sharing of resources, common decision making and common mission action - the Member Churches may develop as truly interdependent ‘churches in mission’.

It is important for Member Churches in 2016 to ask, whether we are “concretely practising partnership - by mutual sharing of resources...and whether we are truly interdependent ‘churches in mission’.”

This anniversary provides a useful segue both for a review of the first 30 years and the casting of a vision for the next period.

The Earl Thames Mission Consultation, which was held in Suriname on September 24th, as a precursor to Council Meeting 2016, was dedicated to this purpose. Gathering under the theme *“Engaging Mission in the 21st Century: Revisioning for the Future”*, the Council gave close consideration to the four mission priorities of CANACOM, namely:

- 1) Church Growth and Renewal
- 2) Gender and Violence
- 3) Poverty and Inequality and
- 4) Human Trafficking

An important element of the time being commemorated was and is the recognition of God's bounty to CANACOM in many forms. Evidence of this largesse is communicated by contributors to the book. In addition, high commendation is here recorded to those who have preserved the treasury of information which is contained in our archives. This book has been well resourced by CANACOM's primary material as will be future publications.

The story of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission is one which is well worth being recounted, hence the decision to share with a wider audience. Tackling this task has been pure joy but in the same breath the archives have silently called out to us that this is but a very small beginning. This significant year, 2016, thirty years along the mission road, beckons us to reflect and to move forward with the words of Acts 1:8, our foundation text:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

This time of commemoration brings to mind the verse above from which we draw our authority but it also causes us to recall how we came into being. Following a number of formation meetings, the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) was established at the Retreat Centre, Mount St. Benedict in Trinidad on Thursday, the Eleventh Day of September A.D.1986. The minutes of this meeting under the signature of Rev. Earl Thames duly record the following declaration: "It was unanimously agreed that the Rev. Earl Thames and Rev. Samuel Smellie continue to serve as Chairman and Secretary respectively until the election of officers". CANACOM has indeed launched the journey of being witnesses near and far.

The Book

This book which sets out to commemorate CANACOM's 30th Anniversary is grounded on two pillars. First, the formal institutional recording and reflections provided a vital component in the accurate recounting of the institution's story. Much use has therefore been made of CANACOM's invaluable repository of Minutes, Reports, Constitution, an array of internally generated documents and papers from a variety of sources, in the sharing, validation and crystallization of the facts of our history. Two seminal papers which were written by the first Education in Mission Secretary are reproduced in full in order to reflect the careful thought which was put into the foundation of the Education in Mission emphasis of CANACOM. In 1996 Steven Chambers and Maitland Evans explored the context into which CANACOM was emerging. The

presentations which were made at the Council Meeting in Cuba are signposted by Chambers' paper which is reprinted in this volume.

Second, the voices of some of the persons who helped in the creation and shaping of this history have been recorded. Many stakeholders were contacted and invited to participate in this undertaking. Unfortunately, some were unable to participate on this occasion. Doubtless, they will be a part of future ventures. The contributions which appear on these pages represent a variety of perspectives that add a rich texture. We are grateful to the contributors.

This project was driven both by a recognition that there is a dearth of publicly accessible material on CANACOM and a spirit to energize the process of filling that gap. As time progresses it is envisaged that additional manuscripts will be created.

As will be observed readily, the work is largely thematic. The presentation is not strictly linear because it is not always possible or easy to neatly pigeonhole personnel and programmes within specified time frames. In the case of CANACOM, some persons have remained with the agency in one capacity or another since its inception. At the same time, some activities have been reinterpreted to fulfill CANACOM's evolving mission and so remain part of the contemporary offering. However, there has been an attempt to weave together a chronology of events while integrating opinions voiced from a number of quarters.

Trawling our Archives

The period of gathering the material provided the space for us to ruminate in our archives and to draw from the rich written records which trace our evolution. Further, talking with members in order to begin the synthesizing of a portion of this wonderful CANACOM experience was quite refreshing. This process proved to be a useful entry point both for a reviewing of the first 30 years and the casting of a vision for the onward journey.

Expressing Thanks

As we pause to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission, we thank God who has infused CANACOM with blessings and challenges throughout its existence. Warm gratitude is expressed to the founders, the officers, Member Churches, staff, partner agencies, volunteers, friends and all participants in CANACOM's programmes.

Jamaica has been the home to CANACOM since 1986. We place on record our deep gratitude to the current Moderator of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands the Rt. Rev. L. Christopher Mason and the General Secretary Rev. Norbert Stephens and all the former Moderators

and General Secretaries for the particular support which has been given to CANACOM.

The WCC was generous in its support of Ms Jet den Hollander's participation in the Rev. Earl Thames Mission Consultation. Thanks. Without your individual and collective efforts, CANACOM, this ambitious and positive mission endeavour, would not have survived infancy. We thank the Administrative Committee and the Finance and Administration Support Group for being integral participants in this work.

In a special way we salute Miss Leslene Laing and Miss Kerone Lamoth for selflessly applying their computer, archival research, writing, transcription and listening skills to the production of this book.

Finally we thank Dr. Paul Martin for his patience, understanding and support of his wife, Jennifer, throughout this project.

Messages



Mrs. Anne Phillips
Chair - CANACOM, 2012-2016

On September 11, 1986, the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission came into being. This year we therefore commemorate 30 years of God's goodness to us. This book is a tangible part of the season of commemoration and thanksgiving for all of God's goodness to us throughout the past 30 years. Much has been accomplished in that time through working together and sharing our resources and yet, there is still much to do.

CANACOM expressed deep gratitude even as we said goodbye to the Rev. Nicole Ashwood, former Education in Mission Secretary, when she migrated to the United States at the end of 2014. We welcomed Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin who succeeded her in January 2015. It has been a very smooth transition as Jennifer brings many gifts and experience which are of benefit to CANACOM and its mission.

In 2014 CANACOM established four priorities for going forward together. There are many areas of concern throughout our region but the four chosen to be the focus of CANACOM's work up to 2020 are:

- 1) Church Growth and Renewal
- 2) Gender and Violence
- 3) Poverty and Inequality, and
- 4) Human Trafficking.

These are very serious concerns for all our member churches. From declining numbers in our denominations to caring for the vulnerable and

disenfranchised, these are issues that need to be addressed both individually and as part of the larger CANACOM family.

The year 2015 saw a very successful YAM Camp in Cuba. The Cuban hosts, led by Rev. Izett Sama Hernandez, provided a very challenging and meaningful programme for the participants. This was a great opportunity for these young men and women to discover just exactly what being in partnership in mission means for many. The exposure will change them forever. Their home churches will benefit from their experiences and CANACOM will also benefit as many continue to want to be involved in mission.

The work of CANACOM continues to progress earnestly. Technology has changed the way we are able to communicate. Through the Internet we are able to access and share resources with each other. CANACOM continues to work on updating our website where increasingly our individual resources will be made available to the public. We need to share what has worked well in our respective contexts with others who have similar needs.

Thirty years constitute a significant achievement for this organization, and with God's help, much has been accomplished. However, as our society and our culture evolve we must continue to review our mission to ensure that we are responding to the needs of our society and its vulnerable and disenfranchised members. This book will aid in the process of remembering as we engage in this re-visioning for the future.

May God be with us as we move forward through the next 30 years.

Anne Phillips (Mrs.)



Rev. Carlington Keen

Deputy Chairperson, CANACOM, 2012-2016

Elected Chairperson of CANACOM 2016 - 2018 at Council Meeting, September 2016

I extend heartiest congratulations to the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) on this, its thirtieth year of ministry and mission.

Thirty years is a long time and I know there have been challenges but, thanks to the leaders who expanded the original vision of CANACOM through the various programmes over the years, CANACOM has weathered the storms.

It is not easy to remain relevant as a mission organization in today's world but you have not only remained relevant but have become more contextual in the ways in which you carry out ministry and mission. I want to express my gratitude to those who have been stewards, past and present of this great organization and its resources.

As a proud member of the Administrative Committee, I congratulate CANACOM on its 30th anniversary as we celebrate the legacy that continues to inspire us. Moving on to the next phase we are confident that God will help us to expand our impact in the Caribbean and North American region.

Congratulations and best wishes,

Carlington Keen (Rev.), J.P.



Pastor Sadie Findlay

Chair - Finance and Administration Support Group (FASG), 2015-2017

I greet you in the words of Acts 1:8, “you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come up on you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and all Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” - a portion of scripture that has directed the work of CANACOM from its inception. As we embark upon the next leg of our journey these words continue to propel us.

The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission celebrates 30 years in 2016. We cannot believe that the years have gone by so quickly! As members of the FASG, we wish to congratulate the founders of CANACOM and all the Member Churches and friends who have worked assiduously for our development.

We also laud the framers of the constitution for having recognized early the need for a Finance and Administration Support Group and for having incorporated this group into the formal structure of CANACOM.

The nature of this organization calls for voluntary support and it is our pleasure to work alongside the Secretariat in order to fulfill the mission objectives. We follow a proud tradition of willing and enthusiastic volunteers and thank God for the privilege of serving in this manner.

The 30th Anniversary of CANACOM is being marked under the theme “Engaging Mission for the 21st Century: Re - visioning for the Future” and the events being planned are both an act of commemorating the past and a looking forward to an interpretation of mission that remains relevant to the Caribbean and North American context in the 21st century. May God’s blessings remain with us all!

Sadie Findlay (Mrs.)



Mrs. Joy Walker Edwards
Chair - Friends of CANACOM (FOC)
Jamaica Chapter, 2015 - present

It is indeed a pleasure to extend greetings on behalf of the Friends of CANACOM Group, a small number of committed individuals who have made themselves available to work closely with the CANACOM Secretariat. These friends help to ensure that CANACOM's Mission mandate and objectives are implemented and achieved in specified time frames. Our hope during the next year is that chapters will be re-launched within other Member countries.

As we pause to commemorate 30 years of God's goodness we think of the many friends who have blessed and in turn have been blessed by the work of CANACOM. In this time of remembering, a very special friend of CANACOM, the late Rev. Fitz Gerald Laing comes to mind. Under the guidance of the Rev. Verna Cassells, he became a staunch Friend of CANACOM. We could rightly refer to him as one of the pioneers of "Friends of CANACOM," who dedicated his skills and expertise in supporting CANACOM's mission mandate. We too as the "new" Friends would like to build on his legacy.

Invitation to become a Friend of CANACOM

We must be reminded of our call to mission as recorded in Acts: 1:8: "But you will receive power, when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." (NIV). You are invited to become a Friend of CANACOM to provide support to CANACOM by:

1. Promoting and publicizing the programmes and activities that are geared towards Mission, so as to encourage and motivate individuals to offer themselves for mission.
2. Organizing fund-raising activities and events to support mission projects and sustain these programmes.
3. Offering your skills, expertise and resources to enhance the mission mandate of CANACOM.

As we go forward may you be inspired and awakened to become actively engaged in the mission of CANACOM – God's Mission!

Joy Walker -Edwards (Mrs.)

Introducing CANACOM: Quick Facts

The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) is a fellowship of 14 denominations in the Caribbean/Atlantic basin exploring the endless possibilities of mission relationships between North-North, South-North, North-South and South-South Member Churches.

- Totally committed to mission education and transformational leadership within the region.
- A not-for-profit organization whose primary fiscal holdings are in Jamaica, although our human and transformational collateral base spans 11 countries.
- Predominantly Reformed in our thinking, our Membership extends from as far North as Canada to the Southern tip of the Caribbean, Trinidad & Tobago.

1. Guyana Congregational Union (GCU)
2. Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)
3. Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG)
4. Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
5. United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
6. Iglesia Presbiteriana-Rformada en Cuba (IPRC)
7. Presbyterian Church (USA) [PCUSA]
8. Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)
9. United Church in Canada (UCC)
10. Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
11. Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)
12. Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)
13. Church of Scotland in Trinidad (COST)
14. Reformed Church in Suriname (RCS)

The Singapore-based Council for World Mission (CWM) has voting and Associate Membership Rights and Privileges.

Mission Mandate

Following the words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 1:8, we believe that all Christians are empowered to share in one world mission. As a fellowship of churches, we covenant to share together in this one mission and to seek to manifest the oneness of the Church and its mission through a genuine partnership in mission. Our primary sources of Income are through:

- ✓ Endowment Fund
- ✓ Interest payments
- ✓ Voluntary Member Church Contributions
- ✓ Occasional Gifts and Grants

Primary Programmes

- ✓ Young Adults in Mission Work camp (YAM)
- ✓ Joint Mission Action Team (JOMAT)
- ✓ Sharing of People (SOP)

Grants

- ✓ Project Grants
- ✓ Empowerment Grants
- ✓ Disaster Grant
- ✓ Special Grants

Council Meeting:

Council meeting is held biennially.

Administrative Committee (2016-2018):

Elected at Council Meetings, the Administrative Committee (AC) is selected by the delegates. However, the Young Adults Representatives (YA Reps) are selected after applying for the position. AC Members are elected for ONE term, but may be re-elected for office for a second term. The AC membership comprises:

Rev. Carlington Keen	Chairperson (UCJCI)
Rev. Izett Sama Hernandez	Deputy Chair (IPRC)
Rev. Diana De Graven	Secretary (RCS)
Mrs Merle Buchanan	Treasurer (UCJCI)
Ms. Farida Da Costa Gomez	C'bean Rep. (VPGC)
Rev. Dr. Jo Ella Holman	N. Am. Rep. (PCUSA)
Mrs. Anniya Tomlinson-Morris	C'bean YA Rep (UCJCI)

Ms. Anna Groebe
Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin
Miss Leslene Laing

N. Am. YA Rep (PCUSA)
Education in Mission Secretary
Administrative Assistant

Staff and Support Team:

Full-time Staff

Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin
Miss Leslene Laing

Part-time Staff

Mrs. Maxine Chong

Finance and Administrative Support Group (FASG)

Mrs. Sadie Findlay	Chair – FASG
Mrs. Merle Buchanan	CANACOM Delegate, Treasurer
Rev. Carlington Keen	CANACOM Delegate, Chair
Mrs. Joy Walker-Edwards	
Rev. Garwell Bacchas	
Mrs. Andrine Tulloch-Francis	
Mrs. Betty Ann Mobley	

The Formation of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM)

In the Beginning...

The minutes of the Meeting of September 11, 1986, which follow are counted to be among the most precious items in our archives: "It was agreed unanimously that the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission be constituted as coming into being." There is nothing unusual about the appearance of the minutes yet the follow-up actions arising from the decision still stand as a testimony to God's goodness. We salute those who were present for their resolute action.

Minutes of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission
(**in Formation**) held at the Retreat Centre, Mt. St. Benedict, Trinidad
On Thursday, 11th September, 1986.

Present were:

The Rev. Earl Thames (Chairman, CARC)	United Church of Jamaica & Grand Cayman
The Rev. Sam Smellie (Secretary, CARC)	U.C.J.G.C
The Rev. Oswald Best	Presbytery of Guyana
The Rev. Leonard Bhagwandi	Guyana Presbyterian Church
The Rev. Brian Rutterford	Church of Scotland, Trinidad

The Rt. Rev. Everson Sieunarine
The Rev. John Rollins
The Rev. Joseph Reed
Dr. David Young

Presbyterian Church, Trinidad
Guyana Congregational Union
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Observers:

The Rt. Rev. Raymond Coke (U.C.J.G.C.)
The Rev. Maitland Evans (U.C.J.G.C.), representing CWM
The Rev. Gus Keuther, United Church of Christ, U.S.A.
Dr. P. Arnold C. Downers, Netherlands Reformed Church

Constitute – The Rev. Earl Thames led the devotion, constituted the meeting and then welcomed all present.

Agenda: The agenda was discussed and then accepted.

Reports from participating Churches:

The secretary of CARC, the Rev, Sam Smellie, intimated that the following churches reported positively in regard to their willingness to participate in the formation of the council. U.C.J.G.C., Presbytery of Guyana, Guyana Presbyterian Church, Guyana Congregational Union, Church of Scotland in Trinidad, Presbyterian Church U.S.A.
The Representative of the Presbyterian Church in Canada reported that the Caribbean/Latin America Working Group of that denomination was still awaiting a response from the Caribbean group.

The moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad indicated that the matter was still being studied by the Ministers of that Church before its presentation to the Synod.

Report from the Task Forces:

- (a) Finance.– Noted the serious illness of Mr. Ivan Delochan since the task force was set up, and as a consequence no report was available.
Decided that other members of the committee meet at an appropriate time during the meeting in order to obtain some idea of the cost of the meeting.
- (b) Correspondence: Reported on earlier under Secretary's report above.
- (c) Constitution: The Draft Constitution was presented by the Rev. Earl Thames, discussed and amended. The following changes were made.

Theological Statement: Paragraph 1 delete the words "by our Spiritual Fathers" in line 5, and the word "Himself" in line 7. Approved as amendments.

Name – No change approved.

Aims – In line (a) add the word "vision" after "of"

In paragraph 2 line 2 add the word "experience" after the word faith. Approved as amended.

Principles: Section 1. Amended as follows: The contribution of each member Church within this fellowship shall be valued.

Section 2 No change

Section 3 In line 3 after the words "Churches" add (11Corth. 8: 14-15) and after "Mission" add the words "determined by member churches".

Section 4 – No change

Section 5 Paragraph (a) No Change

Paragraph (b) in the last line after the word “situation” add the words “and global prospective in Mission”.
Paragraphs (c) (d) (e) (f) deleted. Approved as amended.

Membership – In line 3 after the word ‘by’ add the word ‘a’ Approved as amended.

Representation: Amend the section as follows;

The organization shall function through two bodies – The Council and an Administrative Committee.

Representation of that Council shall be as follows:

Church with a membership of less than 2000 - 1 delegate

Church with a membership of 2000 and over - 2 delegates

(Delete 3rd category of Churches).

Representation on the Administrative Committee – no change. Section approved as amended.

Meetings: The Council (a) no change

(b) In line 2 the word “two” is amended to read “three”. Section approved as amended.

The Administrative Committee–

(a) (b) (c) No change.

Delete the word ‘Note’ before the last paragraph. Section accepted as amended.

Voting – In line 2 after the word ‘post’ add the words “at the discretion of the council.”
Approved as amended.

Officers – The Council – no change
The Administrative Committee – amended to read “the Officers of the Administrative Committee shall be the Officers of the Council together with any additional staff deemed to be necessary by the Council.
Accepted as amended.

Finance – Accepted with the additional sentence – an annual audit shall be made of the accounts of the Council.

Amendments – No change.

Bye Laws –

1. Areas for common action in Mission –

In line (i) ‘Social Concerns’ amended to read Social Service

Add (j) Development Action and (k) Healing Ministry.

Approved as amended.

2. Administration – In line 3 after the words ‘the council on a’ add the words “part-time or” before full – time in line 4.

3. Duties of the Administrative Assistant – No change

4. Duties of Officers

A. The Chairperson –

Section 1 no change; Section 2 No change

Section 3 amended to read as follows;

- B. The Vice Chairperson – No change
- C. The Secretary – No change
- D. The Treasurer (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) No change
 - (v) Delete the last three words – “to member Churches” in line 2
 - (vi) No change
 - Add a No 7 to read “Prepare the Accounts of the Council for the Annual Audit.
- E. Additional Committee Officers: Amended the Section to read –
‘Additional Committee Members and Staff’.
The duties of the members of the Administrative Committee and any other staff may be assigned according to the emphases of the Council at any period of time. Duties may include the following –
 - 1. Personnel
 - a) Facilitating personnel exchanges e.g. Ministerial and Youth exchanges.
 - b) Facilitating personnel appointments e.g. Fraternal Workers and Missionaries to third Countries
 - 2. Education in Mission e.g. Training Programme and Advocacy.
 - 3. Communication – Assisting in the production of publications and Audio Visual Material. Accepted as amended.

Amendments – No change

The Representatives voted to accept the Amended document as a Draft Constitution and a Working Document for the Council.

It was agreed unanimously that the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission be constituted as coming into being.

It was agreed unanimously that a period of 9 months be allowed, during which other Churches be allowed to become founding members. The expiry date being 31st May 1987.

It was unanimously agreed that the Rev. Earl Thames and the Rev. Sam Smellie continue to serve as Chairman and Secretary respectively until the election of Officers.

Statements re Contributions and Priorities of Needs

In keeping with the purposes and Principles the under mentioned churches indicated as follows:-

- (a) The United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman
 - 1. J\$6000.
 - 2. A Lay Development Training Programme and the Building of a Synod’s Conference Centre and Youth Camp.
- (b) The Presbytery of Guyana: The Representative promised to supply details later.
- (c) Guyana Congregational Union –
 - Contributed G\$450.-
 - Needs to be indicated later.

(d) Guyana Presbyterian Church-

A willingness to offer money, personnel and entertainment re meetings when held in Guyana.

(e) Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

Contribution –

Pledge of contribution at a later stage despite Budget freeze.

Needs – (1) For the Caribbean people and Churches to be known in the U.S.A.

(11) Building of 'Bridges' across the Caribbean Basin.

N.B. Noted that the amounts pledged at the Meeting plus those yet to be pledged are for the year 1986. The suggested Target for 1987 is \$50,000.

Interim Administrative Structure:

Agreed that an Administrative Officer (full-time) be the main Officer be appointed.

Election of Officers:

Chairman – the Rev. Earl Thames

Vice Chairman – the Rev. Oswald Best

Secretary – the Rev. Sam Smellie

Treasurer – Dr. David Young

Administrative Centre: Agreed that it be sited in Jamaica, operating out of the United Church Office.

Assignment of Duties: The preparation of material for Advocacy was assigned to the Rev. Leonard Bhagwandi.

Relationships: The Caribbean/North America Council for Mission is to be the main Mission Arm of CARC. Its existence in no way affects the relationship of CARC membership churches with that of the Caribbean and North America Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

It has no structural relationship at this point in time with the Council for World Mission. However, CWM sees its coming into being as an important step forward and graciously contributed to the common pool for the meeting.

Agreed to overture that Council with the request for the Rev. Maitland Evans to attend the next meeting as CWM observer.

Agreed also that certain information and material be shared with the CWM and CANAAC-WARC.

Date and Place of Next Meeting

Agreed that the next meeting of the Council be on the 6th November 1987, following immediately after the meeting of the CARC set for the 4th and 5th November, 1987 in Guyana.

The meeting was brought to a close after devotions.

The Governance of CANACOM

CANACOM is closely governed by its constitution. Aspects of this document are reviewed as necessary through the recommendation of the Administrative Committee and by the authority of the Council. The Constitution has determined that the organization shall function through two bodies. These are the Council and the Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee which is empowered to act in the interest of CANACOM between Council meetings has a direct supervisory role regarding staff members. Working in partnership with the Administrative Committee, is the Finance and Administrative Support Group which gives oversight and support to the work of the Secretariat.

The governance structure of CANACOM has had to be adjusted as necessary over the years. However, in essence it has remained true to the original template which has proved to be very effective in the realization of the goals of the organization.

The extracts below from CANACOM's constitution set the parameters which should guide the proficient running of the institution:

13. Meetings

The Council

13.1.1 The Council shall meet at least once in a 24-month period. Any additional meeting within this period will be at the call of the Administrative Committee.

13.1.2 Each Member Church regardless of size shall be entitled to 2 delegates for each council meeting.

13.1.3 At least fifty per cent (50%) of CANACOM Member Churches must be officially represented in order to constitute a quorum. Each delegate shall have one vote. The Chairperson shall have a deliberative vote only. Voting may be by mail at the discretion of the Council.

Council Meetings (CNL)

Starting in 1989, Council meetings were held every year until the pattern evolved into biennial meetings as set out below:

Table 1: Council Meetings

Year	Host Church	Country
1986	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)	Trinidad and Tobago
1987	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)	Guyana
1988	INFORMATION MISSING	
1989	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)	Trinidad and Tobago
1990	POSTPONED	
1991	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)	Guyana

1992	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)	Jamaica
1993	Presbyterian Church in Grenada	Grenada
1994	Presbyterian Church (USA)	Florida, United States of America
1995	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)	Guyana
1996	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)	Cuba
1997	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)	Jamaica
1998	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)	Trinidad and Tobago
1999	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)	Guyana
2000	Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)	Dominican Republic
2001	Presbyterian Church (USA)	Kentucky, United States of America
2002	Presbyterian Church in Grenada	Grenada
2003	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)	Cuba
2004	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)	Jamaica
2005	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)	Curacao
2006	United Church of Canada (UCC) and Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)	Canada
2008	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)	Guyana
2009	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)	Trinidad and Tobago
2011	Iglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)	Dominican Republic
2012	Presbyterian Church in Grenada	Grenada
2014	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)	Jamaica
2016	Reformed Church in Suriname	Suriname

Administrative Committees

The Administrative Committee shall consist of the elected officers together with five others: an at-large North American member, an at-large Caribbean member, both the Caribbean and North American Youth/Young Adult Representative, and a representative of CWM.

The Administrative Committee shall meet at least once between Council Meetings at the call of the Chair. Meetings need not take place in person but may be by telephone, internet, etc.

Persons serving on the Administrative Committee shall normally be appointed to the Council for two terms. (CANACOM Constitution 2012)

The quorum for the Administrative Committee shall be two-thirds of the membership of the Committee.

The duties of the Administrative Committee and staff shall be as stated in the By-Laws.

Administration

The administration of the Council shall be carried out by the Secretariat comprised of the Education in Mission Secretary who works closely with the Administrative Assistant and part-time Accountant.

Finance and Administration Support Group

The Constitution states that there shall be a Finance and Administration Support Group, the majority of whom will be located in the country of the CANACOM office. The Group shall consist of persons who are familiar with the aims and objectives of CWM and CANACOM. There will be gender balance in the Finance and Administration Support Group.

The Administrative Committee will have final approval of the membership of this committee on behalf of CANACOM.

This Support Group will:

- Give oversight to the work of the Secretariat.
- Function as a reference for all new programme action proposed by the Secretariat.
- Offer care and support to the Secretariat.
- Present and former CANACOM members shall represent at least 50% of the membership of the Finance and Administration Support Group.

The FASG meetings have taken place once every three months for each year of CANACOM's existence.

Historical Perspectives



(In foreground) Rev. Maitland Evans of the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman/ Council for World Mission and Rev. Earl Thames of the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman, two of the founders of CANACOM

Introduction

This section brings together parts of the chronology of CANACOM. The record is shared by persons who were not simply present in the early stages but were part of the visioning, the design, sourcing of funds, agreeing on a mission philosophy and above all turning the idea of CANACOM into a living breathing organization. It is a blessing that some of these persons have been able to contribute to the content in this book.

The articles by Rev. H. Earl Thames and Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick had originally been presented at CANACOM's 25th Anniversary as a means of tracing the history of CANACOM. The interview with Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans explores the missiological, cultural and economic ethos out of which CANACOM was framed.

Other contributors present an array of perspectives which reflect their experiences and / those of their Member Churches as CANACOM has evolved over the decades.



Rev. H. Earl Thames

The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission began in a very inauspicious way. The Presbyterian Church of the USA felt that it needed a wider and more mutual way of doing mission and the Rev. Dr. Cliff Kirkpatrick, the then Director of Missions, became very impressed with the concept of “mutuality in mission” which was being advocated by the Council for World Mission (CWM), which had come into existence in 1978. CWM is the successor to the famous London Missionary Society.

Rev. Kirkpatrick therefore decided to visit the headquarters of CWM in London to discuss with the then General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Bernard Thorogood, the possibility of the PCUSA becoming a member of CWM. During the discussion, he suggested that instead of the PCUSA becoming a member of CWM, it would be of greater significance if that Church could partner with the Reformed Churches in the Caribbean, as well as other Reformed Churches in North America, to form a body in the Western world, similar to that of CWM, based on the concept of mutuality in mission.

This would be particularly meaningful, he declared, as the only geographical area of the world in which CWM did not have a presence was North and South America. The PCUSA had had long-standing relationships with many Churches in the Caribbean, including the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman, which was a member of CWM. Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick returned with the idea and during a discussion on bilateral relationships, mentioned it to the Rev. Maitland Evans, the then General Secretary of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman.

From the discussion, both persons felt that the idea had real merit and pledged to interest their respective groups of Churches in implementation – the Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick, the Reformed Churches of North America, and the Rev. Evans, the Reformed Churches of the Caribbean. Fortunately for Rev. Evans, the Reformed Churches of the Caribbean were already together in an ecumenical body which had a mission dimension – the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches (CARC).

The Rev. Dr. Kirkpatrick had a more difficult task, as although the Reformed Churches of North America were together in a body, the Caribbean and North America Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, that body did not have a real emphasis on “missions,” being more theological in character. However, he was able to interest those Churches which had a history of mission involvement in the Caribbean – the United Church of Canada, which was a partner of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman and was integrally involved in the Caribbean Council of Churches (CCC), and the Presbyterian Church of Canada, which, in addition to being a partner of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman, was a founding Church of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago.

In September, 1986, at a Meeting of the CARC held at Pax Guest House, Mt. St. Benedict in Trinidad, the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission was inaugurated with a membership of six Churches – four Churches from the Caribbean and two from North America. From the Caribbean there were the Guyana Congregational Union, the Presbytery of Guyana, the Guyana Presbyterian Church, the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. From North America there were the Presbyterian Church of the USA and the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

It should be mentioned that the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago did not become a member at first, as there was the fear that the new body would mean the demise of CARC and that Church was committed to the preservation of CARC. In addition, three other churches which had also been present at the meeting of establishment also did not accept the invitation to become members, for a variety of reasons until some years had elapsed.

With regard to financial resources, each member Church would contribute to a common pool according to its means, but it was the hope that just as the Churches of Europe provided the financial undergirding of CWM, the Churches of North America would provide the financial undergirding of the new body.

The first Officers of CANACOM were: Chairman, Rev Earl Thames (UCJGC); Vice Chairman, Rev. Oswald Best (PCOG); Secretary, Rev. Samuel Smellie (UCJGC); Treasurer, Mrs. Julia Ann Moffett (PCUSA); and Mrs. Mamie Evelyn of the UCJCI served as part-time Secretary in the early stages. It was in 1991 that Mrs. Joyce Williams was appointed as the first part-time Administrative Secretary with the task of setting up the CANACOM office. She had returned to Jamaica with her husband, the late Rev. Dr. Lewin Williams, who had been seconded to teach at the UTCWI.

It was decided that the new mission agency would function through two administrative entities – a Council at which all Member Churches would be represented by one delegate, if its membership were less than 2000 members, and two delegates if its membership were 2000 or more; and an Administrative Committee consisting of the Officers and two other members, one from the Caribbean and one from North America. Initially, the Secretariat was to be in Jamaica. Meetings of the body would take place in either the Caribbean or North America. Cost was an important factor in determining venues.

Early in the life of the fledgling body, however, it received an unfortunate setback. The North American Member Churches experienced a dramatic reduction in their Mission Incomes. Local Churches refrained from sending mission contributions to the central administration and began to support individual mission agencies directly.

At a meeting of the Executive of CANACOM with the North American representatives held at the PCUSA's headquarters in Kentucky, it was

communicated that the financial situation in these Churches had deteriorated to such an extent that the undergirding expected from the North American Churches would not be possible. CANACOM therefore, would not be financially viable.

The only hope of CANACOM's survival would be if it could be united with a more financially viable Church agency, such as the Caribbean and North America Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (CANAAC).

The recommendation therefore, was that CANACOM should seek to become a part of CANAAC. As that body did not have a strong mission component, it was hoped that CANACOM could become the "mission arm" of CANAAC. A Joint meeting of the two bodies was therefore arranged. Before this meeting took place, another North American Church, the Reformed Church of America had become a new member of CANACOM.

At the Joint Meeting held in Canada, the deliberations could only be described as "*disastrous*." Grave doubts were expressed by some members of CANAAC as to the ability of the Churches in the Caribbean to maintain any stable Church-related agency. The words used were that all such attempts in the past had been "torpedoed." In any event, the concept of a "mission arm" of CANAAC did not find favour with many of the members of that body. At a hurriedly called meeting of the representatives of CANACOM, it was decided to withdraw the request for a closer relationship between the two bodies, and, in faith, to "go it alone." The Reformed Church of America through its General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Richard Vander Voet, offered additional financial support. In the end, CANACOM was given a place on the Committee for Witness and Service of CANAAC.

It was in this situation of crisis that CWM was asked to intervene. Fortunately, CWM felt that this "visible expression of the CWM concept of mutuality in mission" in the West, should not be allowed to fail. CWM therefore made a grant of £70,000 (US\$156,707) to enable CANACOM to survive. The agreement was that this sum was not to be used as a direct support of the Budget, but should become the basis of an Endowment Fund, the Interest of which was to be used for Budget support. It was thus that the Endowment Fund commenced. Other Member Churches were encouraged to give to this Fund and the eventual contributors were as follows:

Contribution & Amount	US\$ Value
United Church of Canada (C\$50,000)	US\$ 36,595
Presbyterian Church of Canada (C\$20,000)	US\$ 14,599
Presbyterian Church of the USA (US\$7,000)	US\$ 7,000
Guyana Congregational Union (G\$14,000)	US\$ 100

United Protestant Church of Curacao (US\$100)	US\$ 100
Council for World Mission (£59,000)	US\$156,707
TOTAL	US\$215,101

This Fund became the financial base of CANACOM. The Presbyterian Church of the USA indicated that although its contribution to the General Fund could not be much, it would be able to contribute additional amounts to specific programmes of CANACOM. The special funds aspect of the budget was therefore established in order to dedicate the use of such funds for agreed projects. Two such funds were the Sharing of People and the Youth in Mission Funds. In 2005 the Sharing of People Fund was renamed the “Fitzgerald Laing Sharing of People Fund” in memory of one who gave exemplary service to CANACOM but had an untimely passing.

Through the initiative of Mrs. Julia Ann Moffett, the Presbyterian Church of the USA contributed US\$8,000 to the Sharing of People Fund for eight years! This Church also contributed US\$12,000 to the Youth in Mission Fund for two years. The Reformed Church of America fulfilled its pledge and became the largest contributor to the General Fund by contributing \$10,000 each year. CANACOM was therefore able to weather the “hurricane” and survive in the early days.

Because of its generous support of CANACOM, CWM was accorded the right to be a member of the CANACOM Council with speaking and voting rights. On the other hand, CANACOM was accorded the status of an “Associated body” on the CWM Council with speaking though not voting rights. It should be mentioned that in addition to the financial support, the link between CWM and CANACOM was maintained by four other means:

- CANACOM was regarded by CWM as “the visible expression of the CWM concept of mutuality in mission” in the Western world.
- The YAM Work camp was regarded as a joint programme between CANACOM and CWM, as representatives from the other five regions of CWM have the right to be participants in the Work camps. In addition to contributing 50% of the Budget of the Work camp, CWM paid the Airfares for these participants.
- The Commission on Women and Men in Mission was regarded as a joint programme between CWM and CANACOM.
- CANACOM was given the right to send a participant to the Training in Mission (TIM) programme of CWM each year.

It was the joint Young Adults in Mission (YIM) programme which was to lead to a far more significant input by CWM into the financial life of CANACOM.

In 2000 the Budget for the YAM Work camp was so large that CANACOM asked CWM for an increased contribution to cover the cost. The then Education in Mission Secretary (EIM), Miss Jet den Hollander however decided to make the bold suggestion that instead of CWM having to make periodic grants to cover the expenses of CANACOM's programmes, it would be better if CWM could give one large grant to enable CANACOM to "stand on its own feet" and "foot its own bills."

In a tremendous gesture of Christian partnership, CWM decided to use a part of the Principal of a special lump sum gained through the sale of a hospital in Hong Kong, to benefit two bodies which advocated mutuality in mission – CANACOM and the French version of CWM, the Community of Evangelical Churches in Mission (CEVAA).

In 2001 therefore CANACOM received a grant of £500,000 towards its Endowment Fund. To appreciate the significance of this grant, it should be known that this sum when converted became US\$723,383, and increased the Endowment Fund from \$215,101 to \$938,484. This enabled CANACOM to accept the responsibility of paying the emoluments of the EIM Secretary, (which had been paid previously by CWM) and also commencing a new level of assistance to member Churches through what became known as **Empowerment Grants**. As the main aim of CANACOM, as of CWM, was to encourage and enable all its member Churches to become sending as well as receiving Churches, the Empowerment Grants were designed to enable the younger churches, especially, to develop the infrastructure which would equip them to become sending Churches. It should be mentioned that while Project grants have a limit of US\$2,000, Empowerment grants have a limit of US\$5,000. It would be fair to say that CANACOM took on new life.

The significance of CANACOM is best seen by examining its programmes. CANACOM is both a Collaborator in mission and a Facilitator of mission. One of the first programmes developed under the leadership of the then EIM Secretary, Miss Jet den Hollander, was the Joint Mission Action Team (JOMAT). In an attempt to stir persons to consider missionary service at home and abroad, the programme envisions a team of three to five skilled and spiritually mature persons, young or older adults, drawn from different member Churches, who would be willing to live, work and witness together in the country of a member Church for a period of one to five years. They would live, worship and work together, sharing spiritual, cultural and other gifts, not as trainees but as missionaries in a chosen place. The hope was that after this experience they would return to serve their Church at home or on the overseas mission field. It was meant to be not merely a "baptism", but an entry into mission service.

The other main programme of CANACOM is the Youth in Mission, (YIM), later called the Young Adults in Mission (YAM) programme. Unlike the JOMAT this is specifically a training programme. Recognizing that if an idea is to influence the future, one must involve young people in its prosecution, CANACOM has sought to convey the concept of mutuality in mission to the young. Originally called the Youth in Mission programme, its name was changed to the Young Adults in Mission programme to reflect the fact that it demanded young adults rather than the very young.

The programme lasts for three weeks and seeks to immerse young adults in a mission-related activity based on the action/reflection concept of training. The project chosen for each camp involves manual labour of some sort. But in addition to the physical work, the participants engage in studies centred on mission ideas and concepts. Modelled to some extent after the Training in Mission programme of CWM, it brings young people together from all over the world to learn about one another, to learn from one another and to be prepared for cross-cultural service of Christ in the area of mission.

Therefore, more than in the JOMAT programme the participants are drawn from a variety of countries, cultures and languages. Because CWM partners with CANACOM in this programme, the representatives of CWM come from the five regions (other than the Caribbean) of that body - the Pacific Region, the Africa Region, the East Asia Region, the South Asia Region, and the European Region.

As the participants live and work together, the aim is to develop cross cultural relationships as well as to impart knowledge specially related to mission. This programme has been known to have introduced many young adults not only to the world Church but to the world! In one well known case, a friendship which blossomed into a courtship led to a marriage.

Against the background of these two programmes, it will be seen that CANACOM seeks to develop mission consciousness and mission personnel in Churches which may not have taken seriously the Great Commission of Christ in Matthew 28:19-20, and Acts 1:8.

The Empowerment Grants are designed to assist in equipping Churches which may not have the financial resources to develop the infrastructure needed to produce persons to serve in mission situations. Perhaps the best example of this is to be seen in the development of the College for Ministry and Mission Studies (CMMS) in Guyana.

In this country there are three member Churches of CANACOM. Yet these Churches had no theological institution of their own to train persons for Christian service. They had to send students to Jamaica, over a thousand miles away, to be trained as Ministers. CANACOM sent a team to meet with the Churches and examine the possibility of all three uniting to produce a theological training institution in Guyana. Using the model of

the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development (ITLD) in Jamaica, the Churches in Guyana were able to develop the College for Ministry and Mission Studies (CMMS) at which Ministers and other Church workers are now trained. The three Churches did not have the financial resources to make the idea of this College a reality.

Therefore, Empowerment Grants were given to these Churches over a three-year period, which, together with grants from other bodies such as CWM, made the impossible, possible. The hope is that some of those trained at this institution will hear the Call to serve on the wider mission field, especially if they have participated in the YAM or JOMAT programmes. In this way, CANACOM is a mission facilitator, if not itself sending persons to the mission field.

It must be mentioned however, that CANACOM itself did send at least one person from a younger Church to the mission field. The Presbyterian Church of Grenada is in the difficult position of having three Congregations in three geographical regions of the country served by only one Minister! Through CANACOM, the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church of Canada pooled their efforts and were able to send Rev. and Mrs. Sahadat and later, Rev. and Mrs. Bushby, to serve as missionaries to Grenada. CANACOM contributed half of their stipend from the Sharing of People Fund.

It was recognized, however, that the best solution would be to have a local Minister from Grenada serving that Church, preferably assisted by another Church worker. One person from Grenada in training overseas would not have been available until at least a year after the departure of the last serving missionary. The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was approached by CANACOM with a view to that Church providing someone not only to fill the Ministerial gap but also to prepare the Church to receive one of its own. The Rev. Ashley Smith, a senior Minister who had served as the Moderator of the United Church, offered his services for that role. He was accompanied on this one year missionary assignment by his wife, Mrs. Winnie, in 1998. He not only filled the gap until the arrival of the Grenadian but prepared the Church to assume responsibility for one of its own local Ministers.

The Rev. Dr. Osbert James, the Grenadian, now serves as the Minister and Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Grenada. It is perhaps noteworthy that he is also the present (2011) Chairman of CANACOM.

While CANACOM has encouraged persons to serve in places other than their own country, the body has also used its resources to enhance the mission capabilities of Churches in their own local contexts. A very wide range of programmes and projects have therefore been funded by CANACOM through the years. These include, for example, Conferences on Evangelism in the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, a Lay Training programme in Trinidad, the development of sports facilities

for young people in Guyana, the production of compilations of indigenous music and poetry in Cuba, the printing of Sunday School material in Grenada, the production of Christian literature for the Dominican Republic, the provision of “Meals on Wheels” in Guyana, a Music Camp in Jamaica.

These grants have been responses to the requests made by Member Churches based on their mission priorities. In order to make real the principle of mutuality, that is, that all Member Churches should both give and receive, there has been a determined effort to have not only the Churches of the Caribbean make such requests, but also the Churches of North America. Two such requests from North America have been answered by CANACOM. The Presbyterian Church of the USA desired to send a representative to the special Columbus 500 celebrations in 1994 and CANACOM funded the visit.

The Presbyterian Church of Canada experienced damage from an Ice Storm in 1998, and CANACOM provided financial assistance. CANACOM's policy stance is that no need should go unanswered provided that the resources are available. Therefore, although CANACOM focuses on “mission” requirements, it has a Disaster Fund that is responsive to appeals relating to the periodic natural disasters, especially hurricanes, that affect the Caribbean. In 2005 CANACOM responded to a request from Cuba which had suffered hurricane damage. In that same period other Member Churches suffered similar damage especially from hurricanes Ivan and Katrina. The Churches assisted from this Fund were the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, the Presbyterian Church of Grenada, the Guyana Presbyterian Church, the Guyana Congregational Union, the Presbytery of Guyana, and the Presbyterian Church of the USA.

Whereas CANACOM's membership has consisted primarily of Churches from the English speaking territories, no attempt has been made to discourage Churches in other linguistic domains. In fact, from the very beginning, the United Protestant Church of Curacao was bilingual, as in addition to English, the language of the people was Papiamentu, a Dutch Creole. However, Spanish is the most commonly used official language in the region.

Two Spanish-speaking Churches became members of CANACOM. They are the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Cuba, which had previously been a member of CARC, and the Evangelical Church of the Dominican Republic. It is true that the delegates to the Meetings of CANACOM have been bilingual, and so in addition to Spanish, they have also spoken English, but it soon became necessary to have some of the decisions and literature of CANACOM translated into Spanish.

Further attempts were made to invite Churches in Central and Latin America to become members, but none has accepted thus far. Conversations were held with the Panama/Costa Rica District of the Methodist Church, but the “Conference” structure of the Methodist Church

did not allow an individual Church to become a member of an ecumenical body such as CANACOM.

It must be admitted that much of CANACOM's progress and success has been due to the work of the Education in Mission (EIM) Secretaries who have served the body. The first EIM Secretary, Miss Jet den Hollander, made a distinctive mark on the life of CANACOM; she served for the period 1987-2001.

Entering upon this post in the early years of the body's existence she had to initiate and pioneer most of CANACOM's programmes. Originally Miss den Hollander had been appointed by CWM as a **Mission Enabler** to the two CWM Member Churches in the Caribbean Region – the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman and the Guyana Congregational Union. However, conscious of the birth of CANACOM in the region, CWM allowed Miss den Hollander to extend her services to all the Churches of CANACOM, although her stipend was paid by CWM. Eventually, that which was her second responsibility became her main task. As the Secretary for Education in Mission of CANACOM she laid the foundations of most of the programmes of the body, and used her dynamism to create an interest in mission in many of the Churches.

CANACOM contributed a half of her stipend at first and from 2002, paid the full amount. Ms. Den Hollander developed the Youth in Mission Work camp. This camp was later renamed the Young Adults in Mission Work Camp.

Miss Jet den Hollander was succeeded by Rev. Verna Cassells, who served from 2001 to 2008 and built on the foundations which had been laid. She developed the YAM programme so that it became a genuine educational instrument influencing young adults towards a mission commitment.

The present EIM Secretary, Rev. Nicole Ashwood was appointed in 2008. She is at this juncture engaged in the delicate task of leading CANACOM in a review of its operations as a mission agency. It can be sincerely said that CANACOM has been fortunate in having a succession of dedicated Christian servants in the post of EIM Secretary, who have had a genuine heart for missions.

In addition to the EIM Secretaries, the persons who have influenced the development of CANACOM have been the Chairmen and other Officers of the body. The first Chair of CANACOM was Rev. Earl Thames, of the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman. He served for the first six years of the body's existence and then had the distinction of serving as Treasurer for a total of nine years. The first Vice Chair was the Rev. Oswald Best of the Presbytery of Guyana. Rev. Thames was succeeded by Rev. Dr. Steve Chambers, of the United Church of Canada, who had an outstanding period of service. Others who served as Chair are Dr. Margery Ross of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, Rev. Leander Warren of the

Guyana Congregational Union, Rev. Claire Smith and Miss Roshana Gillis of the Guyana Congregational Union, Miss Julie Graham, of the United Church of Canada, Rev. Rawle Suku of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago, Rev. Tricia Lloyd-Sidle of the Presbyterian Church of the USA and Rev. Dr. Osbert James of the Presbyterian Church in Grenada. At present, Mrs. Anne Phillips of the United Church of Canada who became Chair in 2012 serves as Chair.

Those who have served as Secretary of CANACOM include Mrs. Julia Ann Moffett, Rev. Tricia Lloyd-Sidle and Rev. Karen Herbst-Kim of the Presbyterian Church of the USA and Rev. Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago.

The first Treasurer of CANACOM was Mrs. Julia Ann Moffett. Others were Rev. Dr. Carlos Ham of the Presbyterian Church of Cuba, Rev. Earl Thames, Rev. Fitz Gerald Laing, Rev. Dave Spence and, at present Mrs. Merle Buchanan also of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Because the Secretariat is in Jamaica, it has been felt that the Treasurer should be in relatively easy reach of the Secretariat. Representatives of Jamaica, Cuba and the USA have therefore held the position of Treasurer.

In addition to the contribution made by CANACOM to projects and programmes of the individual Churches, its influence on the world of missions has been mainly through the young adults who have benefited from either the JOMAT or the YAM programme. *The real contribution of this body is therefore yet to be realized.*



Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans

This conversation took place between Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans, one of the founders of CANACOM and the Education in Mission Secretary, Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, on Tuesday, August 22, 2016, as he reflected on the start of CANACOM.

JPM: Rev. Dr. Evans, thank you for making the time to meet with me to talk about CANACOM.

ME: Welcome, Mrs. Martin. It's always a pleasure to talk about the work of CANACOM. The conversation which eventually led to the formation of CANACOM began at a CWM facilitated meeting. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss how the work among Member Churches in the Caribbean and North America could be expanded. The attendees at the meeting were representatives from the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman, The Guyana Congregational Union and the Presbyterian Church USA. The idea of CANACOM was initiated during a meeting which had already been scheduled.

It was that first meeting that brought Guyana and the North American people together. When the subject was put on the table, there was a great bit of excitement about its possibility; then we began to schedule initial meetings dedicated to the subject. Two meetings were held in the USA in which their leadership had an opportunity to share in the conversation and to participate in the shaping of the vision of a grouping that had at its centre, not the normal talking and not the normal almost reliance on their goodwill but a whole different understanding that was linked to what we then called a **Partnership in Mission** - how we understand a different kind

of partnership, **“how”** we understand a different kind of partnership in which there were neither junior nor senior partners but we were **partners together** in the mission for Christ.

That conversation began to blossom into a larger agenda which then took into account the Reformed Churches in the region that were also part of a later meeting. When the Reformed churches in the region were to have their meeting, the business of linking them into a mission was not a simple matter because they did not have a mission agenda. Therefore, we began to focus not only in the gathering in terms of how we were supportive of each other but how do we now recalibrate in such a way that we put mission at the centre of the identity and of the purpose for meeting. All the churches bought into the understanding of a different journey with mission at its centre. The business of constructing an instrument for enabling this idea of mission was given much energy.

JPM: Was this conversation separate from ones being carried out with the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches (CARC)?

ME: Yes. This new conversation with North America present became a new focus in which Mission became Partnership in Mission. You will recall at that point in time the relationship between North and South was the high end to the low end with the north being the high end. We were saying that those days were finished. When you sit around the table and everybody owned the table and everybody had a piece to contribute and that was unique and could make a difference to how we presented ourselves not just together but how we presented ourselves in the context of Missionaries in a Mission organization.

JPM: From records of the time we know that the main movers in that conversation included Rev. Maitland Evans, Rev. Earl Thames, Rev. Sam Smellie, Dr. David Young, Rev. John Rollins, Rev. Joseph Reed, Rev. Cliff Kirkpatrick and some others. Can you comment briefly on the factors that helped the conversation to progress?

ME. In reality Earl was a very important part of that because he was Chair for the Mission Witness and Service Committee of the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman. So even though he was not the initiator of the action that it was being driven from where I was located in CWM and from where the North American people were, Earl was pivotal to the process of moving it from a conversation between some persons to an organization in which people who belonged to that organization were being encouraged and motivated to begin the process of working and acting together for the cause of mission.

A crucial point in our discussion was the visible need for a refocusing and probably even a reinterpretation of mission in partnership.

But that had all kinds of implications because it required a different way of seeing ourselves. It was now not only what the North American people brought to the table. Clearly the disposition and orientation of the North American people was that they were at least the “Big Brothers” in the process and the other piece was that we were the “Small Brothers” in the process. What we wanted to emphasize is that, it is not what you brought to the table but the certain sense of personhood which you embodied in relation to the other that allowed each person to be clear about what they had to contribute and importantly as well what they had to receive because the underlying principle in the partnership is that everybody sitting around the table was at once a giver and a receiver.

JPM: Was it hard to convince colleagues that everybody was equal?

ME: It was hard on everybody because the people from the South were very, very accustomed to stretching out their hands and to be categorized as receivers. The people from the North were clearly socialized to understand their role as that of givers. In fact, what was critical for the journey beyond that was the appreciation that everybody was both a giver and a receiver. The humility of the mission which we were talking about is the readiness of everybody for the dual role. Great effort was required in the redefining ourselves and casting ourselves actively in the mode of a continuous personhood that understood that everybody had something to give and everybody had something to receive. And that was the essence of the partnership which we were trying to give form and content to.

JPM: So when CANACOM started in 1986 I imagine that there still would have been vestiges of that difficulty in understanding that we all had something to give and something to receive.

ME: That is true. There were a lot of struggles on the part of the persons who were accustomed to either being one or the other but never both. What we were pressing each other to understand was that, in the relationship the mindset of all the persons in that conversation predisposed them to be one or the other and it was never going to be easy.

JPM: What influenced the Council for World Mission to support the positioning of Ms. Jet den Hollander as Secretary for Education in Mission for CANACOM? The organization recognizes with appreciation the invaluable foundational work originating from her office. We continue to build on it.

ME: The Training in Mission Programme was the first major programme that I had to bring into effect. The threads were within CWM but it had never been activated. It became activated in a way which was much more consistent with the giving and receiving perspective which was dominant in CWM at that time...As far as the people from the South were concerned things were basically in shape. However, that was not true of everybody because there were some enlightened ones who were open to some new perspectives.

One of the big disappointments that I had is that when in the CWM context we began to push this message to its logical conclusion even those who were the liberals and who were communicating themselves as being open to the process, when you began to push the principle to its logical conclusion it became very difficult.

I remember the process becoming very uncomfortable when some of us from the South began to indicate that we couldn't live with a discontinuity about how we interpret mission in the totality of the giving and receiving understanding and therefore there is a logical movement of thought and action which we needed to pursue. It is that logical movement between thought and action which separated the people who saw themselves as liberals and people who had the sense of a whole new totality of interpretation of the process that didn't go half way but went all the way.

'All the way' was always going to be difficult for persons who had lived their lives with one orientation. It was always going to be difficult for people on the other side of the same coin who had lived their lives as receivers. Therefore, the process was always going to be among those who were going to take the risk of pushing for a totality of understanding in application.

Some of us have never been able to survive it in terms of how we were seen and understood. To this day in most of the North America areas of CWM there are some people including myself who were always seen as "trouble makers" because we were not prepared to simply allow the system to quietly return to what it knew. I am afraid that the last time I addressed the CWM I could sense the unease among some of my colleagues. I was addressing them on the understanding that we have come a long way. It has always been on the basis of a struggle to move from one way of thinking and behaving to move to a different way of thinking and behaving. There was always the business of who were responsible for loosening the money that people were going to benefit from. That money had a power to adjust and limit the way we think and behave.

JPM: By Constitution CANACOM accounts for its Member Church contributions through a common pool into which all Member Churches contribute. Some churches in the North are registered as charities and rules governing the use of their funds overseas are changing. The financial

climate governing our mission partnership has to be reviewed or some areas of our programming could be negatively impacted.

ME: In this particular milieu, the partnership in mission enterprise, we can't say it has been retracted but we have to say that it has been compromised and it has been compromised because although the world has become smaller the chasm between the "Haves and the Have Nots" has become wider.

It's all-embracing and the thing which makes it most challenging is that those who were alert and alive to the issues have not ceased to be alert and alive to the issues. The struggle they face is the struggle which requires them to affirm small progress at the expense of the larger progress which was part of their earlier expectation. You are now not in a position to expect the large progress. People have not on the basis of compromise but it is on the basis of realism [that] we have come to accept small progress and the issue that faces us is how to put small progress to work in a large way. Because it is small it should not be hidden under the bed or under the table. Small progress should be celebrated because it continues to say that it can be done and it needs to be done.

JPM: When we meet in September at the Fitz Memorial Lecture I would appreciate the point of recognizing value of small progress and making some sense out of it being shared with the audience.

ME: One of the things that faith has enjoined us to do is to understand the mustard seed reality. The mustard seed is not a seed of death but one of life and as small as it is it emphasizes the reality of presence. There is nothing more profound than the small entities that exist through the vision of the future, the most important contribution that they continue to make from their mustard seed perspectives is presence.

I am allowing my voice to be heard and I am using every opportunity to say that there is a common call to mission and it is not you in your corner and I in mine. It is a call to partnership and when you are going to be in partnership with somebody it requires you to engage that person as a person and to affirm what that person brings to the table and the contribution that they make and the extent to which, whatever that contribution is, it is in keeping with the partnership in mission. It is contribution that keeps the fires burning.

JPM: Thank you, Rev. Evans, This has been a most insightful conversation.

ME: It has been my pleasure!



Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick

The Vision that Gave Birth to CANACOM

It is hard to believe that the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) is 25 years old! It seems like only yesterday that those of us from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and from other North American churches were meeting with colleagues and visionaries like Sam Smellie, Maitland Evans, Earl Thames, and many others from the Caribbean to dream of a new way of doing mission in our part of the world based on deep gospel values of mutuality, justice and partnership – that were a marked contrast to the historic patterns of mission that focused on senders and receivers, alliance with Colonial powers, and failure to see the need for God’s mission in all parts of the world.

The mid-1980s, when CANACOM was created, was a time of ferment in both church and society. In the Caribbean theologians like Noel Erskine were calling for a decolonization of the mind and an indigenous “calypso theology.” The church was reclaiming its prophetic imagination and identity at the same time in which it was clear that colonialism and slavery in the Caribbean were being replaced by a neo-colonialism that placed the Caribbean people and nations in a new form of economic bondage to the Global North and to the forces of economic globalization. There was a clear passion to find, in the words of the Apostle Paul, a “**more excellent way**” for the churches to relate to one another and to be a model to the broader society of how community and justice could be lived out between North and South.

Others, from the Caribbean, can speak and write much more authoritatively on these developments from a Caribbean perspective. What I want to share is a bit about the ecclesial and social reality of my context in North America and why we saw so much hope in what CANACOM represented as a new way of doing mission and a new model of how human beings might live together in justice and dignity across all the barriers of

race, culture, nationality, and economic status that divided – and that still divide – the two close neighbors of the Caribbean and North America.

In my own church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the 1980s were a time of great ferment and great hope. We had just come out of the civil rights movement in which the church gained a new perspective on the sin of racism and a new sense of its calling, in the words of Martin Luther King, to be “the beloved community.” Yet, by the 1980s much of the hopes and dreams of that era seemed to be fading as the country moved once again toward widening the gap between the rich and the poor and supporting, often through violence, national security states, especially in Central America, where the rights of the people were being subjugated to the interests of the rich and the powerful in the region and in the USA.

Our church was celebrating a union for Presbyterians who had been divided into two churches between the North and the South going back to the time of our Civil War over 100 years ago. Just as that division had been, in major part, a division caused by slavery and injustice, our hopes were that this reunion would be marked by a fresh commitment to justice and inclusion of all of God’s people – and by a new approach to mission that moved us away from the Colonial patterns and their legacies into a new era marked by mutuality, justice, partnership, and the sharing of the whole gospel for the redemption of the world. It was also a time ecumenically when churches around the world were focusing on “mission in Christ’s way” and “mission with empty hands.” These hopes and dreams made something like CANACOM seem like a “breath of fresh air” and a sign of considerable hope for a new era of mission.

During this period, I had the privilege of coming to know of the Council for World Mission, which transformed old mission sending and receiving structures into a community of sharing in mission, where former senders and receivers shared their resources “with empty hands” and together as a community set priorities and supported one another’s churches in their mission at home and in their sharing in mission in other parts of the world. In CWM old patterns of dominance and one-way mission were replaced by genuine mutuality in mission with churches in every part of the world seen as both givers and receivers in the mission of Christ.

I remember well visiting with the leaders of the CWM in London in the early 1980s in my capacity as the director of the world mission agency of our church to inquire if the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) might become part of this community. CWM leaders were a bit hesitant about such an expansion of the membership of the CWM community at that point in time; however, they raised the question as to whether we might instead consider creating a similar, if smaller scale, community in mission in the Americas or at least between churches in North America and the Caribbean. The vast majority of CWM’s member churches were in the Eastern Hemisphere, and they felt that a parallel community of mission sharing in the Western

Hemisphere might complement CWM and extend this new vision of mutuality in mission to a global level. They also shared that the few CWM member churches from the Western Hemisphere were in the Caribbean. One of those churches, the United Church of Jamaica and the Grand Cayman was also a church that had relations with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and they suggested that I and my colleagues in the PCUSA might fruitfully be in contact with our friends in the United Church.

The rest is history! I soon came to know as friends the leaders in the United Church like Maitland Evans, Sam Smellie, and Earl Thames, who had a great enthusiasm and a real vision for such a new community in mission between Reformed churches in the Caribbean and Reformed churches in North America. We soon expanded the circle to include other Reformed churches in the Caribbean and in North America, and the conversations and relations that lead to launching CANACOM in 1986 began in earnest. While the enthusiasm on all sides was great, we did encounter a few “bumps in the road”. Some churches in the Caribbean feared losing the close community and real support they had felt in the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches (CARC) which would be folded into this new arrangement. Churches in North America experienced a major downturn in financial support for their national structures, including their mission agencies, which cast doubt on funding to start major new ventures. Complications were encountered in trying to see how CANACOM might relate to the other major organization that linked Reformed churches in North America and the Caribbean, the Caribbean and North America Area Council (CAANAC) of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, which connected the churches together largely in theological reflection.

With the incredible support of the Council for World Mission, these obstacles were overcome, and CANACOM was launched by eight churches from North America and the Caribbean in 1986 and came to life in a variety of expressions of sharing and community in mission over the years that followed. While always small in size and resources, CANACOM has had an impact far beyond its size. It has enabled the sharing of people in mission at points of great need among the Member Churches. It pioneered in youth and young adult in mission work camps and learning experiences that have linked together Caribbean and North American youth in common mission and common reflection on God’s call for their lives. A variety of Joint Mission Action Teams have linked together people from our churches to witness at the frontiers of mission and justice.

Grants, while small in size, have made a huge impact in empowering churches to respond with compassion to disasters, care for people in need, and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. CANACOM and its sister organization, CANAAC have both been deeply involved in implementing

in both the Caribbean and North America the vision of the Accra Confession for a covenant for justice in the economy and the earth.

While credit for what has been accomplished through CANACOM over the last twenty-five years belongs primarily to God and to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, credit for the accomplishments of this ministry also needs to be extended to the incredibly faithful and dedicated people who have served as officers and leaders of CANACOM over the years, beginning with the Rev. Earl Thames, who served as CANACOM's first Chairman during its early years. Special thanks also need to be extended to three incredibly dedicated and capable staff who have led CANACOM as it's "Education in Mission Secretaries": Ms. Jet den Hollander, Rev. Verna Cassells, and Rev. Nicole Ashwood. These three women have taken a mustard seed and nurtured it into a strong and healthy plant.

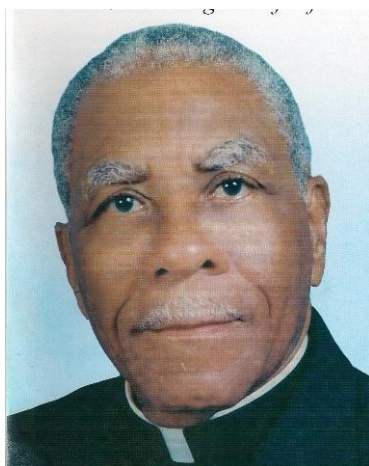
The world in which CANACOM begins its second 25 years is a different world from the world of the 1980s, but the vision and the needs that brought CANACOM into existence a quarter of century ago are as relevant for the 21st century as they were for the 1980s. These values include such things as mutuality in mission, being a community of sharing where all have gifts and all have needs, an approach to mission that assumes that the resources belong to God and not to us, a deep and profound connection between mission and justice, and a deep need for the churches to be a living demonstration of the kind of community and justice that God intends for all people in the Caribbean and North America. Small, but important steps have been taken in these directions through CANACOM over the last twenty-five years, but far more needs to be done in the years ahead.

The Reformed churches of the Caribbean and North America need to use this opportunity to take a fresh look at ourselves, our mission, and our relations with one another. How do we reclaim this vision and these values for a 21st century world? How might we further increase the cooperation and community between CANACOM and CANAAC so that we can have a common and strong witness as Reformed Christians to God's justice in our time? **How might we move CANACOM from being a community on the edges of our church's lives to being at their very center where it truly impacts our people?**

At core, what is important about this 25th anniversary celebration is not the specific organization that we recognize, CANACOM. What is important is how we enable our churches to be a true reflection of the body of Christ. What Paul makes clear as he unpacks this metaphor from I Corinthians 12 is that no human person or institution is the head of the church. Only Christ is the head of the church. In the body of Christ all the parts are valued. They exist not to compete with one another but to complement and support one another so that Christ's body may be effective

in its mission to the world. In fact, in the body of Christ, those who are most valued are those who are most marginal.

The most important contribution of CANACOM in its first 25 years has been that it has enabled the churches of the Caribbean and North America to more faithfully be the body of Christ in our time. The greatest challenge for the years ahead is that it even more faithfully lives out this calling as North American and Caribbean Christians we become living expressions of the body of Christ in our time. May God richly bless us as we seek to be faithful to that calling!



Rev. Sam Smellie

Rev. Sam Smellie was General Secretary of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands at the time of the formation of CANACOM.

That position naturally called him to represent the church nationally, regionally and internationally. In the instances of the Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches (CARC) and the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) he acted as Secretary for many years.

He was appointed as Secretary of CARC in 1965 when it was formed. Similarly, when CANACOM was founded in 1986 he became the first Secretary and remained so for 6 years. He was part of very important developments in the mission arena for both CARC and CANACOM in his

role as Secretary. Rev. Smellie is hailed by Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick as a visionary whose dedication and contribution to the work and life of mission within the Caribbean and North American context will ever be remembered as a great factor that influenced an even greater change in how mission is seen.

The Caribbean Association of Reformed Churches is regarded as the parent of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission. CANACOM was developed as the mission arm of CARC.

Over the many years, crucial communication regarding the visions and programmes of both organizations were prepared, kept current and transmitted through the hand of Rev. Smellie but, as expected, his role and interests in the organizations were multifaceted. In the records, his presence is felt at the start of CARC and similarly at the formation of CANACOM. His was one of the steady hands which guided the dissolution of CARC when it became clear that CANACOM's wider reach would, by constitution extend the original mandate of CARC. His generation was very keen to design and implement a model of mission partnership which would redound to a strong future.

In areas of Joint witness which were addressed by CARC, for example, Racism, Pornography, Freedom to Witness, Drug Abuse and Haiti, Rev. Smellie's voice was integral to the discussions leading to resolutions and actions.

Rev. Smellie epitomized the spirit of eagerness by the churches at the time to work together with an increased sense of cooperation.

Mission and Evangelism

One aspect of the work of CARC which was naturally brought into CANACOM is Mission and Evangelism. CANACOM therefore is committed to the practice of member churches being witnesses to Him (Acts 1:8). Rev. Smellie continued to be part of the discussion which challenged member churches to move towards a greater sense of faithfulness to this mandate. In this the 30th year of CANACOM, this challenge is even more relevant and it remains evident that Church Growth and Renewal is still lagging. It would serve us well to listen to his voice and those of other missionary forebears who call us to a radical sharing of the good news in this age. Through CANACOM's programme the Fitz Gerald Laing Sharing of the People, and partnership with other mission agencies we need to approach the work with a renewed zeal. May we, in honouring the memory of Rev. Smellie and his colleagues, many of blessed memory, carry on the work they started with such robust energy and vision.



Rev. Leander Warren

Reflecting on CANACOM: Guyana to Curacao

Guyana was a CANACOM Member Country from the inception of CANACOM; the Reformed Churches in Guyana have therefore always been familiar with CANACOM. When I attended my first meeting of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) in 1989, representing the Guyana Congregational Union, just three years after its founding, I by no stretch of the imagination could know that I was getting involved in a mission experiment that would bring a transforming perspective as to how mission could be done in the Caribbean and North America region.

Further, aspects of the work have on occasion embraced members of the global church. To be invited to share my CANACOM experience at this juncture of CANACOM's history (30 years), I consider a delightful privilege. This opportunity is especially precious because I have had the rare opportunity to be a part of the CANACOM experience in Guyana, a number of other Caribbean countries, especially through attending Council meetings and serving on the Administrative Committee. Combined with this has been the tremendous opportunity to be associated with the Council for World Mission in a number of roles over the years. This has strengthened my understanding of what CWM and CANACOM are all about and how jointly they have sought to foster mission.

Knowledge of the opportunities for partnership through CANACOM has made it possible for me to share with others ways of actualizing mission projects. Above all, for the past 10 years, I have had the once in a lifetime opportunity to share in the mission of Curacao through my role as a minister in the Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC). This particular position has widened my appreciation of mission endeavours of CANACOM.

It was at the 2004 Council meeting in Jamaica that it was announced that there was a vacancy for an English-speaking minister at the Ebenezer

church in Curacao. The advert said in part, “we are an English speaking multi cultural church with active small groups...”. CANACOM was asked to assist in the process of encouraging suitable applicants to apply. A following of the process resulted in my appointment in April of 2006. My brief reflection seeks to:

- present a broad overview of the missiological and global context out of which CANACOM grew. I will also seek to raise some issues which are significant as CANACOM engages in a process of revisioning regarding our response as a relevant 21st Century mission organization.
- recognize that CANACOM was an experiment in mission.
- highlight the rise of secularism and new interpretations of Christianity.
- to call us to a further revisioning of CANACOM.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the fledgling years of the council, as could well be imagined, many issues of primary interest were contending for attention:

- vision or what was possible and achievable
- identity or who we were
- policy or nature of our mission and
- methodology or manner of execution of the mission

The thread which united all of these issues was whether the experiment of CANACOM would become a success and whether it would survive.

After all it was in ways a strange partnership between three large Churches of the traditional sending, defining, dominant and powerful North and small Churches of the traditional receiving, defined, dominated and powerless South. CANACOM came into existence during a period of intense ecclesiastical, economic and social disquiet or fermentation. Churches particularly in the North were seeking to gain an understanding and a capacity to respond in a *Christian* way to a plethora of emerging social phenomena. Chief among these were:

- Economic globalization
- The emergence of varied sexual orientations, thus alternative lifestyles
- A rise in secularization which increasingly had a negative impact on programmes that addressed evangelism and mission.

These phenomena were contributing factors which threatened to disturb the status quo of their churches.

Because the world is not neatly and strictly compartmentalized, the counterparts in the South were affected by some of the same issues. While the north was coming face to face with the effects of entrenched hegemonic structures and practices in their own societies, the South was beginning to voice protests against these very issues. The unease came against a background of foreboding as the South quietly assessed how societal shifts in the North would impact economic, political and social aspects of life in the South. The matters burdened the minds and lives of church members in the South.

In particular, the large and encompassing system of globalization coalesced into the imposition of an unjust debt repayment burden. This was imposed on the South by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), and other financial institutions of the North, which were paralyzing and stymieing development and creating economic and social destabilization and gridlock in the south, a situation that was adversely impacting the small Churches in the South.

While the foregoing were making the noise, so to speak, on the socio-economic front, it ought to be remembered that on the ecclesiastical front, the emergence of new theologies – “Black”, “Caribbean,” and “Liberation” were beginning to make their impact, offering another way of theological reflection or thought and inquiry quite distinct from the “classical theological” thought patterns of the North. Such is the description of the regional climate in which the CANACOM mission experiment was born, rather powerful headwinds by any reckoning.

It can therefore be said that the experiment of CANACOM was a bold move, a great leap of faith which proved that a mustard-seed faith can accomplish great and significant things just as the Bible says (Matt. 17:20).

I now return to vision, identity, mission and methodology, four very important considerations to the understanding of CANACOM’s *raison d’être*, hence a structure and *modus operandi* that differentiated it from other regional ecumenical and mission organizations of that time. A few which readily come to mind are the Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC), the Caribbean Conference of Churches (CCC), the Caribbean Area of Reformed Churches (CARC) and AIPRIL, a membership of Spanish speaking Churches. These all reflected the traditional model of mission or ecumenism based on dominance or power where there was one directional movement of personnel, material, financial and other resources from North to South or source of dominance to place of the dominated.

The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission by contrast, embraced a different model, one inspired by the Council for World Mission (CWM) as will be explained in the following. The vision of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission was born out of Ephesians 4:12-13, "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

The vision, therefore, is the building up and empowering of all God's people for service of love so that all might attain a life of fullness, and **experience lives that are authentically human irrespective of geographic or socio-economic circumstances.**

Returning to identity, CANACOM is modelled on the "round table" pattern which is that of **mutuality and equality**, according to each participating Church's legitimacy and equal representation at the conversation table. This equality was embedded in the model irrespective of numerical size, operational sophistication and economic strength of any member. This allowed for equal and shared input in the decision making process regarding the core principles and values and mission of the council.

The "round table" model encouraged as well as ensured that all member communions contribute to a common pool; be it personnel resources, financial resources, material resources, faith or prayer resources according to their ability or means, and receive from that common pool according to their needs.

With respect to mission, CANACOM focuses or targets strategic ministries and projects, initiatives that make for positive difference to the ministries of member communions, and partners them in giving strength and efficacy to these initiatives. This is done through the provision of personnel, financial, material and prayer support. The approach seeks to recognize CANACOM's ongoing objectives to strengthen the mission and projects of Member Communions that minister to the needs of people. Through its programmes/mission/partnerships CANACOM seeks to point persons in a direction which will enhance the quality of their lives, in order for them to experience and see the love of Christ through the action of his Church.

The way CANACOM has worked - the methods or measures it has used - has evolved over the years informed by the specific needs of the Member communions. The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission first began with the Young Adults in Mission (YAM) programme; it then added the Joint Mission Action (JOMAT) programme, the Training in Mission (TIM) programme, in collaboration with the Council for World Mission and finally the Sharing of People programme.

The first three programmes bring mostly young adults together from disparate backgrounds and contexts and immerse them in experiences of

cross cultural fertilization as they collaborate on specific focuses and projects of Member Churches. The fourth programme allows for the exchange of personnel between Member Churches over short, medium and long term periods. In this regard CANACOM's methodology has been from the inception - reflection and action, its defining hallmarks.

I think it would be remiss of me in sharing this experience albeit briefly, if I did not provide some insight regarding the progress of CANACOM over its thirty years of existence. During the fledgling years, a period of about five to six years, CANACOM had neither secretariat nor personnel to enable it to coordinate and execute its mission initiatives. The nascent organization was kept alive by the enthusiasm and lively hope of the Administrative Committee. The policy directions and mission goals began to take form with the establishment of the office.

This changed when a secretariat or coordinating centre was established and staff appointed. During my tenure as Chair of CANACOM the secretariat was located in Jamaica, courtesy of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), and staffed by an Education in Mission (EIM) Secretary and an Administrative Assistant (AA). Mesdames Jet den Hollander and Joyce Williams respectively were the first two staff members. Support for the staff was later added in the appointment of the Finance and Administrative Support Group (FASG).

The astonishing fact that CANACOM's accomplishments regionally and beyond have far outstripped its size, has in no small measure been due to the immense work done by the initial staff named in the foregoing as well as those who succeeded them, namely, Rev'ds Verna Cassells and Nicole Ashwood, Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, Education in Mission Secretaries, and Mrs. Eldemire and Ms. Leslene Laing, Administrative Assistants.

In conclusion I feel compelled to raise the spectre of current and potential challenges that the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission would more likely than not, need to address as it celebrates its thirtieth year and going forward, in the service of Christ's mission. I believe that theological reflection needs to take place in light of the seismic shifts that have occurred in Christian moral beliefs and values as exemplified in the redefinition of marriage.

This can be potentially dangerous to the unity of CANACOM on account of the North-South divide on the matter of ever changing interpretations of Christianity. Also I believe that at this significant juncture in its history, CANACOM needs to engage in re-visioning regarding its *raison d'être* so as to be able to respond in an appropriate manner to 21st century societal realities and needs.

My prayer is that God will continue to bestow the Council with the knowledge, understanding, wisdom and whatever other resources it would need for the journey ahead.



Rev. Diana de Graven

Coming into CANACOM

The 1980s, the decade in which CANACOM was founded, not only saw great socio-economic change in the world due to advances in technology and the beginning of globalization, but AIDS also became recognized during this decade and global warming was placed on the agenda of the scientific and political community. Developing countries across the world had to deal with economic and social difficulties as they suffered from multiple debt crises requiring many of these countries to apply for financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Suriname which gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975 was also in political turmoil. A military coup was launched on February 25, 1980 which caused the country's politics and economy to be dominated by the military until 1991.

The 1980s also marked the life of the Reformed Church in Suriname (RCS) which started its mission in Suriname in 1668. In 1986 Rev. Max Lieveld was ordained as the first Surinamese minister. This was after 300 years of depending on ministers from the Netherlands to serve our denomination. This signal event set the RCS on a new course.

In the late 1980s and early 90s, it became clear that the RCS had to manage its own affairs. This involved the training and appointment of indigenous ministers. It was also during this period that the movement away from a paternalistic colonial missiological approach to mission started to evolve. The church's journey in this decade coincided with that of my ministerial formation. The call led me to pursue my Diploma in Ministerial Studies at the United Theological College of the West Indies and at the same time my Bachelor in Theology at the University of the West Indies at Mona, Kingston.

By confluence of circumstance, the RCS first heard of CANACOM in the early 1990s. Ms. Jet den Hollander who served as the Education in Mission Secretary at that time visited Suriname in 1992 to explore whether

the church would be interested in joining CANACOM in the mission partnership. The outcome of this initial visit was that I was asked by the RCS to represent the church as an observer at CANACOM's Council meeting which was held in St. George's, Grenada in April 1993.

Even though the RCS was invited to join CANACOM, it took us twenty-two years to formally make the move to join the ranks of CANACOM. God in His Providence once again allowed me to study in Jamaica to pursue a Masters in Theology. I was unaware that CANACOM and CANAAC were at the time having a joint meeting in Jamaica. I was asked by the President of the United Theological College of the West Indies, Rev. Dr. Marjorie Lewis, to represent the UTCWI at this joint meeting. I informed the RCS of what was happening and pointed out that it was no coincidence. The time was right for the RCS to belatedly accept the invitation of membership. We were accepted by acclamation as CANACOM's fourteenth Member Church and since then the bond between CANACOM and the RCS has been growing from strength to strength.

This year marks CANACOM's 30th anniversary and things have changed tremendously in the world. However, we know that the vision and the needs that brought CANACOM into existence are just as relevant today as they were all those years ago. The RCS is aware of its obligation to effectively meet these needs and also uphold this vision. CANACOM's strategic plan 2014-2020 has identified four mission priorities to guide its work. These are: Church Growth and Renewal, Gender and Violence, Poverty and Inequality and Human Trafficking.

As a community we have to share the gifts we all have so graciously received from God to ensure that all God's people get access to what ultimately belongs to God. As workers in the mission field we should always strive for a deep and profound connection between mission and justice. As such, through these mission priorities, the Member Churches can actively demonstrate God's love for all people in the world.

The RCS as the youngest Member is proud to host this year's Council Meeting and is looking forward to finally meeting the other Member Churches and continuing to engage in CANACOM's mission for the 21st century.



Mrs. Joyce Williams
CANACOM's First Administrative Secretary

Lewin and I returned to Jamaica in 1990. This was an arrangement between the Presbyterian Church (USA) to whom he was employed and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Before returning to Jamaica Lewin was commissioned by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA to the United Theological College of the West Indies as a lecturer in Systematic Theology while I was commissioned to the home. What did that really mean? Would I just sit at home twiddling my thumbs?

Rev. Maitland Evans knew that I would not be satisfied sitting at home and so he visited with me soon after our arrival and gave me a brief history of CANACOM. It was during this discourse that he invited me to come aboard to establish the office. I was most enticed by this offer.

He indicated that Mrs. Maimie Evelyn of blessed memory had been giving of her time in preparing the minutes but there was need for a more permanent arrangement and extended responsibilities. Yet he was not convinced that CANACOM in its early stage of development would provide sufficient work for me. He went on to explain that the Public Education Committee of the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman, up to that point only had volunteers and needed someone permanently in the office to attend to the affairs of all the schools which were owned by the Church. I accepted the challenge and space was provided in the Synod Office where I was expected to spend one half of the time on each entity. Little did I know what I was getting into!

When I joined CANACOM in 1991, the full membership consisted of seven churches - the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman, The Guyana Congregational Union, The Presbytery of Guyana, the Guyana

Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in Grenada, the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The United Church of Canada was an active participant who had given a seed funding to CANACOM at the beginning and became a member of CANACOM in 1994.

In May of 1992, the first Education in Mission Secretary, Ms. Elisabeth (Jet) den Hollander joined CANACOM. Her appointment was to work part time with the CWM Regional body and devote the remaining portion of her time in the development of programmes for CANACOM. The original agreement was for a period of three years. However, she did serve for six years and eight months before changing places with the Rev. Verna Cassells.

At the time of my arrival, CANACOM's Officers were the Rev. Earl Thames, chairman, Rev. Leander Warren, Deputy Chair, Rev. Samuel Smellie, Secretary, and Mrs. Julia Ann Moffett, Treasurer. CANACOM operated through two administrative bodies - a Council at which all member churches would be represented by two delegates if the membership were 2000 and over and one delegate if the membership were less than 2000. The Administrative Committee was comprised of the officers and two other members, one from the Caribbean and one from North America. During the time I served the Council meetings were held in Grenada and thereafter in Florida (USA), Guyana and Cuba.

The first JOMAT team was organized and representatives from the membership participated and embarked on a most enriching mission to the United States of America. I must mention here that Fitz Laing of blessed memory was a part of that team.

As the movement progressed I realized that Public Education was being short changed. The teacher in me convinced me to let go of CANACOM and to give full time to Public Education. Mrs. Dionne Harriott was appointed in an interim capacity to succeed me. I enjoyed my years with CANACOM and feel honoured to have served.



Administrative Assistants Ms Leslene Laing and Mrs. Joyce Williams

I observe with much admiration the great volume of dedicated work which has been undertaken by successive Administrative Assistants over the years. The current incumbent Leslene Laing has now been on duty for eight years! I remain a member of the Friends of CANACOM and am delighted to continue serving in this capacity. May God continue to bless CANACOM.



Rev. Dr. Steven Chambers
Chair of CANACOM, 1997.

Steven, a minister of the United Church in Canada (UCC) for over 30 years, has held many positions including that of General Secretary of the United Church Division of Ministry Personnel and Education 1998- 2002.

His doctoral thesis, *The Partnership Conversation*, 'listened to' ongoing conversations between two congregations which entered a 'twinning relationship' - St. James United in Simcoe, Ontario, and Webster Memorial United Church in Kingston, Jamaica.

Steven is married to the Reverend Beth Hayward and they have two daughters, Leah and Anna. They live in Vancouver.

EMERGING CONTEXT:
Bilateral Relations and the Multilateral Vision
by Steven Chambers
United Church of Canada

Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM)
Annual Council Meeting – May 20-23, 1996
Havana, Cuba

Mission has its origins in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people.

*David J. Bosch, Transforming Mission:
Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission, p .392*

Gathering here in Cuba, as representatives of churches in the Caribbean and in North America, we acknowledge that we come from different contexts. However, with joy and hope, we are beginning to sense the emergence of a new context beyond our own - the multilateral context which has brought us together. Our unique experience matters a great deal;

but the arrival of something new matters greatly also. It matters to us, and we believe also to God, who is continually making all things new.

Understanding our contexts is of primary importance as we seek to understand our faith and our call to be “participants in God’s mission.” Contextuality has been described as “different people in different times and places [asking] different questions about their faith.”¹ Contextuality frees us to explore our faith and engage in mission in a particular location, but there is an essential grounding in God. “God remains what God has always been and will be, but our understanding of God, and ways of talking about God, differ according to where we are, when we are speaking and the reason for our speaking at any particular time,” wrote Jamaican theologian Ashley Smith.² From age to age, context to context, the Word of God communicates to humanity.

“God communicates [God’s] revelation to people through human beings and through events, not by means of abstract propositions,” wrote South African missiologist David Bosch.³ Building on the work of others, Bosch proposed an incarnational theology expressed in different stages, or *paradigms*, through Christian history.⁴ Bosch saw the process of emerging paradigms as a helpful model to understand the history (and the future) of mission. These paradigm movements in mission have not been simple or direct, but have emerged with the exploration of new contexts.

We are moving toward a new paradigm of mission. That is why we are here. We believe the ‘roundtable’ or ‘multilateral’ sharing of resources model holds great promise for our participation in God’s mission. It is not entirely clear how the new paradigm will emerge and how all things will work out. The challenge we face is to bring learning from our contexts of mission to one another and to faithfully explore the emergence of the new paradigm.

Change is here

Change is upon all of us in many ways; it is clearly with us as Canadians. You will know of the tensions within our country between the two main linguistic groups, you will know of the increasing pluralism of our society and the struggles we have to be faithful in a consumer-driven economy. Presently, several of our governments - provincial, municipal and federal - are following the global neo-liberal trend and drastically reducing financial support of social services, education and health care in an attempt to ‘defeat the deficits’. The implication is that the private sector, and specifically the non-profit sector (churches and other community organizations), is now expected to pick up many of the services that have been provided previously by the government. Layoffs, ‘downsizing’, globalization, restructuring - all of these elements, known by each of us here in different ways - are part of the new reality for us. In local congregations, we are trying to understand how to adapt to future mission

challenges with the resources that we have available to us. If society – or at least government – is asking us to be in partnership with them in some new context – will the church have some way of defining that partnership from our contextual understanding of global partnership? Will we be assisted in our local and regional ministry by global understandings of God’s mission?

A Stewardship Context: The Third Miracle of the Manna

A recent conference on stewardship in Toronto, probed the anticipated financial largesse that will be transferred from the two generations of mid-century (the ‘GI generation’ born from 1901 to 1924 and the ‘Silent Generation’ born from 1925 to 1942) to ‘the Boomers’ (born from 1943 to 1960) and those who follow. Forecasters believe that this transfer will represent approximately a trillion dollars in Canada before the year 2010. This possibility has tremendous implications for us in Canada. Will the parents give it all to the children? Many say it is not likely; many say it would not be desirable. Will society benefit? Will the resources be shared with those truly in need? Will something that is good and closer to God’s heart emerge? How will the church in the North American context address this?

While there were many learnings at this conference, there were disappointments too. North Americans, it seems, still live and reflect in a world of privilege and isolation, with little awareness of the global imperatives of God’s mission: none of the workshops dealt with sharing resources in a global context. As far as I was aware, there was no participation from beyond North America. The title of the conference, *The Great Giveaway*, was problematic – who is giving? To whom? And what? Giving? What about the concept of ‘sharing’?

One of the redeeming moments of the conference occurred in a Bible Study offer by Catherine Gonzalez, professor of church history at Columbia Theological Seminary, and Justo L. Gonzalez, executive Director of the Hispanic Theological Initiative at Candler School of Theology. Justo noted that when he has occasionally invited people to reflect on the story of the manna in the desert (Exodus 16:14-18) and to speak about what they remember of that story, the immediate answer is something like this: “The people of Israel were in the desert. They were hungry and had nothing to eat. And God gave them this bread-like substance called manna.”

Now, if the people who responded were pressed for some other detail, they might remember another ‘miracle’: “whatever was gathered by the people of Israel **before** the daily need, would rot. Only on the day before the Sabbath, was it permitted to gather enough for two days.”

The respondents would almost always offer these two ‘miracles’ from their memory, but Justo would push for more. He would push to get them to recall – ‘the third miracle’.

When the manna fell, the head of each ‘tent’ would go out and collect enough for the family unit for the day. God had told Moses that they should gather only an *omer* (about a quart) for each member of the family. Humanity being somewhat the same throughout all the ages, it doesn’t surprise us too much that the people didn’t follow those instructions exactly; we can imagine the flurry of activity to gather up as much as possible of the sweet gift of God. We know the result: some gathered too much, and others weren’t able to gather enough. Some have said it would have been a miracle itself if the people had actually followed the instructions and gathered only what was needed.

Now, as you will recall, here’s the third miracle. When the people came to measure up what they had gathered (no doubt some with anticipatory embarrassment at their great accumulation), those who had picked up too much found their stash reduced and those who have not gathered up enough found an increase. We might say, as we gather here around this table, that the miracle of God’s love in the ancient story of the manna was in the sharing of the resources: God provided a **redistribution** and placed an emphasis, or priority, on **a more just sharing**.

The Context of Covenant: “How do we relate now?”

Relationships in mission – our current contexts – have largely emerged out of history: colonial history and the actions of church organizations. These relationships, mostly bilateral, emerged historically from the North to the South, and have been the predominant way of church-to-church work in mission for some time. They have been contextually based, in as much as the partners have asked questions of faith and mission of one another, pertinent to God’s mission in their respective situations. As mission paradigms shift, however, our vision is for new contexts, new encounters, new experiences of God’s mission. We are, in some ways, already experiencing these.

Contextual theology speaks to our current situation, but it is not directed by that situation. Contextual theology is not a theology that responds to whatever is happening or whatever is current in the particular situation; it does not implicitly approve or disapprove of the context; it doesn’t ‘set the agenda’. Contextual theology is at once interested in the **local context** of people’s faith and the contemporary reality **of the world**. In a global church, and with the marvels of contemporary communication, a Christian can be immersed in his or her own place and at the same time informed about many other places. As participants in God’s mission, we have a covenantal obligation to hold up both local and global contexts.⁵ In many ways, our churches have done this with determination in bilateral relationships for many years. But an exciting new context calls us to enliven and expand that form of relationship.

Multilateral relationships as the preferential vision we seek

A multilateral understanding of mission can lead us to, among other things, resource sharing through a web of relationships that ensures the locus of power is neither in sending or receiving, but in the core of mission, which is God. This would be the arrival of a new context, a context beyond ourselves, but with our full participation.

Multilateral relating is the preference that we are called to assert as people committed to a just sharing of resources and to a new participatory mission context. There are signs of this paradigm emerging in the fast-changing world of electronic communication – multilateral relationships, relationships that operate in various directions and from different angles, these are characteristics of the ‘internet-world’. The multilateral round-table reflects the World Wide Web in the variety of news groups that electronically gather to ‘share and exchange’. The global context of relating is truly changing. What might we learn from this?

From the perspective of the north, it would be simple to say that relationship of mutual sharing, built on a multilateral framework, would be the only missiological concept for our future work. This would have significant immediate implications; power would be disengaged from the ‘wealth-holders’ as a common source of funding becomes fully implemented. The change would be astounding. It would be true to our hearts, and perhaps even come close to the heart’s desire of God. But it would be wrong to assert such a policy without full consultation, and without fair regard to the consequences of existing mission activities. To take such a position from the North, would be an assertion of assumed power.

It is important, therefore, to actively encourage the expansion of multilateral relationships, while at the same time honouring the best bilateral work and ensuring that no harm comes to work in progress. There is much that is taking place in bilateral relationships that should be affirmed.

Bilateral relationships have the important element of historical memory that revolves around people. Partners in a bilateral relationship learn, over time, the names, the places, the organizational life-stories, the struggles and the achievements of each other. Bonds develop. Honest communication can develop and move deeper and deeper into the heart of God’s love. Partnership that is person-centred, that builds relationship as it explores faith issues (the proclamation of the gospel, the call for justice, the engagement of social analysis for change) rates highly. In many cases, it is the one-to-one contact of a partner relationship that encourages the development of this kind of partnership. However, what provides great possibility can also lead to destructive dependency and distrust. The best of bilateral relating, that which leads people to actively work with one another toward a more complete understanding of God’s mission, needs to be

preserved as we move into a new paradigm of God's mission: a multilateral web of relationships characterized by our grounding in God. The high value of person-centred partnership need not be lost in a multilateral context.

How might we proceed?

Members of this multilateral council, many of whom are also in bilateral relationships, need to bring continual evaluation to both contexts. We need to share current trends, forecasts, hopes and fears from our individual contexts. In the bilateral environment, we need to encourage evaluative conversations about specific relationships and what it would mean to shift them to a multilateral context. What might be enhanced if those relationships were transferred to a body like CANACOM? In each bilateral context, we need to ask the question: "Can this work in a new (multilateral) way? Can this relationship effectively receive new life in a multilateral context? What are the stewardship implications? What might be lost? What gained? What might be new and full of life? We are called to move into that new context; yet it may be our discovery that there are some things that need to be celebrated, and even deepened, in a bilateral context. Bilateral relationships may be transformed – and given new bilateral life – as this evaluation takes place and as we await new multilateral context to come into fuller life.

Whether we find ourselves in a renewed bilateral context, or entering further and further into a multilateral context, may we remember the third miracle of the manna and rededicate ourselves to a clearer vision of a more full and equal sharing of the resources God has given.

Notes

1. Albert Nolan, "Contextual Theology: One Faith, Many Theologies," Chancellor's Address VIII, Delivered at Regis College, Toronto, 12 November 1990. (Toronto: Regis College, 1991), p. 4.
2. Ashley Smith, *Emergence from Innocence: Religion, Theology and Development* (Mandeville, Jamaica: Eureka Press, 1991), p. 10.
3. David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis, 1991), p. 181.
4. 'Paradigm' has been defined as 'example', 'classic example' or 'pattern'. Hans Kung defines it more specifically as: 'interpretative model', 'explanatory model', 'model for understanding'. Kung, "Paradigm Change in Theology: A Proposal for Discussion," in Kung and David Tracy, eds. *Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for The Future* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 7.
5. See Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991 [1989]), pp. 114-115.



Mr. James Hodgson
UCC Programme Coordinator/ Former CANACOM Rep.

CANACOM at 30: “An exciting journey in mission relationships”

In the global ecumenical movement, turning 30 means you’re no longer a young adult. In the case of the Caribbean North America Council for Mission (CANACOM), turning 30 means a certain maturity – even longevity in the topsy-turvy world of regional ecumenical organizations.

On this anniversary, there is much to celebrate, even for those like The United Church of Canada (UCC, the place where I work) and others who, like me, came a bit late to the table. From nine founding churches, CANACOM today is made up of 14 churches.

CANACOM was created in 1986 from dissatisfaction with the historic model of one-sided North-to-South mission flow that too often resulted in dependency and domination. From the outset, with generous support from the Council for World Mission, CANACOM sought to challenge old ways of doing things by creating a space for ecumenical sharing of resources that removed much of the power from churches that had the most money. Over time, CANACOM has grown in stature as a space where people of diverse backgrounds and ways of thinking come together, get to know one another in community, and act together in God’s mission.

To speak of a value that is celebrated in my own context: through CANACOM, The United Church of Canada (UCC) is able to connect with historic partners. These include several churches in the English-speaking Caribbean with which we can no longer maintain bilateral financial support, such as the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (with which we share a heritage dating back to 1868), the Presbyterian Church in Grenada, and the United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. While we do maintain very modest funding to the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba, CANACOM provides a Caribbean-wide, multilateral dimension to the partnership that we could not match without the participation of other

churches. Moreover, the extended family represented in CANACOM means we develop new relationships with churches in places where we had no direct mission history, such as the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Curacao and Suriname.

For the early history of CANACOM, I can only defer to Rev. Earl Thames and Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick who were part of the process with the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the CANACOM founding churches three decades ago. They have told stories in other papers of CANACOM's origins. Even though the UCC did not join until 1994, it was part of the initial discussions and it provided one of the start-up contributions: CAD\$50,000 (USD\$36,000 at that time).¹ With others in CANACOM, we make choices about how we work together in God's mission. CWM made two large contributions that allowed for the creation of an Endowment Fund whose proceeds ensure the organization's viability and ongoing action. Various grant programmes are designed to assist churches as they identify their mission needs. Member churches share ideas, personnel, skills, finances, and material resources, allowing all to be receiving and giving.

I became involved with CANACOM in 2000, when I joined the staff of The United Church of Canada. At the same time as I was beginning my work, a Young Adults in Mission (YAM) work camp was underway in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, on Canada's Atlantic coast.

To me, the best part of CANACOM has been the building of friendship and solidarity through the YAM work camps and the Joint Mission Action Teams (JOMAT) – experiences that have also helped to build new leadership among Member Churches. Together with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, we had the honour and challenge of hosting a JOMAT in north Toronto in 2005. Council meetings have also been strong occasions for learning, especially when combined with meetings of the Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC) of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

An encounter during one of those joint meetings remains strong in my memory. Our 2008 CANACOM-CANAAC meeting in Guyana took place just after two mass murders: one took the lives of 11 people, including five children; then 10 more were killed in a riverside mining town. The first day of our meeting took place on a national day of mourning for the victims of violence.

One evening, a half-dozen of us gathered to talk about a concept promoted among churches these days: CANACOM and its sister organization, CANAAC, have both been deeply involved in implementing in the Caribbean and North America the vision of the Accra Confession¹ for a covenant for justice in the economy and the earth. Several of us had talked out of the top ends of our bureaucratic heads and shared our economic justice documents and resolutions. Suddenly, a young Caribbean

pastor broke through the abstractions, and cried: “We need covenants for justice!”

Gradually, the young man told his story. Years earlier, he had been trained as a rural policeman, and eventually found work in the international airport of his country, a place where he continued to work while completing theological studies and working in a local congregation. But in the airport, he encountered the corruption and threats that are now commonplace in the countries that are transit points for the drug trade as merchandise moves to the markets in the northern countries. Through the church, he sought but did not find the institutional will and strength to speak truth to power about corruption and violence.

The pastor said: “We need covenants for justice with you so that we can talk to the powerful about what is happening with our people.” With that statement, he underscored a major reason why churches seek each other out to work in partnership. Our voices are stronger when we speak together, when we overcome our differences and raise our voices in solidarity with those who suffer.

At some point, Rev. Dr. Dale Bisnauth of the Presbyterian Church of Guyana joined our group. After listening, he said: “To seek justice is the social way, the collective way, which we have of showing our love of neighbor.” Dr. Bisnauth, who passed away in 2013, was a key leader in the ecumenical movement in the Caribbean, and is missed by many friends around the world.

The joint meetings of CANACOM and CANAAC always seemed to me to strengthen the sense among all of our churches of being rooted in real, life-and-death mission challenges. The joint meetings also strengthen theological reflection among those of us who tend to be more action-focused: participants challenge each other in ways that are good for both organizations. In the enlarged circle, we sometimes find the courage to address issues that have for too long remained unaddressed.

From the time of our joint meeting in Guyana in 2008 through our joint meeting in Jamaica in 2014 and indeed to the present, some new spaces have opened for respectful dialogue about different perspectives on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. We also developed a document to enable mutual dialogue with partners on issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. In 2008, a draft of the resource was reviewed by partners during a partnership consultation. ***Moving Toward Full Inclusion*** is the result of that work. It has been shared with partners around the world.

Points of celebration come face to face with other challenges to our collective work:

These challenges include the decline of financial capacity from Northern churches to fund mission activities in the Caribbean.

Ever-more restrictive visa rules imposed by governments of the United States and Canada have made it increasingly difficult for CANACOM representatives or participants to gather in Northern countries. Canada's policy of deporting people whom it considers criminals back to their countries of origin – even if the people involved were raised in Canada – provokes serious challenges for the countries that have no choice but to receive them. At the same time, too many “temporary foreign workers” received in Canada find themselves victims of exploitation and abuse.

Membership of CANACOM is larger and more diverse, at times presenting challenges of language and of intercultural understanding, but on the whole, enriching the vision of mission that we share.

Rules imposed on charities by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and by the Canada Revenue Agency have resulted in more onerous reporting requirements for funds disbursed in other countries (a factor that has challenged the success of CANACOM grant programmes).

A strength in CANACOM has been the willingness to at least hear points of view that are different from the ones we brought to the table – and I think we are all grateful for that strength.

Another CANACOM strength has been its staff. I have had the pleasure of working with three amazing Education in Mission Secretaries: Rev. Verna Cassells, who completed her term of service in 2007; Rev. Nicole Ashwood, who completed her term in 2014; and Mrs. Jennifer Martin, who began as Rev. Ashwood left. Over the years, I also enjoyed good working relations with administrative staff, including Mrs. Nellian Slowley and (currently) Ms. Leslene Laing.

I was thinking of all of those persons (and of many others who have served on the Executive or Council) when, at a CANACOM Council meeting in 2012 in Grenada, I said that among the many blessings of our work is that we get to meet wonderful people. Even when we are tired from too many hours on airplanes and buses, we are blessed by the presence of each other.

On that occasion, I reminded the Council of some words shared during a visit to Canada that year by a mutual friend and colleague: Ofelia Ortega of the Iglesia Prebiteriana Reformada en Cuba. She is also a former president of the World Council of Churches. Ofelia is a relentless optimist whose enthusiasm strengthens the rest of us.

In our international ecumenical work, challenges abound. We know quite well what science says about climate change, and the risks it poses to small island nations. Across this region, we work alongside survivors of earthquakes, hurricanes, and economic collapse. We all know migrant workers and victims of human trafficking. We are exposed too often to the violence that is tied to the so-called “War on Drugs” in the Caribbean and Latin America.

In the face of such problems, it would be easy to feel despair. But I don't, and I don't think that any of us involved in CANACOM does either. It's not because we are either heartless or naive. It's that we work among the most wonderful people who dedicate their lives to God's mission for justice, peace and creation. And we do see change! Think of the new opportunities that start to emerge as the United States and Cuba take steps to overcome the decades-long embargo and to develop a new relationship.

During a visit to Toronto in 2012, Ofelia spoke with us about discernment: how to discern the signs of the times. "Sometimes we only see the evil things," she said, "but we should also see the good things." She quoted St. Paul: "Let us not grow weary of doing good." (Gal. 6:9).

She quoted the South African Dominican theologian, Albert Nolan, who said we should have hope in times of despair and that, when things are bad, that's when God acts in mysterious ways.

Show Signs of hope as CANACOM begins its next chapter. Ofelia pointed to Paul's story in II Corinthians, chapters 8 and 9, of the small, impoverished church in Macedonia that sent help to the church in Jerusalem. I thought of the efforts by churches in the Caribbean and Central America to send funds to help Haitians in the wake of the earthquake in 2010, and of the people of the Dominican Republic who were the first to help. Ofelia spoke of how Cuba helps Haiti, Grenada, Ecuador and countless other countries by sending doctors and technicians.

Ofelia also pointed to work at the World Council of Churches to overcome violence, especially towards ending the arms trade, and she spoke of new momentum for peace in Colombia. She could have pointed to other ecumenical work, such as support for theological education, and the inclusion of women, youth, indigenous people and people with disabilities in the lives of the churches. And with pride, we would each point to work in our churches and countries, and in CANACOM itself, to bring people together as participants in God's mission for the fullness of life for all. This work brings hope to all who are touched by it.

On another occasion, Ofelia said we should listen to each other in love, and never use harsh words with each other.

In the months and years ahead, we will be challenged to pray and to think deeply about what God requires of us in these times. I think that good people can differ respectfully as projects and proposals are examined, and as we learn from each other from across our different perspectives and experiences.

What's essential is that we all find ways to join the great debates of our times and discern together in hope what the "signs of the times" call us to do next.



Rev. Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan

It is hard to believe that the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) is 30 years old! It seems like only yesterday that the Reverend Verna Cassells, Education in Mission Secretary, stood before the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) and gave a report on the activities of CANACOM, expressing the hope that PCTT would take a decision to become a member church of CANACOM. As a symbol of mutual friendship gifts were exchanged between the PCTT and Rev. Cassells, the then Education in Mission Secretary.

Based on its experience with previous efforts to unite the Churches of the Reformed tradition in the Caribbean, the Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) was hesitant to join this new movement known as The Caribbean and North America Council for Mission. After a lengthy discussion on day three of our 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Synod held on April 6th 2002, the decision was taken to seek membership with this new body whose emphasis was on Mission.

At a meeting of the Synod of PCTT held on October 26th 2002, the then Rt. Rev. Winston Gopaul Moderator of PCTT and Rev. Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan were elected to represent PCTT at the gathering of CANACOM which was to be held in Grenada from the 9th to the 15th November 2002. At this meeting, held at the Grand View Hotel St. George's, the Chairperson Dr. Marjorie Ross (Presbyterian Church in Canada) formally welcomed The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago as a Member Church of CANACOM. PCTT was the twelfth church to receive membership status.

As I reflect on my first meeting at CANACOM as a representative of the PCTT, I recall that some twelve churches were represented and I can still remember the faces of those who were in attendance:

The representatives from the Member Churches of:

1. Guyana Congregational Union – Ms. Roshanna Gillis, Rev. Glen Johnson
2. Guyana Presbyterian Church– Mr. Jaisook Lekhranj, Rev. Kayshena Dyal-Khusial
3. Presbytery of Guyana – Mr. Shelton Daniels, Ms. Eunice Belle
4. Presbyterian Church in Grenada – Mr. Wilbur Adams, Rev. Rafael Osbert James
5. Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente Van Caracao – Mr. August Winter, Mr. Douwe Boelens
6. The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands – Rev. Earl Thames, Rev. Fitz Laing
7. Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba – Rev. Daniel Montoya Rosales
8. Presbyterian Church in Canada – Dr. Marjorie Ross
9. United Church of Canada – Ms. Erin McDonald
10. Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago – Rev. Annabel Lalla-Ramkelawan
11. Presbyterian Church USA – Tricia Lloyd-Sidle

Other Representatives:

1. Caribbean Youth Representative: Mr. Peter Quinland
2. North America Youth Representative: Rev. Karen Herbst-Kim
3. Associate Member Council for World Mission: Ms. Gillian Palmer.

The then Officers of CANACOM:

Chair:	Dr. Marjorie Ross (Presbyterian Church in Canada)
Deputy Chair:	Rev. Glen Johnson (Guyana Congregational Union)
Secretary:	Ms. Julie Graham (United Church of Canada)
Treasurer:	Rev. Earl Thames (United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands)

Administrative Assistant: Ms. Chantal Williams (Jamaica)
Education in Mission Secretary: Rev. Verna Cassells (United Church of Jamaica and the Cayman Islands)

At the Grenada meeting PCTT got a firsthand view of the work that CANACOM was involved in. Immediately one could see the mission statement of CANACOM being fulfilled. *“To bear common witness, to challenge and empower one another for creative involvement in mission: There is a common understanding that mission begins at home. All are invited to begin in their Jerusalem, then to Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”*

At this meeting, as a means of equipping Member Churches for mission, Project Grants were approved for: The Guyana Congregational Union for

“The New Foundation Training Center”, The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands for purchase of equipment for Youth and Music Ministry Outreach, the Guyana Presbyterian Church for building a Camp Site and the Presbyterian Church of Guyana for Multipurpose games and sports court.

As a representative of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago I was privileged to attend six Annual Council Meetings of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission:

1. The first in Grenada 9th -15th November 2002 hosted by The Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) at the Grand View Hotel, St. George’s. At this Annual Council Meeting the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago was accepted as a member church of CANACOM.
2. The second in 2003 in Cuba November 15th -21st hosted by the Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba (IPRC) at Matanzas Evangelical Theological Seminary. At this meeting of the Council I was elected to serve as the secretary of CANACOM.
3. The third in 2004 in Jamaica November 13th -19th hosted by the United Church Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) at the Shirley Retreat Hotel.
4. The fourth in 2005 in Curacao October 15th -21st hosted by the United Protestant Church of Curacao (UPCC) at the Tropical Hotel Rio Canariweg. At this Council meeting new executive officers were appointed to serve. The secretary was Rev. Tricia Lloyd Sidle from the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA).
5. The fifth in 2006 in Toronto Canada October 14th -20th hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Canada (PCC) and the United Church of Canada (UCC). The venue for this meeting was Grief Hills Community. A Christian Retreat and Conference Center of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.
6. The six in 2016 in Paramaribo Suriname September 21st - 29th hosted by the Reformed Church in Suriname at the Ons Huis.

Having been appointed Secretary of CANACOM at the second Council Meeting I attended meant that I had to quickly learn the administrative system of CANACOM. With the assistance of the Education in Mission Secretary, Rev. Verna Cassells, the process was made easier. To be fully prepared to record minutes at Annual Council Meetings and Teleconferences my first step was to learn the over forty five acronyms! We still joke about acronyms at CANACOM.

A crucial pillar of CANACOM is its constitution. By grasping the content quickly I was better able to assist the Chairperson in finding constitutional clarification on matters when necessary. The work of

CANACOM is simplified by the use of forms in the reporting and application processes.

I will never forget the outpouring of love and concern for the countries who suffered the devastation of hurricanes Ivan and Katrina. The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) and the Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) were given assistance from the disaster relief fund in the sum of US\$5,000.00 and the Presbyterian Church USA assisted victims of Katrina in the sum of US\$1,000.00. The Member Churches sent clothing, linen and food items to Grenada because the nation was the hardest hit in the Caribbean. The response of the Member Churches by way of finance, material for rebuilding roofs, food and clothing was just overwhelming. CANACOM exemplified the spirit of mission and love in action.

The empowerment and project grants offered by CANACOM truly are blessings to churches as they seek to develop leadership and projects to enrich the mission of the church to the community where they are located. PCTT has been the benefactor of two such grants. The first grant was for a “Lay Leadership Training Program” designed and implemented by the St Andrews Theological College. At the end of the program an evaluation proved that the objectives of the project were met.

The church’s human resource network dealing in a more sensitive and compassionate manner with the violence, crime and indiscipline in our schools and society has been increased. The second grant was used to produce a booklet **“Stop Bullying in our Schools”**. The excellent material provides strategies to deal with bullying in schools. Copies have been shared with principals and staff of Primary and Secondary Schools. The response has been very positive and there is now a call for a follow up book.

PCTT’s Participation in Joint Mission in Action Team (JOMAT) and Training in Mission (TIM). The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago was able to participate in the Joint Mission Action Team (JOMAT) 2005 hosted by the United Church of Canada (UCC) and the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). JOMAT and TIM expose young persons to ministry and mission in different contexts, granting them the opportunity to grow and see mission in a new way. I have seen the positive influences upon the lives of two young persons and their respective vocations.

The PCTT’s participant in the JOMAT programme was Deaconess Ms. Jenifa Sinanan who continues to utilize what she learnt and experienced in her ministry.

The 2006 Training in Mission (TIM) participant from the PCTT was Ms. Kimberly Ramlochan. The wealth of her experience was shared with her class mates as she completed her studies toward ordination. The

knowledge she gained was seen in the papers she prepared for classes during her studies at St. Andrews Theological College. It is regrettable that Kimberly, shortly after her Ordination left the ministry of the church to pursue a law degree. It is hoped that during the course of her new professional journey, she will find ways of continuing to serve the church in Christ's mission.

The years that I represented PCTT at CANACOM were exciting, spiritually rewarding, and enhanced my understanding of mission to move beyond the walls of the church where wider expressions of mission abound.

As CANACOM celebrates its 30th anniversary, Member Churches need to stop and take a fresh look at themselves, their mission and their relationship with each other as Member Churches. The world of the 21st century is different from the 1980s in which CANACOM began. However, the vision and the needs that saw the birth of CANACOM still exist.

Values such as mutuality in mission, being a community of sharing where all have gifts and all have needs, an approach to mission that believes that all things belong to the creator and to the created, a deep understanding of the relation between mission and justice, and the need for churches to be a living example of the community and justice that God meant for his people in the Caribbean and North America. Significant work has been accomplished by CANACOM but there is yet much to do.

It is my hope and prayer that as CANACOM celebrates 30 years of mission Almighty God will give new vision and direction as to where he wants CANACOM to go. The Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago is pleased and proud to be part of the CANCCOM family and stands willing and ready to continue working with CANACOM in mission. It was a privilege and blessing to have served as a secretary to the Administrative Committee of CANACOM.

God Bless!



Rev. Dr. Jo Ella Holman

As regional liaison for the Caribbean, Rev. Dr. Jo Ella Holman's ministry focuses on churches in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, Curacao, Grenada and Trinidad & Tobago. She works closely with the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM), an organization that enables mutual mission among churches from the two regions. Her ministry involves facilitating and supporting programs of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) partner churches and organizations and implementing regional strategies. She also works with mission personnel in the region by communicating regularly with them, offering them counsel and encouragement and helping them reflect on and assess their ministries. She also works with PC (USA) congregations and presbyteries in the United States involved in partnerships with Christians in the Caribbean.

Rev. Dr. Jo Ella Holman is a mission co-worker, the Regional Liaison Officer of the Presbyterian Church USA. She has served in the Latin America and the Caribbean for many years and has maintained a longstanding relationship with CANACOM. In September 2016, at the Council meeting held in Suriname, Dr. Holman was elected as the North American Representative on the Administrative Committee of CANACOM. One of the ways in which she shares information on mission is through Missionary Letters and other writings as seen below:

Missionary Letters

A MISSIONARY LETTER FROM THE CARIBBEAN REGION

DECEMBER 19, 2012

SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Greetings in this Advent and Christmas season from the beautiful Caribbean!

Our Advent readings this year include passages from Philippians and I join the apostle Paul in saying that “I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you.”

In this holy season we remember the gift of the Christ Child, the Divine come down in human form to walk with us, beside us, among us. And Philippians also reminds us of *how* Jesus came: in humility, emptying himself, taking the form of an obedient servant. It is in this attitude that the member churches of CANACOM, the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission, seek to walk together, to accompany each other as we seek to incarnate the love of God in our one region of the Caribbean and North America.

I had the privilege of participating in the Council meeting in October in Grenada, which includes 13 churches of the Reformed tradition from Scotland/Trinidad, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Dominica, Cuba, Canada, the U.S.A., Grenada, Curacao, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, and the Council for World Mission (formerly the London Missionary Society).

From its beginnings 30 years ago, CANACOM has pioneered a different form of mission partnership, that of a *round table* where resources are pooled, according to means, from each of these churches, and each member church sends two delegates for an equal voice and vote toward common mission. It is an unusual but an inspiring model for mission in which we all join the table as equal partners, seeking to accompany one other in humility, mutuality, and reciprocity.

It is not a perfect body, but it is one that seeks to be faithful to the biblical witness of sharing resources (human as well as financial) as members of Christ’s body, and acting in the unity of common witness.



Mrs. Merle Buchanan, of Jamaica and CANACOM Treasurer, gives her report while Ms. Leslene Laing takes notes.

This past summer CANACOM sponsored a Young Adult gathering, hosted in Trinidad. Each member church was invited to send two representatives to this multinational, multicultural event. For three weeks the young adults participated in mission activities with the churches in Trinidad, including prison ministry, planting a kitchen garden at a home for abused women, doing environmental clean-up along the coast, working at a home for orphaned and abandoned children, and a beautification project at a cemetery.

While sharing of themselves and their cultures, they also explored a number of topics of interest to all. In good Caribbean English, the theme of the event was “Strike up di Riddim, Mission is wi Beat!” Finding one’s own “rhythm” for mission within the diversity of and vibrancy of the culture of Trinidad and Tobago was part of this exciting opportunity for our young people. During our annual council meeting, we identified three challenges that are common to all our member churches:

- Increasing violence in our societies, particularly against women and children, and trafficking of people
- A concern for church growth – in numbers, and a concern for renewal of our liturgies and music to respond to the younger generation
- A concern for increased attention to Christian vocation as seen in the lack of sufficient numbers of pastors and lay leadership for our congregations.

We are working together toward strategies and activities relating to these three important priorities. These are examples of the kinds of mission and ministry we can do together as one body that seeks to follow the example of Jesus in walking humbly with one another, each a servant to the other. Thank you for your companionship with me on this journey. I desire and welcome your continuing participation in this ministry through your prayers and your generous financial gifts.

In this season of Advent, as we again await the coming of the Christ Child, may your lives be open to walking alongside your brothers and sisters in your own place, in the Caribbean, and around the world. And may the Prince of Peace light your way!

Today’s Presbyterian Presence in the Caribbean by Jo Ella Holman

Our ministry with other Reformed and Presbyterian denominations in the region is greatly expanded through our participation in CANACOM, the Caribbean North American Council for Mission. Together, the 14 member churches plan strategies and activities around their priorities—addressing root causes of poverty, ending gender violence and human trafficking, and empowering church growth, renewal and women’s leadership. As the host for the 2014 Global Exchange, CANACOM

member churches and Presbyterian Women are examining together these issues in different country contexts within the region.



Rev. Garwell Bacchas and Rev. Verna Cassells joining their voices together in song at a CANACOM event.

Journeying with CANACOM

I am very delighted to spend a few moments reflecting. My journey with CANACOM began when I was convenor of the Mission and Evangelism Sub-committee of the Mission, Witness and Service Committee of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. This was the sub-committee under which the operations of CANACOM fell at that time. It was in my role of convenor that I travelled to the Dominican Republic where I represented the UCJCI at the Administrative Committee Council Meeting of 2000. This involvement provided the opportunity for growing in an understanding of the aims and programmes of CANACOM which would prove to be of great benefit in a future assignment in 2005.

It was in July of that year that the United Church sent me as a missionary to Trinidad to serve as the Moderator of the Church of Scotland in Trinidad. My family was a part of this wonderful adventure as we easily blended into the life of the church and community in that new setting.

It was during my sojourn in Trinidad that I became more heavily involved in the operations of CANACOM. It was also during this time that the Church of Scotland Congregations in Trinidad gained increased exposure to CANACOM. This increased involvement paved the path to the Church of Scotland becoming a member of CANACOM in 2009.

In 2006 one of our Young Adults went as an observer and participated in the Young Adults Work camp in Grenada. This was a very enriching experience. In January 2008, an elder and I attended the Council meeting in Guyana as observers at the invitation of the Education in Mission

Secretary, Rev. Verna Cassells. It was an enriching experience meeting and interacting with ministers and lay leaders of the Caribbean and North America and planning for mission programmes.

In 2008 Rev. Cassells was invited to address the Church of Scotland in Trinidad regarding CANACOM. Much interest was expressed in the information she presented. As was expected, at the next council meeting held in Trinidad which was partly sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago and the Church of Scotland in Trinidad, full membership status was granted to our church. The CANACOM Delegate, a host of church members and I attended. It was an honour to be invited to preach the sermon at the opening service. This church has continued to actively participate in all areas of the work of CANACOM.

CANACOM has the excellent practice of involving all its Member Churches in matters of programming and administration. This is in keeping with its aim of encouraging creative engagement in God's mission; CANACOM ensured that the Church of Scotland in Trinidad through its minister and delegates/ representatives had the opportunity to:

- Chair the nomination committee for the purpose of electing the new executive
- Sit on the Constitution Reform Committee
- Have youth and young adults from the church participate in youth programmes
- Be actively involved in the transporting and hosting YAMMERS who participated in the Young Adults in Mission Work camp which was held in Trinidad 2012.
- Organize a work day at the Church of Scotland Congregation at Arouca in North East Trinidad.
- Experience “on the job training” in the planning and implementation of Education in Mission programmes.
- Benefit twice from the Empowerment Grant to assist our home work programme at the Greyfriars/St. Ann’s congregation.
- Experience the joy of seeing our junior minister, Rev. Denyse Rattansingh appointed as Secretary on the Executive at Committee of the Council at the Council Meeting in 2014 in Jamaica.
- In my capacity as minister, ensure that one of our Women’s Guild members attended and participated in the 2014 Global Exchange to the Caribbean, sponsored by the women of the Presbyterian Church, USA. This remarkable mission trip took the women to Jamaica, Curacao/ Dominican Republic/ Suriname and Guyana.

My tenure as a missionary to the Church of Scotland Trinidad was quite rewarding. With specific reference to CANACOM, the work of this mission agency was revealed to me in new and refreshing ways mainly

because I felt so much “nearer to the action”. This was due to my involvement and leadership in the Church of Scotland Trinidad after joining CANACOM. I cherished all my moments with CANACOM whilst in Trinidad and continue to enjoy the fellowship and work in my present capacity.

Ecumenical Relationships

CANACOM/CWM Relationships

One cannot understand what CANACOM is and why it was created, without understanding what the Council for World Mission is and what happened at that famous CWM consultation in Singapore 1975, when a routine meeting became the starting point of something radically new. “A breakthrough in mission relationships”, CWM would later describe the outcomes and the subsequent restructuring. However, this clearly did not occur in a vacuum. The African call for a “moratorium for mission”, as formulated by John Gatu in 1971, had already shaken the missionary world. Philip Potter’s exposure of “partnership in mission as empty slogan as long as mission structures are not changed” at the 1972-3 World Missionary Conference in Bangkok made short work of any illusion that there might be an easy path to maturity in mission. Both theologians made it very clear that it was the uni-directional flow of mission resources from the First to the Third World churches, and the unilateral control over these resources by the former, that continued to distort mission identities and praxis, both in the “Third World” and in the “First World”, as the vocabulary was then.

Ms. Jet den Hollander, Earl Thames Mission Consultation, September 24, 2016

It was a blessing that Ms. den Hollander found it possible to be our keynote speaker at the Earl Thames Mission Consultation. Her experience in working with both the CWM and CANACOM provided her with a ‘bird’s eye view’ as the relationship matured. Those who are closely connected with the CANACOM/ CWM relationship at this time, still feel the effect of a bond which is deeply rooted in trust. The relationship grew out of a growing consciousness that the North and South had to recognize the humanity of each other if we were to become true missionaries. The spirit out of which CWM was born and that from which CANACOM came, converged into a powerful partnership which has demonstrated the quality of longevity and hope for the continuing future.

The Council for World Mission saw CANACOM as a “regional expression of its *Partnership in Mission* vision”. Armed with the knowledge of a shared colonial history, both CANACOM and CWM understood that the Caribbean churches in particular were not in a strong financial position. However, financial potency was not allowed to be a bargaining chip. The relationship was forged upon mutual respect and shared goals in mission. It was this reciprocal desire for enduring ventures that led to the establishment of the endowment.

Following the joint meetings of 1998 and 2000, a one-off ... endowment was given in 2001 by CWM to the CANACOM trust fund, as a 'lifetime gift', a gift of capital so as to generate income for CANACOM to contribute substantially to 'the resources required to truly empower the region for effective partnership in mission endeavours' into the future. From CWM's perspective this endowment was therefore an **investment** in the future of our global common interests, based upon a gesture of trust, in recognition of joint goals. CWM continues to take keen interest in CANACOM's activities, and CANACOM personnel take part in many of CWM's initiatives in reciprocal arrangements – notably CWM's 2003 Assembly and CWMM programme in Singapore this year." *(Council for World Mission Presentation, How does CWM see its relationship with CANACOM? CNL 2003)*

Another contributing factor to the success of the CWM/CANACOM partnership has been its intentional and open communication which has proved to be quite effective over the years. This has been achieved through the attendance of representatives from CWM to certain CANACOM meetings and vice versa. Some pertinent minutes and reports are shared; the submission of our annual audited reports to CWM has remained a standard operating procedure.



Farewell luncheon for the CWM "A New Face Programme", November 2015, in Jamaica. From left, Ms Leslene Laing, Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, Ms Millicent Hopkinson, Mrs. Vickeisha King-Burke and Mrs. Karen Francis.

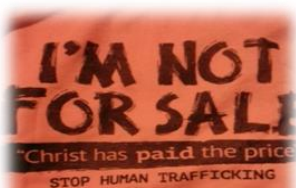
Participation in each other's events and programmes has long been a strong feature of CANACOM. Of the many available examples a few are given here and two are highlighted.

- In 2015 CWM and CANACOM were jointly involved in the planning and implementation of the Joint Youth Forum on Human Trafficking which was held in Guyana.
- Lay Pastor William Chirwa of the United Church in Zambia has served in CANACOM
- The Education in Mission Secretary was involved in the planning and delivery of the A New Face Programme (ANF), serving as one of the Chaplains.



Lay Pastor William Chirwa and Rev. Elizabeth Chirwa

The Council for World Mission, through its Partners in Mission Programme is committed to the mutual sharing of people among its Member Churches to serve in the mission field locally and abroad. The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI) participates in this activity and it is through this route that Rev. Elizabeth and Lay Pastor William Chirwa serve as Mission partners to the UCJCI since 2005. CANACOM is very grateful to have benefitted from the service of Lay Pastor Chirwa on the Finance and Administration Support Group. We were beneficiaries of his wise counsel for four (4) years 2011 – 2015. Rev. Elizabeth Chirwa serves in the ordained ministry of the United Church. The Chirwas remain steadfast Friends of CANACOM on whose support we can always count.



Saturday, August 1, 2015

Emancipation Day! On that particular day we journeyed to Guyana's National Park to spread information about our main topic, Human Trafficking. As a target driven group we all wore T-Shirts with **"I'm Not For Sale—Christ has paid the Price"** *"Stop Human Trafficking"*

CANACOM/CANAAC Relationships

Throughout the years, CANACOM has had a positive working relationship with a number of ecumenical bodies within the Caribbean and North American region and beyond. Some of these relationships continue until the present.

CANACOM has remained a facilitator of mission and maintains links with the Jamaica Council of Churches (JCC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC), which is the regional expression of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Jamaica Ecumenical Mutual Mission (JEMM).

Some of the issues explored in mutuality have been:

- Gender - Based violence,
- Justice from the Caribbean perspective in response to the Accra confession
- Bible Studies and other theological writings
- Collaboration in Symposia
- Participation in mission or other ministry events (for example youth assemblies and YAM)
- The signing of a resolution which called on the US Government to end the embargo to Cuba and normalize relations with Cuba
- bilateral talks with special interests to
 - Eliminate unnecessary duplication
 - Expand number of churches working together in mission.
 - Add special strengths of each to the other; and thus, eliminate the weaknesses.

CANACOM has long established relations with the regional expression of the World Communion of Reformed Churches –WCRC, through CANAAC (Caribbean and North American Area Council). CANACOM and CANAAC continue to explore the nature of relationship in the region. The most recent such collaboration took place in Jamaica in March of 2014.

CANACOM and CANAAC have held a number of consultations spanning from 1992 to present. Themes such as *‘How has the emphasis on partnership in mission influenced the youth ministry in the United Church,’* and *‘Mission Evangelism and Justice’* have been explored.

As one way of working together, it has been agreed that CANAAC is allowed to name two delegates to CANACOM’s Young Adults in Mission Work Camp. A representative from CAANAC is also invited to serve on the International Planning Committee of YAM. During the last YAM work camp which was held in Cuba Miss Donnette Ritchie represented CAANAC with great aplomb. She was a superb leader who brought great energy, and joy to the life of the camp.

These photographs capture the spirit of our partnership.



Kadeem reading the scripture at the CANACOM/CANAAC Joint Assembly- Ocho Rios



Ms Donnette Ritchie CANAAC Rep at CANACOM's 2015 Young Adult in Mission Work camp in Cuba



CANACOM/CANAAC 2014 Joint Assembly - Ocho Rios, Jamaica

The Relay



CANACOM's Education in Mission Secretaries. From left, Ms Jet den Hollander, Rev. Verna Cassells, Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin and Rev. Nicole Ashwood.

CANACOM started in 1986. However, for the first six years, it was not possible for a formal office to be set up. Thus, the secretarial duties were undertaken by the Rev. Sam Smellie with the voluntary assistance for a portion of that period by Mrs. Maime Evelyn. Mrs. Joyce Williams began the establishment of the office in 1991 on a part-time basis. The first Secretary for Education in Mission joined the secretariat in 1992.

This section uses the motif of a relay to view the movement of CANACOM through the eyes of each EIM Secretary.

Foundation for Education in Mission



Ms. Elisabeth Henrietta (Jet) den Hollander,
Education in Mission Secretary, 1992 - 2002

Towards an Education in Mission Process in CANACOM

The year 1992 is the year of the many conferences on the Quincentennial: the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Caribbean and Latin America. Across the continents people are seeking to assess the results of five centuries of North-South interaction. Their conclusions vary with their angle and perspective. The more in-depth analyses, however, appear to be unanimous in their main findings. First, that on the whole the South today is worse off than 500 years ago. ⁽¹⁾ Second, that the underlying cause of this state of affairs lies in the unjust relationships between North and South which hold, it is said, "as an unspoken fundamental premise, the human inferiority of some in relation to others." ⁽²⁾ The basic question is, whether people in the First World can, and will, acknowledge people in the Third World as persons with the same human right to a 'normal' life as they themselves. As the theologian Jon Sobrino states: "This is what is at stake in the symbolic year of 1992 just as it was in 1492: whether the North of the planet concedes the reality of the South and is interested in building the human family, or whether its only interest is in its own well-being, with the declaration, as a result, of the non-existence of the South and of its lack of interest for the human family." ⁽³⁾

The year 1992 is also that in which the “Caribbean North America Council for Mission” has established ‘Education in Mission’ as a priority focus. Throughout the centuries churches have been part of the North-South interaction. While at times their role was prophetic, more often interests of state and church were tightly interwoven, with Christian theology serving to justify the status quo. ⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, because of a predominantly one-sided flow of church and mission resources from North to South, and the one-sided control over these resources by the North, vicious circles of dominance and dependence were created, which have resulted in distorted mission identities in both North and South. ⁽⁵⁾ The CANACOM Partnership, presently consisting of 5 Caribbean and 3 North American churches, represents one small attempt to transform North-South relationships and develop more biblical church identities. During 1985-86 a structure was created which would enable the common sharing of power and resources. Since then some significant developments in terms of mutual giving and receiving have taken place. Now an intentional Education in Mission strategy is envisaged to further enhance this partnership process by facilitating common action, systematic reflection and mutual learning.

The intention of this paper is to start off discussion on the concrete shape and content of such an Education in Mission (EIM) process. The assumption is that the process, in order to be relevant, should be designed by the Partnership as a whole, with each member church sharing in the identification of needs, goals, methodologies and actual programmes. In order to explore what is already happening in the churches and what is deemed necessary in CANACOM as such, all the churches, it is hoped, will be visited during September-December 1992. This paper is meant to be a starter for the discussions to take place then. It begins with a brief analysis of the CANACOM vision, structures and objectives. This is followed by a summary of what in actual fact has happened since the Council’s inception. In the light of this, some suggestions are made with regard to the possible role and foci of Education in Mission within the Partnership.

A new model for mission

In order to begin determining the place and possible foci of Education in Mission in CANACOM, it is important to clarify the mission model underlying the Partnership. What are the theological convictions undergirding CANACOM? How does this mission instrument work? And what is it meant to do? The following is a first, tentative analysis of what the Council’s Constitution seems to indicate in this respect.

Theological basis

Before actually setting forth what CANACOM believes about mission, churches and resources, the Constitution intimates how CANACOM

understands itself. Two important points are made. First, reference is made to the Church Universal, acknowledging a fundamental unity with all who believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This suggests an *a priori* openness to other churches and traditions, and carries the promise of ecumenical cooperation and membership.

Second, reference is made to the ancient creeds and to the Evangelical Confessions of the Reformation. In particular the latter bring to mind a number of specific emphases in the Church's understanding of God, the bible and mission, such as the idea of "justification by faith through grace", the "centrality of the Scriptures", the "priesthood of all believers" and the insight that "all knowledge of God comes from obedience to God". Though not explicitly mentioned, these emphases and their missiological implications seem to undergird much of what is said in the Constitution.

Thus with these references CANACOM seems to identify itself as shaped by a particular theological tradition, though at the same time part of a larger unity, viz. the world church.

Then an understanding of mission is set forth when focusing on Acts 1:1-8. Luke in these verses seems to emphasize:

- *Mission as first and foremost God's mission.* It is God who initiates, who is working His purpose out and who empowers the disciples to be witnesses to the new world by baptizing them with his Spirit. Their mission, therefore, is simply "to 'get-in-behind' the Spirit of God who is liberatingly present in the world, going ahead of the church."⁽⁶⁾
- *Mission as a spontaneous response to the internal Spirit.* The disciples are described, not as men who frantically strive to obey the last orders of a beloved Master, but rather as men who, "receiving a Spirit, (are) driven by that Spirit to act in accordance with the nature of that Spirit."⁽⁷⁾ Not a command from the past, but a vision of the future and empowerment from within is motivating joyful missionary engagement.
- *Mission as a costly witness (maturia).* Becoming witnesses to Jesus, however, is not easy. It means 'living the Kingdom' in Christ's way, which involves vulnerability and powerlessness. Hence the disciples have to wait for the Spirit to empower them for this task.
- *Mission as a global project of the whole community of faith.* Such as witness, finally, is to take place everywhere: at home, in enemy territory, on the other side of the world. Moreover, it is not just a few, but all of the disciples who are empowered for the witness.

Mission is world mission, both local and global, “all in each place”.⁽⁸⁾

If this interpretation of Acts 1:1-8 is valid, CANACOM may be said to emphasize mission as a ‘getting-in-behind’ the Spirit of God who is already liberatingly present in the world; a joyful response of the whole community of faith to Christ’s invitation to witness, all in each place.

A second biblical reference in the Constitution, II Cor. 8:14+15, seems to complement this understanding of mission with a perspective on churches and resources. At the time of Paul’s writing, the Jewish ‘mother’ church in Jerusalem needed to develop its diakonia programme with the poor. So the predominantly Greek ‘daughter’ church in Corinth was invited to make a financial contribution towards the project. In the above verse Paul suggests some important principles for such church sharing. First, he points out that the object of the collection is ‘equality’. The inequalities between the two churches in terms of status (Jew vs Greek), material wealth and gifts of the Spirit were considerable. What was needed therefore, was a level of giving that would bring about a better equilibrium, a more just balance between what each church possessed for the effective execution of its mission, so that, as in the days of the manna in the wilderness, no one would have too little and no one would have too much.⁽⁹⁾

Second, Paul appears to caution against self-righteous giving, by pointing out that all, at some stage and in some sense, need assistance from others. In this sense there already was equality between the churches, for neither was self-sufficient in every respect. By reminding the Corinthians of this, Paul placed the collection for Jerusalem into perspective, viz. as an aspect of an ongoing relationship whereby each church is both giver and receiver.

And third, Paul seems to allude to an even more fundamental equality as the basis for such mutuality, viz. equality in Christ. “For by one Spirit.” (I Cor. 12:13) Equality is not only the object of, but also the theological rationale for, looking after one another and sharing resources with each other.⁽¹⁰⁾

What Paul sets forth in II Cor. 8:14+15 therefore, is what has been called a “theology of balance”: a vision of resource sharing that both starts from, and aims at, equality between the churches for the sake of Christ’s mission.⁽¹¹⁾

This suggests that the main theological convictions undergirding CANACOM might be summarized as follows: an understanding of mission as Spirit-inspired, global witness by the whole community of faith, and an understanding of churches as interdependent parts of one Body which, because of their given unity and equality in Christ, are called to sensitively deal with the inequalities between them so that, by mutually sharing

material and non-material resources, each can engage in the one mission of the Church more creatively and effectively.

How has this vision of mutuality for mission been given form and content in CANACOM?

Structural framework

A first step towards the vision, has been the creation of a structural framework within which the common sharing of power and resources can take place. The Constitution describes a 3-level structure of Council, Administrative Committee and Staff.

Council

The Council is the controlling body of CANACOM. At this level each member church has one or two places, depending on the size. The Council meets annually in different countries at the invitation of the churches.⁽¹²⁾ Its main task is to decide on CANACOM policy and to steward and allocate the common resources. Moreover it elects an Administrative Committee and honorary officers and appoints Staff as necessary.

Administrative Committee

Because the Council meets only once a year, it needs an Administrative Committee to act for it. The Committee meets every six months, either in person or by telephone or fax. The members are elected from among the Council members, one from each member church.⁽¹³⁾ Its task is to act for the Council on matters of policy implementation and the use of resources and, together with the Administrative Assistant, to carry out the administration of the Council.

Staff

Then at the third level of the structure there is the executive staff. An administrative Assistant (to be renamed Administrative Secretary) is responsible for general administration, communication between the churches, accounting of resources shared and compilation of needs presented. Moreover, at the 1992 Council meeting an Education in Mission Secretary was appointed. These staff are representative of the wider fellowship to the extent that they represent churches in both South and North. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Both are based at the CANACOM office in Kingston, Jamaica.

What therefore can be said about CANACOM as an instrument for common decision making and power sharing? At this point it may be noted that, because of the low criterion for a second delegate on the Council, viz. a church membership of 2000 or more, all churches except the Presbyterian Church in Grenada are in fact allowed two delegates. ⁽¹⁵⁾ This means that e.g. the Guyana Congregational Union with a membership of about 3000 has equal voting power on the Council as the Presbyterian Church USA

with a membership of nearly 3 million. It also means that the present ratio of South: North delegates on the council is 9:6, in other words, that the 5 relatively small Caribbean churches can indeed outvote the 3 large North American churches. This suggests that, at least in theory, the CANACOM structure is a mechanism for genuine sharing power, and as such an essential prerequisite for mutuality in mission.

Objective, aims and principles

Finally, what is this mission instrument meant to do? The Constitution states the overall objective:

“to seek to manifest the oneness of the church and its mission through genuine partnership in mission.”

Under the headings of “AIMS” and “PRINCIPLES” it then specifies how CANACOM envisages to do this, viz.

- ✓ by facilitating the sharing of material and non-material resources for mission;
- ✓ by valuing the contribution of each member church;
- ✓ by stewarding the common resources;
- ✓ by enabling for common action;
- ✓ by enabling encouraging participation and education in mission within each member church.

This suggests that CANACOM has two distinct though closely related functions. The Council is, in the first place, a facilitator. Its role is not to do mission as such but to facilitate more creative and effective mission of the member churches, each in its own context but also together, all in each place. With regard to the latter, in Constitution by-Laws a list of areas for common action is included. The variety of activities listed there reflects the holistic understanding of mission implied in Acts 1:1-8 passage.

Secondly, CANACOM is to function as “common pool” through which the churches share resources. Resources here are understood to include finance, people and material goods as well as prayer, talents, faith, experience and understanding. All member churches, also those which traditionally were seen as “receiving churches”, are expected to contribute to the common pool according to their gifts and means. All churches, also those which used to be regarded as “donor churches”, can apply for assistance from the pool according to their needs. And all determine together how the common resources are to be used and stewarded.

The implications of this system are at least four-fold. To begin with it means that there are, at least within this one context, no direct donor-recipient relationships between the churches. CANACOM is the third party, the “extra wheel” through which the resources are channelled, which means that no church is directly dependent on another and none has direct

power over another. And this, it is suggested, means that the churches can challenge, criticize, equip and empower each other in an entirely new way, with all that that implies for their perception of themselves and their relationship with other mission bodies. Second, the common resources are already co-owned; resources moreover which are brought together out of a common vision and shared on the basis of common priorities. Third, as common pool CANACOM in effect facilitates multi-directional resource sharing, i.e. from South to South, South to North, North to South and North to North. And finally, the common pool system requires that member churches determine their priorities in mission and submit their plans and projects to the judgment of their partners. Partnership, in other words, encourages not only responsibility for but also accountability to one another as members of one body.

It is, it would appear, in this way and according to these principles that the Council, in line with its vision of mutuality for mission, seeks to achieve its objective to “manifest the oneness of the church and its mission”.

If this interpretation of the Constitution with regard to CANACOM’s theological basis, structural framework and objective, aims and principles is valid, one may conclude that what is new about CANACOM is basically a new way of dealing with power and resources: a structure which constitutes a break with the dominant structures of our world, where it is the North church decides, owns, gives and teaches while the South is forced to accept, request, receive and learn. What is the significance of this break? Three things may be said:

1. Theologically speaking, the new patterns of relating, sharing and co-owning are anticipatory signs of the eschatological community, where all will work and live in true interdependence.
2. Missiologically speaking, the CANACOM model seems to promise new opportunities. The Caribbean churches may engage more fully in global mission than before, the North American churches may discover a “second naivete” with regard to mission: a way of witnessing that has worked through the critique of and embarrassment over the past missionary enterprise and that, in the process and possibilities of partnership in mission, is recovering something of the enthusiasm, courage and commitment of the early pioneers. And Caribbean and North American churches together may develop new understanding of, and new approaches to, the missionary task.
3. Psychologically speaking, the new power structure may help to counterbalance the effects of an often one-sided exercise of power in the past, i.e. may facilitate a more balanced understanding of

who we are and what we can give and receive in both North and South.

This raises the question of what, in fact, has happened since CANACOM came into being. Have the member churches indeed begun to work in true interdependence? Are new approaches to mission being developed? Are perceptions gradually changing? And do changing relationships, approaches and perceptions impact upon the way our churches are engaged in mission? For ultimately it is the mission of the member churches which is CANACOM's purpose and *raison d'être*.

Partnership in practice

It is too early to answer such comprehensive questions. But the CANACOM Minutes of 1985-1992 suggest that some significant development has taken place. This might be summarized as follows.

1. Council and Administrative Committee meetings have provided a regular platform for church representatives and observers to get to know each other and share their, as the Constitution puts it, "understanding of, vision for and commitment to mission". A highlight in this respect was the 1989 Council and Consultation on the theme "Jesus on our Doorstep", which sparked off in-depth exploration of the churches' engagement with people on the underside of society. It also evoked renewed commitment to assist one another in developing relevant, contextual ministries.⁽¹⁶⁾
2. Educational needs have been placed on the table, in particular the need to learn to receive, the need for cross-cultural learning and the need for education in mission.⁽¹⁷⁾
3. With regard to the sharing of people, a North American church considered the possibility of a Caribbean staff person on its Mission Board. CANACOM assured the church of full cooperation to find a person if a proposal would go through.⁽¹⁸⁾
4. All churches have made annual financial contributions to the common pool, from which general expenses and project assistance have been met.
5. A number of churches have applied for project assistance, e.g. the 3 Guyanese churches together requested help with regard to lay – training materials, the Presbyterian Church in Canada prioritized its ministry among indigenous people, and the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman applied for assistance with a new Drug Rehabilitation Programme.

This indicates that a process of mutual giving and receiving within a framework of common decision making has been set in motion, and that has facilitated several new developments in mission.

At the same time the process of working together has highlighted a number of areas which need further exploration and development. Some of these are:

1. *Representation and involvement.* So far the churches' involvement in CANACOM has been limited to delegates and observers participating in Council and Administrative Committee meetings. Most of these representatives belong to the top leadership of their churches. In 1989 suggestions were made with regard to a) representation of youth and women on the executive bodies, and b) involvement of young people in the partnership in mission enterprise by e.g. youth exchanges. This raises the question of whether and how a larger and more representative group from the churches can become involved in CANACOM, structurally and programatically. To what extent should and can CANACOM indeed be a partnership of entire churches instead of mainly church leaders? And what kind of programmes could ensure meaningful involvement in overall enterprise?
2. *Financial accountability.* Suggestions have also been made in the area of financial stewardship. During 1988-89 proposals were made to a) have separate budgets for operational expenses (administration and travel) and for project funding, b) establish common criteria for the allocation of funds, and c) periodically report back on projects funded, e.g. on progress made, effects noted, etc. All of these reflect the need for greater accountability to one another with regard to the use of common resources.

Likewise greater accountability may be needed in terms of financial giving. Some churches appear to make substantial contributions to the common pool, especially when seen in relation to levels of inflation, National GNP and size of church. In view of the overall budget, however, it may be important that each member church be invited to share its thinking about its level of giving to the CANACOM common pool.

3. *Sharing of people.* As such CANACOM has not yet been involved in the sharing of people between the Member Churches, though some movement has taken place in respect, e.g. between the Presbyterian Church USA and the United Church of Jamaica and the Grand Cayman, and between the United Church and the Guyana Congregational Union. A number of questions thus present themselves. What does partnership require in this respect? What should be CANACOM's role? How would it affect the existing procedures and principles for missionary service of the churches? Could CANACOM facilitate a team of people for common action with a member church or in a third country?

Other areas suggested in the minutes which need further development are: the location of Council and Administrative Committee Meetings, follow-up to meetings and consultations, increasing the membership of CANACOM, communications between the churches, and the priority foci of evangelism and justice.

In view of these developments and areas for further development, and in the light of what CANACOM is meant to be and do as examined above, what should be the role and foci of Education in Mission within the partnership?

Education in Mission in CANACOM

It may have become clear that as such education in mission is not new to the CANACOM enterprise. The analysis suggests that the partnership process itself is essentially educational. Mutual resource sharing is practised, not just because of the reality of abundance in one area and need in another, but also because it constitutes an exercise in partnership, an educational process which is geared towards gaining new understanding, learning new ways of relating and developing new, more biblical mission identities.

The specific role of Education in Mission in CANACOM, therefore should be to further enhance the learning process that is already taking place. Four foci for attention present themselves.

1. Enabling systematic reflection on the partnership process

Partnership action without reflection, i.e. without sufficient awareness of what we are doing and why, of how it is changing the situation and how it is changing ourselves, runs the risk of remaining empty activism without any real impact on the churches' life, witness and other relationships. This holds particularly true when, as in CANACOM, the scope of the enterprise is relatively small (size, activities, financial turn-over) and many of the member churches also maintain other, bilateral mission relationships. So in order to maximize the effect of what we do in CANACOM, the new ways of sharing and relating should be accompanied by systematic reflection. This would involve continuing exploration of the concept and implications of partnership in mission, regular refocusing on the Council's aims and principles, and ongoing evaluation of progress made in relation to these stated goals. At present some of this takes place during Council and Administrative Committee meetings, events and activities organized by CANACOM. At the same time people engaged in the partnership enterprise could be invited to contribute occasional papers on the issues for distribution and discussion within the wider fellowship.

2. *Facilitating cross-fertilization with regard to education in mission in the member churches*

In the final analysis it is at the level of the local congregation that the church's life and mission take shape in direct and concrete relation to the world. The CANACOM Minutes suggest, that the member churches are seeking to equip their congregations for this task and further, that they are exchanging ideas and materials for this purpose within the partnership. (e.g. lay – training materials, youth magazines, etc.) This process of cross-fertilisation might be further enhanced in the following way: a) Appreciation of existing and projected education in mission programmes of the churches as they relate to local congregations, ministerial candidates and regional/national mission enablers. b) Exploration of this information within the partnership and identification of resources which can be shared and ways by which best to do this. c) Organization of programmes through which these resources can be shared, such as consultations for mission enablers, exchange visits of resource persons, workshops to develop study materials, etc.

3. *Developing programmes in relation to specific needs within the partnership*

The analyses identified certain aspects of sharing and relating which so far have not materialized in the partnership, e.g. youth involvement, sharing of people in mission and common mission action. Moreover some churches have identified specific areas in which they would welcome assistance from the wider fellowship, e.g. cross-cultural learning, learning to receive, etc. all of these require further exploration and, if agreed upon, specific approaches and programmes. Here one can think of youth consultations and at a later stage youth work camps; joint action in mission projects with teams drawn from different member churches; exchange programmes; mission workshops, etc.

4. *Facilitating a climate of learning*

Any process of change, educationalists stress, involves varying levels of discomfort, dislocation and resistance. "There is always the need to address the vacuum created when time-honoured ways of perceiving reality have been dismantled. There is also the recognition that intellectual affirmation of the desirability of change rarely keeps pace with its emotional and practical manifestations."¹⁹ "CANACOM has been created to bring about change; to enable the renewal of mission perspectives, attitudes, relationships and practice. It is therefore important that within the partnership a 'climate' is created which is conducive to learning, cognizant of the difficulties involved in it and

characterized by openness, trust and mutual support. This means inter alia, a very careful designing of programmes and sufficient attention to their follow-up.

These four foci – systematic reflection, cross fertilization, educational programmes and a climate of learning – correspond to a large extent to the four areas of work identified in the Education and Mission job description. They constitute the proposed framework for an intentional process of mission action and reflection, meant to further enhance the partnership process begun in 1985-86, so that as Caribbean and North American churches we may increasingly “manifest the oneness of the church and its mission through a genuine partnership in mission.”

Jet den Hollander,
CANACOM, August 1982.

NOTES

1. This holds particularly true when regarding poverty levels (1,116 million people are miserably poor and another 2000 million poor), the net financial flow from South to North because of the astronomically high debt burden, the depletion of Third World natural resources and its abuse as dumping ground for first world poisonous waste. See e.g. *New Internationalist*, December 1991. Also Jon Sobrino S. J., “500 Years: Structural Sin & Structural Grace; Reflections for Europe from Latin America”. A tribute to Pope Paul VI, given on 21 March 1992 at Salford Cathedral, Lancs, UK.
2. Sobrino, “500 Years”, p. 2
3. Ibid, p. 6
4. See e.g. Theo Witvliet, *A Place in the Sun. An Introduction to Liberation Theology in the Third World*, London, SCM Press, 1985, Chapters 1 and 2. Also Dale Bisnauth, *A History of Religions in the Caribbean*, Kingston, Kingston Publishers, 1989, Chapters 2 and 3.
5. Hence John Gatu’s call for a “moratorium for mission” in 1971, which was meant to enable churches in both North and South to re-examine the nature and shape of their missionary involvement and relationships.
6. Christopher Duraisingh, “CWM’s First Decade and Beyond”, *International Review of mission*, Vol LXXVI, No 304, October 1987, p 478
7. David J Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, New York: Orbis Books, 1991; p. 114, quoting from Roland Allen.
8. A phrase originating from the Section report on “Unity” discussed at the WCC Assembly held in New Delhi, 1961, but later coined to express idea of mission in six continents and mutuality in mission.
9. A point highlighted by J. Roldanus in the context of a Dutch study on mutual assistance of churches in missiological perspective, Nov 1977.
10. Ibid
11. A phrase from an Asian Theologian
12. However, so far most meetings were held in either Guyana or Jamaica.
13. Minutes Council Meeting Nov 1987, p. 5. The three Guyanese churches agreed to be jointly represented by one delegate in view of the financial limitations of the Council.
14. The Administrative Assistant represents the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman as well as the Presbyterian Church USA, while the Education in Mission Secretary represents the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.
15. Membership of the Presbyterian Church in Grenada is about 500 families.

16. Report of the Mission Consultation Nov 1989, p. 15
17. Respectively: Minutes Council Meeting November 1987, p. 2; Minutes Council Meeting March 1992, p. 4; Report of the Mission Consultation November 1989, p. 15.
18. Minutes Council Meeting November 1987, p. 4.
19. Maitland Evans, "Education in Mission. A programmatic Approach," paper presented to the 1982 CWM Executive, p. 2.

Education in Mission – After Five Years

Exactly five years ago tomorrow – on the 29 April 1992 – I landed at the Norman Manley International Airport in Jamaica to take up my new assignment as Education in Mission Secretary for CANACOM. And what wonderful five years they have been: much job satisfaction, good friends and colleagues and a fascinating context. I'm not exaggerating when I say I could not have wished for a more exciting job. I'd like to begin therefore by once again expressing my thanks to the CANACOM Council for the opportunity to work for this Partnership; it was and is a privilege indeed!

As we are planning for the coming years, it is important to take stock of what has happened so far. In view of this:

Section 1 looks briefly at the practical context in which Education in Mission (EIM) and CANACOM generally is operating. What are some of the nitty gritty details of the job, and how can we move towards a smoother way of operating?

Section 2 then looks at the ideological context and context of Education in Mission. How can one characterize the present missiological climate? What – within that general context – has happened with CANACOM over the past five years? Where do we wish to go as a Partnership?

1. Education in Mission" Practicalities

While nitty gritty details and practicalities are by no means the main determining factor in EIM, they do play a role in how the EIM product is delivered. In order to maximize the effect of our common efforts, it seems imperative to somewhat streamline certain aspects of the EIM and general CANACOM operation. One example may suffice. It cannot have escaped your notice that agenda papers for Council and Administrative Committee meetings tend to be mailed out rather late, or tabled only at the meeting itself. Structures are being put into place to address this difficulty.

Personal life The matter of achieving a work life balance has not always been easy. With some rethinking and reorientation it is possible to synchronize both aspects a little more closely for a greater harmony.

Volume of work While the CANACOM workload has increased, the secretariat staff has not. Staff support is urgently needed to deal with e.g. mailings, databases, general correspondence and office routine.

Communication Breakdown There is, at times, a frustrating lack of response from the Member Churches. An example is the organization of the 1997 Youth in Mission Work camp in Cuba, which has demanded much more staff time than was strictly necessary. It seems necessary to streamline to a greater extent how we operate as a partnership in order to more efficiently and effectively realize our aims and objectives.

2. Education in Mission: context, developments, and future directions.

A changed missiological context

It is undeniable that organizations like CANACOM and its international sister organization the Council for World Mission (CWM) are presently going “against the tide”. CWM, came into being in the missiological context of the 1970s and CANACOM in the 1980s. All around the globe the insight was growing that traditional mission relationships were no longer in line with a world in which people, nations and churches were more and more understood to be interdependent. So new round table structures were created, whereby former “mother churches” and “daughter churches” began relating to, and sharing resources with, one another on the basis of equality and mutuality. For me, one of the most courageous steps in this respect remains the decision of the United Reformed Church in the UK in 1977, to indeed share power by bringing into the new CWM some 90% of its mission budget. This has without doubt greatly benefited their own as well as their partners’ mission relationships and thinking. Some 10 years later, on the basis of the valuable experiences in CWM, the CANACOM partnership was created by the CWM Caribbean churches and other Caribbean and North American partners.

The 1990s however present quite a different missiological context from the 1970s and early 80s. A few aspects:

The economical climate has changed

If the 70s were the years of economic growth and the ability to experiment, also missiologically, in the 90s the key words seem to be economic crisis, down-sizing and budget adjustments. Churches, it would appear, on the one hand reflect and on the other hand seek to neutralize the effects of these crises. Where they existed, social safety nets are disappearing while charity is coming back. According to the statistics the gap between rich and poor has never been so big, and globally the numbers of people living below the poverty line were never so shockingly high. Many of the development ideals of the '70s now seem illusions, and it isn't always clear which are the more realistic visions replacing them. The needs have grown; the possibilities seem to have decreased.

The ideological climate has changed

By now Partnership in Mission (PIM) is widely accepted as the way forward for churches. But it has also become an empty phrase which covers all kinds of relationships. No self-respecting church will talk of “mother” or “daughter” churches anymore, for everything is PIM now. But while for some this means the sharing of power as an intrinsic part of the process, for others it means no more than having some discussion with your “partner” prior to making your own decisions. The result is a confusing plethora of partnership relations, which need to be held against the light in order to determine their precise nature. For CANACOM and CWM such erosion of the PIM concept works disadvantageously: churches believe they are already involved in partnership within the old bilateral relationships and do not need to invest in costly partnership experiments or structures like CWM or CANACOM.

The denominational climate has changed

In many places local churches are becoming less and less willing to be guided by national policies and priorities. For example, while the national leadership in North America increasingly accepts the theological and missiological importance of round table structures, many local congregations want to go in the opposite direction. They complain of the anonymity of international mission structures and seek to develop all kinds of direct relationships with local churches abroad, which often include traditionally and potentially destructive forms of financial help. As has been recognized by both CWM and CANACOM, more research into the factors at play in these processes is urgently needed. What is already clear, however, is that this discrepancy between local and national mission visions has serious implications for CANACOM. When local mission funds are sent to “private projects abroad” rather than to the national churches, the national budget deficits increase. Consequently national staff and also the ability to make undesignated contributions to bodies like CANACOM are being downsized. Over the past year CANACOM has felt the effects of this. Some common programmes were started very slowly or had to be cancelled altogether as documentation went from desk to desk while staff positions were terminated. Also, contributions to CANACOM’s general fund saw little or no increase, as the hands of national staff are more and more tied by local congregations.

These trends and the general economic climate have co-determined the context in which CANACOM has been operating over the past five years. It means that to some extent CANACOM has been going “against the tide”. It is important to acknowledge this reality, and moreover, to determine to what extent we can and should change the tide, and to what extent we should adjust our present operation in such a way that new directions can

inspire new impulses and vision in the churches. This is an exploration that we need to engage in urgently.

The changed missiological context

One could identify the increased recognition of “particularity” and a gradual shift away from a “universality” kind of thinking. Many current globalization bonds, such as those which seek to make everybody a Coca-Cola drinker, an internet user or an HBO watcher are basically imperialistic. Likewise Christian mission is often still undertaken in order to “Make everybody a Christian like me, a church like ours.” But as is often noted in publications like the *International Review of Mission*, there is also a growing recognition of pluralism and particularism, and this is an important trend. It acknowledges and appreciates differences, and recognizes that there is a certain tension between being a Christian in your own context and being part of the global context. For CANACOM this implies the need to respect and build on that tension, and an even greater awareness that different member churches have different needs and priorities. This points to the need to regularly identify as a Council what each church desires in terms of programmes and what that means for our common agenda.

Education in mission in CANACOM – Developments since 1992

It was, in fact, with such stocktaking that CANACOM’s Education in Mission process began in 1992. The first step was a policy paper: an analysis of why CANACOM was created, what had been done so far and what could be the role of Education in Mission in the partnership process. Education in Mission was defined in a two-fold way: as the development of specific educational programmes but also as the educational undergirding of the overall partnership process.

The second step was a series of orientation visits to CANACOM member and observer churches, to hear what was actually happening in the churches in terms of EIM and to identify what kind of programmes they wished to see happening within the Partnership. On the basis of these findings an action plan for 1993-95 was developed and subsequently accepted by the 1993 Council. It had 5 main programme areas:

1. To set up Joint Mission Action Teams to share in a mission frontier project of a member church. As you know, the first JOMAT programme took place from September 1995 to July 1996 in Columbia, South Carolina. Several reports have been written on the project. Unfortunately our second JOMAT programme here in Jamaica had to be cancelled because of insufficient nominees to form the Team. Fortunately the United Church in Jamaica and Cayman Islands has been able to invite a Team through other channels.

2. To organize mission work camps for young adults. CANACOM and CWM have been working closely together in this area. The first joint Youth in Mission Workshop in our region took place in 1994 in Guyana; the second one will take place in Cuba.
3. To organize a CANACOM youth consultation which would enable young people to share in the thinking and shaping of CANACOM. This took place during the 1994 Guyana Work Camp. The group shared its thinking via a number of recommendations, many of which have been implemented. One of the most significant was the proposal from Shelton Daniels and Garth Frazer (representing the Caribbean Region and the North America Region respectively) to have youth representation on the CANACOM Council.
4. To develop a series of mission case studies which would give local study groups across the partnership insight into how groups in our churches are actually involved in mission.
5. To organize a workshop on music and liturgy. This had been postponed some time ago, as our churches felt other areas of work needed priority attention.

This means that by April 1997, 4 of 5 programme areas accepted for priority attention in the period 1993 - 95, have been implemented. Two of these, viz: the JOMAT programme and the Youth in Mission work camp, have been organized more than once. Furthermore CANACOM has had the opportunity to participate in some programmes of the Council for World Mission, such as Training in Mission (yearly) and the 1996 Mission Education School in Jamaica.

In terms of the educational undergirding of the partnership process generally, the following can be said:

1. *Sharing of People* As a partnership, we have gone through an intense process of reflection on what the Partnership vision means for the way our churches send and receive mission partners. Background papers and study questions as well as the emerging policies, priorities and covenants have been documented in the booklet "Sharing of People in Mission in CANACOM" (1995). Meanwhile the council-wide search for mission partners to work with the Presbyterian Church in Grenada has greatly enhanced the development of the Guidelines for Sharing of Personnel. Draft no.3 was sent to the churches last year.

It is appropriate to once again to express our gratitude to the United Church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Grenada and Rev. Sahadat and Mrs. Parks Sahadat, for their willingness to be first "partners" in CANACOM's Sharing of People process. As a partnership we have learned much from the recruitment and

appointment process of the past three years. There is now much greater clarity about possibilities and problem areas, and much of what has been learned is incorporated in the Guidelines.

Likewise the first Joint Mission Action Team programme in Columbia has been a great educational opportunity for CANACOM. Churches like GCU and PCG became sending churches for the first time, while PC (USA) was both sending and host church. The main area of learning will be included in the final report, while the revised JOMAT guidelines are included as Part II of the general “Sharing of People Guidelines”

2. *Financial Sharing* CANACOM’s financial situation has necessitated a continuous reflection process. In 1994 several funds were created to facilitate the designated giving which some church structures favour. A booklet was produced to describe the rationale and purpose of each fund. As has been noted repeatedly, however, this development runs counter to the CANACOM vision of one general fund from which all CANACOM expenditure is met. After all, not individual churches but the entire group of churches should determine what programmes and projects should have priority within the Partnership. It is important therefore to continue the reflection process and to increase our efforts to return as soon as possible to the system of undesignated giving and one common pool.
3. *Partnership relationships* On several occasions the Council has explored aspects of partnership. For example, last year Steven Chambers (UCC) and Maitland Evans (UCJCI) initiated the discussion on the nature of bilateral relations in the context of a multilateral platform like CANACOM; likewise a questionnaire started off the exploration of local bilateral relationships within CANACOM. This discussion too will be continued.
4. *Documentation and communication* Over the years several projects to document, communicate and promote what CANACOM is and does have been undertaken. In 1995 a set of 10 posters was produced to highlight different aspects of the CANACOM enterprise. The draft paper “10 Questions about CANACOM” (1986) was not developed further, as the Cuba Council felt a different kind of information material would be more helpful. This year a new start was made with the CANACOM newsletter. The first issue was included with the agenda papers; the intention is to have a quarterly production.

In these and other ways we have been seeking to educationally undergird the general partnership process. The hope is that this has clarified

and deepened the ways by which the member churches are sharing and relating. It will indeed be important to continue exploring with the churches what in this regard is most effectively enhancing what CANACOM is doing.

Future directions So where do we go from here? Some programme areas were already mentioned at the last Administrative Committee meeting:

1. The Guyanese churches have tabled a request for personnel support for the new “Formation for Ministry and Mission” programme: One mission partner to share in the early stage, and a JOMAT for the second stage. This Council will need to discuss the implications of these requests for recruitment and finance.
2. The CWM Caribbean Region (GCU and UCJCI) is organizing a consultation on “Women and Men in Mission: and has invited CANACOM to share in it. This will take place in November 1997.

At the same time it seems important to continue our analysis of the context in which the Partnership is operating, generally and missiologically. Further research into globalization is needed, and the responses needed from organizations like CANACOM. Further research is also needed in relation to the current trend of local congregations opting for the more traditional kinds of missionary giving and relating, and if and how CANACOM can develop strategies to counterbalance such trends. As an international partnership we are in an excellent position to facilitate cross-cultural research in these areas. Funding should be sought to facilitate such research.

Jet den Hollander
Secretary for Education in Mission
April/August 1997

Notes

1. This paper incorporates the main responses to the presentation made by the Council. “Towards an Education in Mission process in CANACOM”, August 1992

Mission in Practice



Rev. Verna Cassells
Education in Mission Secretary, 1999 - 2008

As there is a time to arrive, so is there a time to go. On the 15th of January I will return to the Netherlands to begin a new period in life. Meanwhile it is my privilege and joy to introduce the Rev. Ms. Verna Cassells as CANACOM's new Education in Mission Secretary. Rev. Cassells is an Ordained Minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman islands. A Jamaican national, Verna has also lived for extended periods in Korea and Britain and has taken part in theological, mission and women's consultations worldwide. For the past four years she has held the Chair of Mission and Evangelism at the United Theological College of the West Indies (UTCWI) here in Kingston. Rev Cassells will begin her work with CANACOM on February 1. I wish Verna and the CANACOM partnership a very fruitful period, as partners in mission with Christ and one another.

Hoping we'll meet again sometime, somewhere!

Yours Sincerely,

Jet den Hollander (Ms)

Bye bye and hello!



Ms. Jet den Hollander



Rev. Verna Cassells

Blessed New Year's Greetings!!

We rejoice in our celebration of God's initiative in mission as we remember the incarnation of Jesus Christ our Lord. In this light, we turn our attention to the year ahead, a year which offers new vistas to all of us. For you the New Year offers a new face, and for me a new place.

Kindly allow me at this juncture to express my thanks to the CANACOM Administrative Committee for demonstrating their confidence in me by offering the position of Education in Mission Secretary to me. My initial encounters with members of the Committee through teleconference and face to face conversations provided me with encouraging signals, assuring me with promising signs of a meaningful and productive collaboration in mission.

I follow the tremendous accomplishment of my friend and sister Jet den Hollander, an able and efficient Secretary of whom I must declare my commendation and congratulations for laying such a solid foundation on which to build.

I will make every effort to ensure that none of the successes achieved are lost as I put my best foot forward. It is with a profound sense of excitement that I offer my services ready to take on the challenge. I am assured that working together with you and seeking God's guidance we will accomplish God's mission in this sphere.

Blessings be yours and God bless others through you.

Sincerely,

Verna Cassells (Rev.)

Rev. Verna Cassells, former Education in Mission Secretary in conversation with Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, current Education in Mission Secretary on October 28, 2016.

JPM: Verna, thanks for setting this time aside to talk about CANACOM. In going through CANACOM's records it was interesting to see how your experience in national, regional and international mission was woven into the mission education mandate of CANACOM.

VC: My pleasure! I came into the position of EIM in 1999 as Jet den Hollander was leaving. In fact, there was a brief period of overlap which supported an orderly transition. A delightful letter 'Bye-Bye and Hello' was prepared by Jet at the time and appears elsewhere in this book. It hardly seems to be the case that after serving for nine (9) years, 2016 marks (8) eight years since I passed the baton to Rev. Nicole Ashwood in 2008!

Even the briefest moment of reflecting on CANACOM reminds me of our long association and ongoing relationship. It is therefore with pleasure that I share a few summary views on my tenure with CANACOM. An essential part of the responsibility of the Education in Mission Secretary is the implementation of programmes. I love teaching and I particularly love mission in action. Thus, delivering the programmes with the help of the Secretariat and Member Churches was a source of joy.

JPM: How would you describe the focus of your work in CANACOM?

VC: The focus of the work was practising God's mission to begin with. This position required, and still requires an understanding that mission is about discerning and doing. A successful mission practice requires a structured yet, flexible approach and a willingness to work in a variety of ways...CANACOM's philosophy respects the individual mission priority of each Member Church. At the same time, we seek ways of working together to support the mission of God's church.

God's mission is what God invites us to do as we engage with people. So it's what God sends us out to do. In this case there were (and still are) the Member Churches, the people of the Member Churches and as we came together we worked towards implementing the mission in each context. So it was a collaborative effort. It was not my place to do the work for them but to work with them, as appropriate and possible. So the main focus was on people. The people who came together at the Council Meetings were the constitutional representatives of the Member Churches and therefore the *voice*. These meetings provided fora for interactions and the sharing of challenges. The delegates openly described their projects, their joys, sorrows and areas in which they needed assistance. Importantly, the Council Meetings took place in a round table setting which enhanced

dialogue and mutual learning. These sessions provided an environment which supported individual and mutual empowerment so that churches felt that they could truly be partners in mission. God's family at work!

Visits to Member Churches

Visiting the churches was an essential and mutually beneficial activity. There were three main stimuli which motivated visits:

- *Rotation*

In order to enable the EIM to perform the duties of the office, it is important for first hand information to be available. Visiting the churches thus had become a standard operating procedure by the time of my arrival. The value of the model of rotation is that all churches would be scheduled to be visited within an agreed time frame. Through these visits the support and partnership goals as agreed at Council meetings would be met.

- *Invitation*

Accepting invitations which were issued by Member Churches symbolized a very visible way of supporting the work of and benefiting from Member Churches in a variety of ways and provided avenues of precious fellowship. It was always a delight to receive such invitations.

- *Response to a crisis affecting the Member Church*

It was never possible to predict when a church might be overcome by a situation of dire challenge. Grenada comes to mind when they were ravaged by Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The St. Andrews (Scot's) Kirk, was so badly damaged that up to this present time, it cannot be used by the congregation. In such a case, I had to visit to be part of the process of determining ways in which CANACOM could render assistance.

- *Supporting Member Church Initiatives*

I found visits directed at particular programmes in Member Churches to be very valuable. They provided in-depth learning about the local church. They also provided a segue into the local context and "*seeing the back of the head*" of the Member Churches. From that perspective, questions which would arise from an outsider's point of view were taken on board at the discretion of the Member Church.

However, one example of a programme, with which CANACOM shared a wonderful partnership, was the ministerial training programme, Formation for Ministry and Mission (FMM) in Guyana. That project really met a dire need in the three Member Churches: the Guyana Congregational Union, the Presbyterian Church of Guyana and the Presbytery of Guyana. There was a shortage of ministers and it was not always possible, for financial reasons, to send persons overseas. This programme provided in-service training and allowed participants to be with their families while undergoing study.

The FMM was therefore a way of allowing the local leadership and other resource persons to increase the group of trained church leaders. Some began their training as lay pastors and over time, became ordained ministers. We were very proud of the FMM programme which was an outstanding example of our response to a specific Member Church training need. I know that the programme has continued in an evolving form and I trust that it will continue being part of the Guyanese efforts at providing adequate numbers of qualified personnel for its ministry needs. Rev. Dr. Adlyn White, Dr. Norma Smellie contributed to this initiative. Mrs. Maureen Massiah is to be congratulated for keeping the programme going.

Networking and Promoting: CANACOM is a network of churches so it is essential for the lines of communication to be kept open. The Secretariat ensured that meaningful contact was kept with each Member Church. One central means of communication was the CANACOMNEWS which was the official newsletter of CANACOM at the time. Attention was paid to promoting the work of CANACOM and its partners the Council for World Mission (CWM) and the Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC).

Collaborating: The nature of this organization requires collaborative ways of working in order to ensure our progress. Therefore, all our major programmes and activities have been designed with a model of collaboration in mind. It is known too that individual churches have quietly worked together in supporting each other in the accomplishment of small projects. This could take the form of cash donations, accompaniment and deciding what appropriate responses could be made when challenges arose.

Empowerment: CANACOM has always been very keen on building the capacity of local churches. Even within the confines of our limited resources, CANACOM continued to provide people, ideas, grants and opportunities for further education and preparation for ministry and service to God's people. Wherever possible, local, national, regional and international exposure was afforded to leaders and members of a number of congregations in the spirit of strengthening persons for the work.

JPM: Can you speak at some length on the programmes which best epitomized CANACOM?

Joint Mission in Action Team (JOMAT)

Although all the programmes were geared towards working together in God's mission, to my mind, the programme which best epitomized CANACOM was JOMAT. This involves a group of 3-5 persons from

different Member Churches living, working, and witnessing together for a period of six months to five years, hosted by a CANACOM Member Church. This multi-faceted, multi-focused programme was started in 1996 was hosted by the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, U.S.A. Three persons from the Caribbean - Mr. Fitz Gerald Laing, Ms. Roshanna Gillis and Mr. Anthony Julien from Grenada along with Ms. Kelly Brautigam from the USA - served as missionaries in that context. The aim of the project was to allow young people to share in a mission frontier project of that church, learn partnership in mission by doing it, and by their nature as an intercultural and interracial group, live out the vision of partnership in mission.

During my time as EIM Secretary, there were two JOMAT programmes. In 2002 the JOMAT in Music and Liturgy was held in Jamaica. Summer Music workshops and camps were also held in Jamaica and Cayman Islands. The music workshops and camp which were offered by the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands were sponsored by CANACOM under the auspices of JOMAT in Music and Liturgy. The tutors, Mr. Tyrone Arjune of the Guyana Presbyterian Church, Mrs. Beverly Marie Campbell, Mr. Everton Garth Webster and Mr. Roy Jackson from the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. They were accompanied to the Cayman Islands by Mrs. Hope Evans-Wilson, the Music Tutors' National Co-ordinator in the UCJCI and myself. The summer music camp in Jamaica was additionally resourced by two Presbyterian Church in USA (PCUSA) musicians, Rev'ds Corey Nelson and Karen Herbst-Kim.

We shared in a fresh approach to the teaching of music, which was interregional, intercultural and intergenerational. This indeed lived out the vision of partnership in mission. The programme set out to train aspiring musicians for the enhancement of the liturgy. It aimed to improve the skills of the participants in keyboard, guitar, trap set and voice. JOMAT 2005 took place in Canada in "Cross-Cultural Collaboration" which involved the interfacing with the Caribbean Diaspora in the Toronto.

Young Adult in Mission Work camp

The Young Adults in Mission work camp was a very popular programme among the Member Churches. It enjoyed a very high profile as young people would promote it in their Member Churches as they were much enthused by the energy of the programme. The spirit of the young people lends strong support to the formal procedure which is put in place by Council and operationalized by the Secretariat. So by the end of each Council it is agreed which Member Church will host the next YAM camp. A policy of equality of opportunity exists whereby each Member Church is permitted to send two participants. In addition, nature of the programme

moved from being regional/ international to truly global with the inclusion of participants from all the regions of the Council for World Mission.

It was delightful to have shared the excitement of three YAM camps, in Curacao, Grenada and Tatamagouish, Canada. The memories remain fresh in my mind. This was a youth to youth ministry as well as youth to the church and community ministry. It comprised fellowship, study, personal development, worship and community service. Some persons had the experience of being hosted in the homes of church members; a kind of *mission to the visiting participants in mission*.

Council Meetings

The Council meetings were an important element of our work. These are formal meetings which are designated by the constitution of CANACOM and are now held every two years. It is amazing though that the formal business of the Council was conducted in an atmosphere of conviviality which was relaxed and facilitated open discussion and debate which welcomed all the voices present.

The strength of the participation rendered it easy to arrive at decisions which honour the decisions of the desires of the members. Typically, by the time the presentation of the slate of the new executive would have taken place the agreement would have been previously established through fulsome discussions. The process of the meeting ensured that all the Member Churches were included. The Secretariat, which is ultimately charged with the support and leadership of the implementation of the wishes of Council was always fully aware of our responsibilities. Assisted by the Finance and Administrative Support Group (FASG) and Friends of CANACOM (FOC), we endeavoured to work with great zest.

Friends of CANACOM

This was geared towards broadening the impact of CANACOM in the local Member Churches. In this way local representative to a CANACOM event could share their experiences with others and gain support for CANACOM in that Member Church context.

JPM: Rev. Cassells, kindly accept thanks on behalf of Ms. Leslene Laing and myself, for this information and the ways in which you continue to support the work of CANACOM.

VC.: Mrs. Martin, the pleasure was mine. Thanks for allowing me to reminisce on the wonderful experience of ‘being God’s servant in God’s Mission’ as EIM Secretary of CANACOM. Thanks to the first EIM Secretary, Ms. Jet den Hollander ably partnered by Mrs. Joyce Williams. Thanks to God, for granting Rev. Nicole Ashwood the wherewithal to have successfully steered the vessel. With you as the current EIM Secretary,

CANACOM remains in good hands. It is wonderful indeed to witness that God never fails to find workers for the vineyard. **Thanks be to God!**

Expanding the Mission



Rev. Nicole Ashwood
Education in Mission Secretary, 2008 - 2014

The February 2008 Guyana Council Meeting created history when the outgoing EIM Secretary, Rev. Verna Cassells, and the newly appointed, Rev. Nicole Ashwood co-convened the meeting. This collaboration of old and new was somewhat definitive for that new season of CANACOM's seven-year mission engagement under the incumbent. It was a season marked by collaboration between the Secretariat and Member Churches, mutuality in mission across Member Churches and widening of regional and global ecumenical partnerships. Also, it was during that period that some programmes were audited, revised, re-visioned and culled, the financial reporting format was adjusted, and the Council finally approved the move to biennial Council meetings and changes to the Constitution and by-laws.

The Guyana Council meeting, after some intense discourse, decided to formally institute international auditing standards for end of year reports.

The change to biennial meetings made it possible for Council to increase the amount of money available for grants and to afford the Administrative Committee (AC) a greater degree of flexibility in decision making.

The tenure of the AC was also increased from one to two years. There was at the same time a vacancy for the position of Administrative Assistant, and in May 2008 Ms. Leslene Laing was welcomed into the post.

Patient, courteous, gifted with hospitality and an accounting background, Ms. Laing helped to provide increased accessibility to the Hope Road Office when the work required that the EIM Secretary travel inland or abroad. Ms. Laing's skills and manner contributed to the smooth

preparation and delivery of full administrative support to the Secretariat, EIM-S, AC, FASG, Council and CANACOM. In other words, her duties undergird the operation of the CANACOM enterprise.

Under the leadership of Rev. Nicole Ashwood and Rev. Dr. Osbert James (then AC Chair), ecumenical collaboration for mission education continued to expand under the regional and international framework which had been established previously. CANACOM co-sponsored a Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture with the United Theological College of the West Indies (the Rt. Rev. Brenda Bullock, Moderator of the PCTT, was the keynote speaker).

CANACOM offered leadership for liturgy in the World Council of Churches' Movers for Gender Justice Global Advocacy workshops and also for the World Council of Churches (WCC) International Ecumenical Peace Convocation hosted by the Jamaica Council of Churches in 2011. CANACOM was also represented in WCC and World Council of Reformed Churches (WCRC) Gender Justice programmes globally, and later hosted/co-sponsored Gender Awareness Symposia across the region. We engaged in mission, worship and other training activities with Member Churches. Journal articles were also submitted to international and regional ecumenical online journals.

During the 2009 Trinidad Council Meeting CANACOM facilitated a Mission Symposium under the theme, "*Mission 2020: Restoring the HOME Front*" (Health, Opportunities, Male-Female relationships and Education/Empowerment) with presentations from ecumenical partners including Mr. Gerald Granada (Caribbean Conference of Churches) and Rev. Robina Winbush (CANAAC/PCUSA). The Symposium was insightful, awakening the participants' awareness to the link between gender-based violence and substance abuse among Trinidadian women. As a result a relationship was established with Trinidad's only substance abuse centre for women – Serenity Place. Both the North America and Caribbean representatives were present for the 2009 Council meeting in Trinidad, where they also provided leadership at the Board of Youth Affairs (BOYA) Convention in San Fernando. Hosted for that season by the BOYA executive, the team found themselves perhaps beginning a new trend in hospitality as they were accommodated in guest lodgings which were situated on the second floor of a mortuary (!). Aside from the initial culture shock, they bonded with the youth and young adults, some of whom would later serve as stewards for the Council Meeting.

In 2010, after ably representing CANACOM in both regions, Chelsea Masterman, then North American Young Adult representative opted to pursue theological training and candidated for ordained ministry with the United Church in Canada. Chelsea's departure signalled a shift in our approach to the selection of the Young Adult Representative.

Using the vacancy as an opportunity to review the expectations of this role, it was agreed to design a clearly articulated Job Description. This was duly achieved. Additionally, in the Caribbean region, there had been two Caribbean Young Adult representatives – Mr. Dylon Rachpaul and Mr. Garth Blackford - who served the Council between 2008 and 2010. The review made it possible for the creative spirit of the YARs to be formally acknowledged in the running of the affairs of CANACOM between Council meetings.

Deepening the Role of the Regional Young Adult Representatives

It was during this time also that the role of the Young Adult Regional Representatives was reviewed and deepened. A five-page job description was prepared. It gave the impression of a daunting responsibility. However, the leadership agreed that this would serve as a guide and each YAR could determine the course of her leadership by focusing on a particular area of mission and ministry.

This helped to streamline the work of the YAR, provided clarity of expectations (yet afforded flexibility of focus depending on the strengths of the Rep.) and made for more effective reporting of activities at the close of each year. And so, Ms. Sanya Beharry and Ms. Jessie Jennette, both former Young Adults in Mission Workcamp participants, emerged as the new Young Adult regional representatives for the Caribbean and North America respectively. It was deemed wise to include both persons on the Administrative Committee and also facilitate their participation in Council Meetings so that the voice of the Young Adults would be reflected in the culture and contexts of the Council.

The imprint of the YARs was very evident in our 2013 Grenada Council meeting as they provided leadership for some aspects of the agenda. And the increased commitment to youth (encapsulated in the Opportunities segment of the Mission 2020 theme) saw our young adults providing representation regionally and globally. They served as stewards for the Trinidad meeting, and Individual exchanges between Grenada and Jamaica and Trinidad were encouraged and facilitated to enhance leadership development in the Grenadian context.

With our intentionality toward inclusion of young adults in our mandate, CANACOM helped facilitate the attendance of five delegates to the Youth Pre-Assembly of the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in 2010, and in 2013 of two seminarians to the Global Institute of Theological Education of the World Council of Churches, Busan, Assembly.

In celebrating our 25 years of existence, CANACOM met in the Dominican Republic for a Joint Gathering with ecumenical partners in the region - the Caribbean and North America Area Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches. We also collaborated with CANAAC

to host a Theological Institute as a pre-assembly to our joint gathering. The young adults spent time in theological reflection, and helped Council to remember how to make room for rest and recreation – billiards, swimming, and general interaction with each other. The Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada en Cuba ably carved anniversary chalices, which were presented, to each Member Church and our ecumenical Partners. At the anniversary gala/cultural night, past supporters were honoured and commended for their service.

Council for World Mission-CANACOM collaboration was extensive – through youth ministry training in Guyana and the Cayman Islands, a *Trafficking in Persons* consultation in Jamaica, and a "Training of Trainers Workshop" (November 2014) in the areas of Mission and Capacity Audits, Strategic and Capacity Development Planning towards transforming churches into missional congregations. CWM was represented at the 2009 Jamaica Young Adults in Mission work camp; adding international flair to an already rich experience of creativity, centipedes, cultural pluralism, and ministry to at-risk youth in Spaldings in Clarendon, Jamaica. There was also mutual representation at each other's Council Meetings and Regional Assemblies.

In summary, the foregoing represents some of the ways in which the approach to mission was expanded.

Programmatically, the format of Council Meetings underwent several iterations as we moved toward the future. Working groups/steering groups were created by Council. The work of each group was started in Council and continued afterward through the Administration Committee (AC) and the Finance and Administration Support Group (FASG). In addition analyses have been employed by AC and FASG as part of the move to ensure that we are adequately prepared for the needs of our context in the present and the future.

The CNL embarked upon a process of review which began in 2009. This review embraced a thorough discussion of CANACOM's modus operandi and interpretation of its mandate. Rev. Danielle James, former North American Representative to Council provided insight in these matters at the meetings which were held Trinidad (2009) and Cuba (2010). It was with great satisfaction that the template for the strategic plan incorporating the period up to 2020 was approved in the 2014 Council Meeting in Jamaica. Her work, coupled with the contribution of many others (including Rev. Dr. Osbert James, Rev. Earl Thames, Mrs. Jennifer Martin and Mr. Jim Hodgson), resulted in the approval of the move to biennial meetings and the change in the constitution and by-laws to provide more autonomy to the AC between Council meetings.

CANACOM from the start has been interested in expanding the Member Church base within the Caribbean and North America region in order to enhance the networking capacity of the organization. Council was

therefore pleased to add two new Member Churches, namely the Church of Scotland in Trinidad (2009) and the Reformed Church of Suriname (2014). This increased our membership to one ecumenical partner, Council for World Mission (CWM), with full voting rights and 14 Member Churches.

This augurs well for the future of CANACOM as there are now two Dutch speaking members in the Council. This has widened the scope for partnership in mission across cultural/language groups, offering further opportunities to explore capacity building and empowerment with a cadre of smaller denominations. These are the Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG), Reformed Church in Suriname (RCS), Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC) and Church of Scotland in Trinidad (COST) which are all three-congregation Member Churches). Our reach and impact in the Caribbean region stand to be strengthened because of the number and spread of congregations.

I concluded my tour of service and mission engagement to CANACOM in 2014 in the company of friends at our annual Christmas Luncheon. The beautiful citation was well received.

Reviewing and Forecasting the Mission



Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, EIM-S, 2015

January 19, 2015, marked a very significant day in my life. This was the first day in my role as Education in Mission Secretary of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission. It was significant for two specific reasons:

1. God had provided me with the priceless opportunity to press into the service of CANACOM all the wonderful gifts and opportunities with which I have been blessed.
2. In particular, my appointment began at the nexus between the ending of the first 30 years of CANACOM and the beginning of the new phase. I came on board very aware that the mission landscape of 1986 was different from that of 2015/2016. CANACOM had entrusted to me the directing of that paradigm shift as set out at CNL14. I welcomed the challenge!
3. By representing the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands on two bodies of the WCC, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace I am brought into direct contact with groups entrusted to invite Member Churches into the ownership and implementation of the WCC agenda on Mission, Evangelism, Peace and Justice. Through these wider international connections and the interface with the issues, the mission priorities of CANACOM stand to be enhanced.

A deep interest in local and international mission and evangelism had attracted me to CANACOM and my voluntary service over the years. The life and work of CANACOM were therefore not new to me. This was of great benefit in my new position.

I still recall the big smile on the face of Ms. Leslene Laing, Administrative Assistant, when she announced that there was work waiting on my desk... Rev. Nicole Ashwood had graciously prepared “handing-over” files to support my settling in. Similarly, having agreed on the four mission priorities at the Council Meeting (CNL14) which was held in Jamaica, it had been decided that members of the subcommittees should gather in order to plan ways of activating the decisions which had been made. Among these was the Strategic Planning Committee. By the time of my arrival this group had already met and had structured a veritable blueprint to guide CANACOM’s move forward. The excellent groundwork has been very helpful during this period.

Combined with the already agreed upon tasks and directions was the approach of a special period of celebration in the life of CANACOM; the commemoration of our 30th Anniversary. Thus, the thrust of my very brief reflection appears under the heading, ***Reviewing and Forecasting the Mission.***

As would be expected, I have started the essential work of making new acquaintances, visiting Member Churches and serving on ecumenical bodies. Importantly, much time has been dedicated to an understanding of CANACOM’s finances which, following an excellent internal tradition, have been very carefully stewarded by Mrs. Merle Buchanan and the Administrative Committee over the past four years.

The practice of strong financial accountability has been the bedrock of CANACOM’s natural survival and it was with great admiration that the CNL16 once again lauded the then CANACOM Officers, who, with the assistance of the Council for World Mission, had set up the Endowment Fund which forms the base of CANACOM’s financial viability.

At this time of review and of looking forward an examination of financial resources is crucial. I have taken the opportunity to be reminded of the exemplary financial stewardship of our forebears in CANACOM. The task of the current team is to further strengthen this tradition as we move forward.

Review

Preparing and implementing a number of Celebratory Events.

1. The Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture
2. The Unveiling of Commemorative Plaques
3. The Earl Thames Mission Consultation
4. Council Meeting (CNL)

5. The “Opening up of the Archives”
6. Interviewing Stalwarts & Founders
7. Compiling the Book (*Historical Perspectives on the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM) Commemorating 30 Years of God’s Goodness*)

Forecasting

1. Guided by our theme for Council Meeting 2016 “Engaging Mission in the 21st Century: Re-visioning for the Future”, continuing to articulate CANACOM’s position as a relevant 21st Century Mission Agency in two regions – Caribbean and North America
2. Planning EIM activities based upon the outcome of the Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture by Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans and the Rev. Earl Thames Mission Consultation Lecture by Ms. Jet den Hollander
3. Moving ahead with work across Member Churches on the four Mission Priorities, viz:
 - ✓ Church Growth and Renewal
 - ✓ Gender and Violence
 - ✓ Poverty and Inequality
 - ✓ Human Trafficking
4. Forming a Mission Partnership with the Kings Gate United Church, other UCJCI congregations and Member Churches of CANACOM
5. Re-establishing of Friends of CANACOM in each Member Church
6. Working closely with CWM Caribbean, JCC, CANAAC, CWME, WCC, PJP
7. Seeking to embed the work of CANACOM more deeply into the activities of the Church and Ministry Committee of the UCJCI while encouraging other delegates in our Member Churches to continue seeking to raise the profile of CANACOM in their contexts.

CANACOM Programmes

CANACOM has never envisioned itself as a forum for the meeting of leaders and delegates. Instead, it recognizes by constitution that meetings are a necessary route for the operation of its affairs. On the other hand, it is through programming that an avenue for mutual mission has been consistently designed and implemented over the years.



*Ms. Jet den Hollander and Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin
EIM Secretaries who accompanied YAMMERS to Cuba in 1997 and 2015 respectively.*

Young Adults in Mission (YAM) formerly Youth in Mission (YIM) (YIM) - (YAM) 1994-2015

Any contemplation and celebration of our journey over the past 30 years would be incomplete without a recounting of some of the exploits of this YAM programme which has long been a pillar of CANACOM. The YAM work camp has created for itself an indelible place in the annals of CANACOM.

YAM remains the robust flagship programme for our young people. In this reflection, we seek to provide two distinct, if divergent, perspectives on YAM. One is seen through the eyes of the participants and the other through the eyes of the Secretariat.

The intention is to provide an indication of the elements which have contributed to its survival over so many years. Particular highlights are given to the years 1997, 2003 and 2015 as they represent focal points of the early, middle and current stages of YAM. As we plan toward YAM 2019 this review will be of value to the process.

There have been eight work camps - 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015. The participants of these work camps have benefited from the cultural flavours which have been added by the influence of the

various island hosts. In 1997 the work camp made its home in Cuba. It moved to Canada in 2000 and journeyed to Curacao in 2003. The work camp was located in the spice island of Grenada in 2006. Jamaica was the home of the YAM work camp in 2009. In 2012 the land of steel drums, Trinidad, welcomed new YAMMERS and we returned to Cuba in 2015.

It is not by design that most of the work camps have been experienced in the Caribbean region. With the exception of the 2000 work camp held in Halifax, Canada, each one has been located in the Caribbean region. Experience has dictated that planning to hold work camps in North America would be likely to result in the exclusion of many young Caribbean nationals who would be available to attend. The obtaining of visitors' visas to Canada and the United States of America continues to be challenging and participation in the activities is not possible without the appropriate visas. A default tradition of YAM work camps being held in the Caribbean has therefore began to evolve. However, in the spirit of continuing to promote the mutuality of mission which is espoused by CANACOM, this limitation of movement will need to be explored among ecumenical partners and appropriate officials in a more robust manner.

The letters below are quoted in full and in Spanish and English in order to help readers to enter into the spirit of the time. They were written during a period when CANACOM's desire was to provide participants with the opportunity to live within a context which would have stretched their understanding of the breadth of mission that was available to Member Churches. In the 1997 letter of invitation, the impact of the blockade in Cuba was raised as part of the context of that country. In July of 2015, there were still discussions regarding the US/Cuba relations some of which were seen on Cuban television. At the YAM camp 2015, comparisons were therefore made between the two periods to further enhance an understanding of present day Cuba and the role of the church:

Ciudad de La Habana, 6 de junio de 1997.

QUERIDOSO/AS JÓVENES QUE PARTICIPÁN EN EL II CAMPAMENTO DE TRABAJO DE CANACOM:

“Que Dios nuestro Padre y el Señor Jesucristo, derramen su gracia y su paz sobre ustedes”
(Efes. 1:2).

¡Bienvenidos/as a nuestra patria y particularmente a nuestra iglesia! Es un alto honor para la Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba ser anfitriona del **II Campamento de trabajo para jóvenes en misión**, el cual se efectuará en el CEPREL (Centro Presbiteriano de Luyanó) y el CANIP (Centro de Actividades de la Iglesia Presbiteriana), del 28 de junio al 19 de julio de 1997.

Es importante reconocer la importancia de la temática de este campamento. El tema de la **mayordomía** es de vital importancia para la vida y misión de la iglesia y para los cristianos. A través del mismo definimos la importancia de dedicar nuestro tiempo, nuestras ofrendas y nuestros talentos o dones a Dios y a nuestros prójimos.

Por otro lado, la oportunidad de conocer y relacionarnos con jóvenes de diversas latitudes y confesiones, imprimirá al evento una riqueza de incalculables proporciones. Estudiar, jugar, compartir, trabajar, cantar juntos será una experiencia inolvidable.

Nos satisface que ustedes visiten nuestro país en estos momentos. Estamos viviendo una época de crisis y de limitaciones, pero a la vez de retos y oportunidades, lo que se define en el griego de Nuevo Testamento como un '*kairós*'. Es un tiempo de creatividad por parte del pueblo y de oportunidades para la Iglesia. Ustedes serán testigos de esta realidad.

Les invitamos a vivir intensamente estas tres semanas en nuestro país. Será, sin lugar a dudas, una experiencia única. El contacto con una cultura hispana (¡la IPRC es la única iglesia miembro de CANACOM que pertenece a esta cultura!), con un sistema socialista y bloqueado, darán a este II campamento un toque distintivo.

Queremos invitarles también para que, al regresar a sus respectivos países, cuenten todo lo que han "visto y oído" y así continuar con una red de interrelación los unos con los otros.

Que el Señor les bendiga y muchos éxitos en el campamento.

Sin más, queda de ustedes en Jesucristo,

Pbro. Carlos Emilio Ham Stanard
Secretario General del Sínodo Nacional de la IPRC.

City of Havana, June 6, 1997.

DEAR FRIENDS WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE SECOND CANACOM WORKCAMP

"Grace be to you and peace, from God Our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. 1:2)

Welcome to our home and particularly to our Church! It is a great honour for the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba to be host to the second Youth in Mission Work Camp, which will take place in CEPREL (the Presbyterian Centre in Luyanó) and CANIP (Activities Centre of the Presbyterian Church) from June 28 to July 19, 1997.

It is important to recognize the importance of the theme of this camp. The theme of **stewardship** is of vital importance to the life and mission of the church and to Christians. Throughout the camp we will define the importance of dedicating our time, our gifts and talents to God and our fellow men.

On the other hand, the opportunity of meeting and relating to young people of different areas and confessions will impress upon the event a richness of immeasurable proportions. To study, play, share, work and sing together will be an unforgettable experience.

It is an honor that you will visit our country in these times. We are living in an age of crisis and limitations, but at the same time, of challenges and opportunities which in the Greek New testament is defined as “*kairos*.” It is a time of creativity for part of our nation and of opportunities for the church. You will be witnesses to this reality.

We invite you all to live intensively these three weeks in our country. It will be, without doubt, a unique experience. The contact with a Spanish culture (the IPRC is the only CANACOM member church which belongs to this culture!), with a socialist system and a blockade, will give this second camp a distinctive touch.

We also want to invite you, upon returning to your respective countries, to tell all that you have “seen and heard”, so that we may maintain a network of interrelation with each other. May the lord bless us and grant us much success for the camp.

Without further ado, remain in Jesus Christ.

Rev. Carlos Emilio Ham Stanard
General Secretary of the National Synod of the IPRC

The Nature and Objectives of the Work Camp

The Youth in Mission work camp seeks to provide an opportunity for Christian young adults within the CANACOM regions to relate as an intercultural and inter-racial group, reflect on faith, mission and issues relevant to the region, and engage with a local community in a manual work project. *Excerpt from CANACOM YIM Workcamp 1997, Update November 1996.*

The work camp is undergirded by the belief that partnership in mission is most effectively learnt by doing it, that is, by engagement, in a process of common mission action and reflection.

From 1994 to 1997

The YIM work camp in Cuba is the second camp to be organized within the CANACOM context. In 1994 the first work camp took place in Guyana at the invitation of the three Member Churches there. This camp was a joint

venture with the Council for World Mission (CWM), which was facilitating YIM work camps in each of the six regions.

Important at the Guyana work camp was the presence of participants from each of the other CWM regions, namely, Africa, Europe, East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific, which gave the camp a global dimension.

For the 1997 Camp, the CWM Caribbean Region has nominated a representative on the planning group. Also, it is anticipated that the wider CWM partnership will be a main sponsor of the camp and be represented through a number of regional participants. *Excerpt from Youth in Mission Work camp 1997- Update June 1996.*

Celebrating Wendy and Peter Quinland

Prepared by Rev. Nicole Ashwood

YAM 1997

Under the theme “*Take Care, Take Risk, Take Up...*” 40 participants from 16 countries will live, study, work and worship together for three weeks (28 June -19 July, 1997) in Cuba. They will get to know one another as people from different contexts, cultures and races...and through it all they will seek to develop their understanding of mission and how as partners with God and one another they can give shape to it in our time.

Excerpt from CANACOM letter to Ministers of CANACOM Member Churches, May 29, 1997.

It is not possible to think of Wendy and Peter without being happy that CANACOM’s programmes invariably bring people together and that sometimes out of these meetings, romance and marriage result. This cameo pays tribute to their lives and mission.

1997 was a turning point in the lives of Wendy and Peter when they met at the YAM camp in Cuba. The young man from Cayman and the young woman from Trinidad and Tobago were about to embark upon the journey of a lifetime.

Their union was solemnized in holy matrimony on August 18, 2001 after which they set about establishing their family. Over time their number expanded from two to four with the addition of Kiyanna and Jayadon.

This is the backdrop against which this Christian couple shared in Christ’s ministry through CANACOM and their churches. The YAM camp had provided an exposure to ministry and mission which influenced their approach to mission. They dedicated their time, talents and resources completely to the Lord. While being committed to their own church they participated in activities of a fellowship of churches. They demonstrated the valuable talent of combining their skills to the glory of God. Wendy was a trained Commissioned Worker of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago. She was ebullient and colourful while Peter, the Cable and Wireless Computer Technician from the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands was the quiet one. Together they formed a

strong team for their whole lives together with the words of John Wesley being their hallmark:

“Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”



Peter Quinland receiving CANACOM's tribute to the late Wendy Quinland, at CNL16 from Rev. Carlington Keen

YAM 2003, Curacao - contributed by Terry Tan ***What about Divi-Divi? Or to that Effect, Missions?***

I travelled a total of 48 flight hours (excluding eight transit hours!). It was a gruelling ordeal as I was alone throughout much of the flight. Being the only Chinese/Asian guy on the plane was also unnerving. Everything was foreign - the language, the culture, the people.

After landing at the destination, I was greeted by unfamiliar faces from 13 other nationalities - people whom I would live and work with for the next three weeks. We were kept on our toes throughout the mission trip. I did manual labour under the scorching sun for 5 days. Mei Hsien and I were unbearably separated for almost a month... I flew off just after our 2-month honeymoon. I struggled!

Overall, if someone were to ask me, “Was it worth it?” I’ll probably still reply with a resounding “YES!” What did I do? Where did I go? YAM 2003!

What YAM 2003 was all about?

The Young Adults in Mission (YAM) work camp 2003 was held in Curaçao, an island of the Netherland Antilles, from the 12th July till 2nd August, 2003. It was a three-week programme with about 40 participants representing 13 different countries. The delegates represented in 2003 were from Curaçao, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Dominican Republic, Guyana, India, Zambia, Netherlands, Malaysia,

U.S.A. and Canada. Only delegates from Cuba were absent from the Caribbean representation due to difficulties in their travel arrangements.

YAM work camps are opportunities to learn partnership in mission through working, living and studying together while reflecting on God's mission in the context of the local host church - Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curaçao (United Protestant Church of Curaçao) (VPGC). YAM work-camps mix academic reflection as well as manual work. While in Curaçao, participants engaged in Bible study, serving the local community through work projects, exploring issues facing young adults and discovering ways to build community within an international group. Held once every three years, YAM work camps are organized by the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM).

Our Host Church

The VPGC is comprised of three congregations - Fortkerk, Emmakerk and Ebenezer Church. The latter is the only congregation which conducts services primarily in English. Others use mainly Dutch language in their liturgy besides using Papiamentu occasionally. This reflects the multi-lingual society of Curaçaoans with the majority being able to speak four different languages fluently! The local language is Papiamentu followed by Dutch, English and Spanish.

Besides the usual Sunday Services, YAM 2003 campers also participated actively in many other VPGC functions in all the 3 churches. We were given the opportunity to perform our theme song in every event. Interestingly, the camp received much publicity not only in the Christian community but also in the whole island. We were featured quite regularly in the local news media, which even included a live television interview with selected campers! From a camper's viewpoint, YAM 2003 brought much excitement, enthusiasm and encouragement to the local Christian community.

What is Divi-Divi?

The theme for YAM 2003 was "DIVI-DIVI: Going Where God Leads." The divi-divi tree (*Caesalpinia coriaria*) grows pods which contain large amounts of tannin. Until the 1950s, tannin was exported to Holland, for usage in tanneries (which converted animal hides into leather). It's an endemic bush in the ABC Islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao), and you'll see images of it on tourist T-shirts, mugs, hats, and on several place-names around the island. The divi-divi, usually not more than twelve feet tall, is permanently bent, at nearly a right angle, with its Medusa-like branches seemingly swept back by the wind. All divi-divi trees point to the west, in the direction of the trade winds that come from the northeast.

The Divi-Divi tree had been chosen as the symbol for YAM Work Camp 2003 on Curaçao. The tree once grew plentifully across the island.

Its unique shape is caused by the trade winds that blow constantly from the same direction. Wherever you happen to be, this tree will indicate the direction. The Spirit of God blows where God wills (John 3:8), but directs us and inspires us and offers vision and then integrates the journey. The theme "Going where God leads" was inspired both by scripture and the symbol, the Divi-Divi tree. Thus the objective of the work camp was to challenge the campers to live our lives like the Divi-Divi tree - to be sensitive to God's Spirit, to respond by going where He leads and to ultimately do His will.

What did we do?

The programme was divided into three movements, each lasting for a week. The first week involved the process of discerning God's will. Campers were given classroom Bible studies, introductions to the theme and mission perspectives, Curacao cultural context and community building activities during the daytime. Evening activities throughout the camp were devoted to personal identity sharing, after which individuals would meet in small base groups for accountability and prayer.

The second week was solely dedicated to the two manual work projects which were agreed prior to our arrival. Campers were divided into two teams; the first team was to spring clean and do cosmetic upgrading to the Obed Anthony Hall, a multi-purpose hall of the Ebenezer Church and the second, to repaint 13 units of Kas Chal Corsen - a home for the elderly in the city.

The final week involved personal and group reflection of the programme. Campers were also exposed to various social action issues such as drug abuse, HIV/AIDS ministry, poverty alleviation, environmental and gender issues.

What did I Think?

The campers were kept busy with a hectic schedule - from devotions in the cool of the morning, right up to base group discussions in the breezy night. Different base groups were assigned to time-keeping by ringing a communal bell located at the center of Emaus. I had too many "ding-dongs" to alarm me out of my slumber!

Upon reflecting deeply on the experience, the crucial point which stands out for me is the fact that the programme was packed with sessions on social action.

However, the one activity with which we had very minimal contact with was the issue of evangelism.

Interestingly enough, I've discovered that this topic isn't very much considered as a top priority by the majority, even though it would seem biblically probable that it is where the Spirit of God would be "blowing"...

It was then I discovered that many campers, besides our heavy luggage to Curaçao, had brought along our theological and ministerial perspectives from our varied cultural contexts as well. Some campers had little or no exposure to evangelistic efforts in their homelands. I represented the few who gave significant emphasis to evangelism in the camp. To me, Scripture explicitly emphasizes God's plan to redeem humankind through Jesus Christ; it is clear from cover to cover of the Bible. Our God is a *missionary* God.

Christians currently make up about only 10% of the Malaysian population. What if, somehow the statistics were reversed and there were 90% Christians in the nation? Would we still have to speak of evangelism and missions then? Personally, I'd still be passionate about reaching the remaining minority for Christ because of what Scripture teaches me.

How About You?

YAM 2015 Work Camp

It is quite fitting that this reflection on YAM should take us to 2015, the cusp of CANACOM's 30th anniversary in 2016. In many ways this work camp has retained the elements of the original YAM and the projects chosen were ones that once again captured the hearts and minds of the participants. By observations, comparison of the records and a review of the evaluation forms in 2015, the young people were just as buoyed and blessed by the physical work as were those of earlier years. There were also expressions of the sense of spiritual challenges which were experienced by some.

Focus, Theme and Programme

The specific focus was about migration as a globally understood human situation. We focused on our faith in the presence of God, wherever we may find ourselves. Drawing from biblical and contemporary examples of migration, God being present in all situations was reinforced.

The theme of the Work camp was "Dios Esta Siempre en Linea", "God is Always on Line". Thus, the camp sought to remind participants of our call to be unified in purpose in spreading the good news of salvation. It also reinforced the message that on whatever route we find ourselves, God is always available to us.

Matanzas Seminary

The beautiful trees and amazing scenery at the Seminario Evangélico de Teologica (SET) aided the devotions and our personal time talking with God. The journey of the young adults was filled with laughter, friendship, support and love which bound us together despite our different cultural backgrounds.

The base groups provided times of reflection, in which we shared what we felt and what effect our work had in the lives of God's children. We were all reminded that as Christians we are called to be a light in the darkness of the world and to spread the great news that "Dios es Amor." Special thanks are extended to **Miss Sanya Beharry** who processed the evaluation forms.



Lessons Learnt

The **first** and major lesson from the YAM camp was the joy which is inherent in CANACOM's model of Young Adults in Mission. The model calls our young adults into a space for joyful service and positive use of their God given strength (1 John 2:14): "Young men (people) I call upon you because you are strong."

The photographs above provide a snapshot of our concentrated activities. We hope that this passion will be shared by the young people in their own contexts.

The **second** lesson is that the EIM-S has been challenged by the camp to encourage Member Churches to draw upon the joy and passion of their young people in building up of Christ's kingdom by answering their vocational call to mission, should one be sensed.

The **third** lesson is that Member Churches should encourage members to move toward the call of Acts 1:8 which speaks of Home and Overseas Mission. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is

come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth”.

The grid below shows the year, host churches and countries of Young Adults in Mission Work camps.

Table 2: Young Adults in Mission (YAM) Work Camps

YEAR	HOST CHURCH	COUNTRY
1994	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)	Guyana
1997	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)	Cuba
2000	United Church of Canada (UCC) and Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)	Canada
2003	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)	Curacao
2006	Presbyterian Church in Grenada	Grenada
2009	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)	Jamaica
2012	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT) and Church of Scotland in Trinidad (COST)	Trinidad and Tobago
2015	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)	Cuba

The Joint Mission in Action Team (JOMAT)

JOMAT came into being in the year 1996. It involves a group of three to five persons from different Member Churches who live, work and witness together for a period of one to three years hosted by a CANACOM Member Church. They share in a mission frontier project of that church and learn partnership in mission by doing it. As far as possible the group is intentionally designed to be intercultural and interracial. The nature of the group creates the environment in which the vision of partnership in mission can be lived out.

AIM of JOMAT

The explicit aim of the programme is to witness together as an intercultural group, to cross mission frontiers and to share with and learn from the host church and each other.

Missiological Context

Underlying the vision of a Joint Mission Action Team are some basic convictions about the nature of mission in the contemporary world. These are:

1. Mission is first and foremost God's mission, in which we participate in response to Christ's saving presence in our lives.
2. Our mission begins at home, as mission is the *raison d'être* of the church in each location, the responsibility and privilege of all Christians in the place where they find themselves.
3. The "foreigner" is an important element in mission. Her/his different insights, interpretation and approach can add a crucial dimension to our ministry.
4. People from different cultures not only complement but also add to one another.
5. Working together as an intercultural team is not only making a statement and getting tasks done, but is also a way of "learning" to work together.

General Objectives of JOMAT

1. To engage as a Partnership in common mission action, thereby demonstrating the vision of partnership in mission.
2. To assist a CANACOM member or observer church in developing a new or strengthening an existing mission outreach project.
3. To enhance multilateral relations between the churches involved in the programme as well as others in the Partnership.
4. To enrich the host church with the gifts, professional skills, faith perspectives and cultural traditions which the team members bring.
5. To enable the team members to enrich one another, to rediscover their own faith and traditions through each other's eyes, and to learn partnership in mission by doing it.
6. To enable the team to develop, within an overall framework of set goals and methodologies, their own approaches to the tasks placed before them.

The Team as Missionaries

The JOMAT programme is devised as a new way of multi-directional partnership. Thus the primary emphasis in the programme is on the contribution which the team will make to the mission of the host church, even though it is anticipated that team and host church will mutually learn from and enrich each other in the process.

Besides understanding of an affinity with the partnership vision and the CANACOM praxis therefore, professional skills and qualifications of the team members are crucial elements in the JOMAT enterprise.

So unless otherwise decided, the JOMAT team members will be recruited by their church as mission personnel who will, for a specific period of time, work with a partner church.



JOMAT 1996: *visions becoming reality*

Left to right Roshanna Gillis, Kelly Brautigam, Fitz Gerald Laing and Tony Julien

Westminster PC is already involved in mission in a variety of ways. However, in 1994 it was felt that a) the church needed to reflect more on its mission at home, and b) in particular its mission with people in crisis needed more attention. Also the mission committee at that time felt it would be helpful if mission partners from other countries would share in these areas of work.

JOMAT 1996 was designed for the group to partner with the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Columbia USA. The steps which led to the realization of this Joint Action in Mission Team (JOMAT) programme are retraced in the CANACOM Progress Report 95-96 Mid-Term retreat and evaluation, January 6-15, 1996, from which quotations appear in the boxes below:

Westminster PC is already involved in mission in a variety of ways. However, in 1994 it was felt that a) the church needed to reflect more on its mission at home, and b) in particular its mission with people in crisis needed more attention. Also the mission committee at that time felt it would be helpful if mission partners from other countries would share in these areas of work.

...the focus of the JOMAT programme is the mission of the Westminster Presbyterian Church. The primary focus is not on the Team, their work with the ministries or the relationships which they develop (though these are important), but the question of how Westminster is involved in mission and how the Team can enhance that mission. In other words, the Team has no mission apart from Westminster's mission.

For this reason the PC(USA), on behalf of Westminster Presbyterian Church applied for a CANACOM JOMAT Team to come and share for a year in WPC's...ministry with people in crisis. The aim and objectives...were determined by Westminster and CANCOM staff together.

The final section provides brief comments which point to the impact of JOMAT on the four participants and the CANACOM office:

"While at the orthodontist office, the assistants asked why am I in South Carolina, and when I explained the aim of CANACOM the assistants exclaimed: "COOL!" indeed, "COOL" and an honor it is to be serving as the North American on the CANACOM team." (Kelly Brautigam)

"I consider myself as being called to this mission sharing of one's time, talent and ability. Demonstrating his love was Christ's call to his followers. I feel privileged to be called to this mission." (Roshanna Gillis)

"I see myself being born into a new family and have been able to share my expectations, my fear, and other thoughts of JOMAT, Westminster and mission. I accept it as proof of God's plan for my life." (Fitz Gerald Laing)

“To serve, to learn, to grow, to share, to care, to just be there. For the Lord, for others, for love. I did not find mission, mission found me.” (Tony Julien)

“When I think back to the Grenada meeting and now see Tony, Rosie, Kelly and Fitz, live out the vision that was being shaped there I am just filled with amazement. Sometimes it really doesn’t take long for visions to become reality” (Jet den Hollander, CANACOM)

The table below shows the year, host churches and countries of Joint Mission in Action Teams:

Table 3: Joint Mission in Action Team

YEAR	HOST CHURCH	COUNTRY
1996	Presbyterian Church (USA)	United States of America
2002	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)	Jamaica
2005	United Church of Canada (UCC) and Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)	Canada
2010	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) and Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)	Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago

A Ripple effect of JOMAT

The late Rev. Fitz Gerald Laing was a participant in JOMAT 1996. His dedicated involvement in the life and work of CANACOM was influenced by this life changing experience. He was fully convinced that mission engagements however brief, should be widely encouraged.

Mrs. Janet McConnell, photographed below, shares in this account the impact that Rev. Laing’s experience had on a group of Young Adults of which she was a part.



Mrs. Janet McConnell,
Grenada Mission Trip, July 2004

In 2003 the late Rev. Fitzgerald Laing, as he led the Andrews Memorial United Church, had the vision to build and nurture a strong Young Adult Action Movement in that congregation. He wanted to foster among the young adults, grounding in the Word, passion for mission and commitment to full involvement in the life of the Church.

Rev. Laing was deeply mission oriented. He was involved in the work of the **Caribbean and North American Council for Mission (CANACOM)** and JOMAT, and he sought to infuse the young adults with this same passion for mission, and to stir up within us an innate desire to dedicate time to God's work.

As a part of his strategy, Rev. Laing invited his newly formed United Church Young Adult Action Movement (UCYAAM) to accompany him to Grenada where he was to assist the Presbyterian Church there in their efforts to re-energize the Church.

Though the majority of the group members had never ventured into a foreign place to do ministry, we were inspired by the possibilities of this exposure and begun the arduous task of planning. In his wisdom Rev. Laing invited UCYAAM members and friends from the Farm Heights United Church to join us. Some of these visiting friends possessed musical skills. We later added to the delegation Kevin Calvert who was serving as Youth Minister for the then South Middlesex Area Council, Delroy Johnson who was at that time a ministerial student and Warren Griffiths who was a friend of Kevin and member of the Newleigh Road Church of God Choir. As the ministry and mission unfolded before us, we came to realize that each member of the delegation was perfectly positioned with a unique gift for the mission.

The planning was exciting as we sought to find airfare, coordinate travel arrangements, and hosted sessions to get to know each other and design the programme. It was an ecstatic time!

On the eve of our departure, Rev. Laing fell ill and could no longer lead us to Grenada. Nevertheless, he encouraged us, assigned us team leaders and gave us his blessings to go to Grenada in support of the Rev. Osbert James. The delegation journeyed to Grenada in July of 2014 and spent one glorious week performing a variety of tasks:

- visiting members in their homes
- conducting vacation bible school in two parishes,
- holding street evangelistic meetings with "road side drama",
- organizing a church social with concert
- leading worship services.

The Church in Grenada came alive and a Young Adult Action Movement was given birth there. From a personal perspective, this mission

was a significant moment in my spiritual formation and my journey to responding to the call to full-time ministry within the United Church. Though I celebrate this, there is a greater celebration, which is that almost every member of the delegation is today fully engaged in the life and ministry of the Church, demonstrating leadership, grounding in the Word and commitment to the work of the Church.

This mission exposure was truly a divine experience of a lifetime, an experience which converted us from being just members into servants.

Where are we now?

Delroy Johnson is now an ordained minister, Kevin Calvert is preparing for ordination. From the Andrews congregation, Deanette and Robert Edwards have served as elders as well as in many other ministries; Sophia and Horace Lawrence have served as elders. Horace now leads the praise and worship ministry; Brenda McNish is a member of the choir, the Feed My Lamb and the fellowship ministries; Joan Blackwood-Simpson is currently the National Chairperson for the United Church Children's Ministry Committee, and she has served at both the congregational and Regional Levels in children's ministry. Dionne Plummer migrated to the USA. Ingrid Rowe-Mair, who had been the chief communicator for the delegation passed away in February 2016. Prior to her passing she also served the Church as an elder, youth ministry advisor and member of the choir. At Ingrid's funeral, almost all members, including those from Montego Bay presented a tribute to her life. To this day the delegation remains a tightly knit group.

Though this mission trip was not initiated by CANACOM, it was certainly influenced by the work of CANACOM through Rev. Laing. The mission was endorsed by CANACOM and was a fitting tribute to the late Rev. Fitz Laing, who having come under the impact of its work, spared no effort to ensure that a passion for evangelism and mission was embraced and practised by as many persons as he was able to inspire.

[P.S.: Rev. Dr. Osbert James and Mrs. Janet McConnell have started talking about the possibility of Mission Grenada 2017. We look forward to a fruitful outcome.] *Jennifer P. Martin*

Fitz Gerald Laing Sharing of People (FGLSOP)

Originally known as the Sharing of People Programme, it was renamed in honour of the late Rev. Fitz Gerald Laing Sharing of People Programme. Rev. Laing of the UCJCI, was a member of the first JOMAT (1996) and Deputy Treasurer of CANACOM (2003).

This scheme facilitates a mutual sharing of people and is practised as a means of gaining new understanding, learning new ways of relating and developing new biblical mission identities. This mutuality ensures that churches both send and receive people. There is an increasing awareness that we need other people, different perspectives and other traditions to shape our understanding of our calling. That we are all in-process and need one another is emphatically demonstrated in a visible way-through this programme. *Extract from the CANACOM Brochure, An Exciting Journey in Mission Relationships, CANACOM Programmes*

From its onset CANACOM has been committed to the provision of short-term mission appointments. Over time, a number of persons have served in Grenada. The Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) consists of three congregations. In 1992 the PCG became a member of CANACOM. Since then the church has hosted CANACOM Council meeting in 1993,...commissioned a missionary, Tony Julien to JOMAT 1995-96 and has been instrumental in the development of the CANACOM “Guidelines for Sharing of People in CANACOM” as the church was the first to request a missionary through the new personnel training system.

Three vignettes shared below provide insight on the ways in which some of the missionaries have served:

The first CANACOM assisted missionary

Rev. Sahadat, accompanied by his wife Lynda Parks Sahadat, were commissioned by the United Church in Canada for an initial period of three years. This was the first CANACOM missionary appointment.

An excerpt from the report submitted by the Rt. Rev. Joseph Sahadat, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Grenada to the Annual Council meeting of the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission of April 26-May 2, 1997, reads in part:

“The first seven ½ months of this ministry have been very busy and challenging. I have preached Ten Broadcast services including the Thanksgiving Day service in 1996. I have attended fundraising and social activities in each pastoral charge. St. Andrew’s Kirk hosted the YWCA ecumenical service in November. The Belair Presbyterian Church honoured senior citizens in October and spent a day of wonderful fellowship at Bathbay Beach.

The activities continued with a five day orientation with Ms. Jet den Hollander of CANACOM and a workshop facilitated by her, were held by her at Knox House. As manager of MacDonald College I attended four meetings of the advisory board and visited the college, students, teachers, and agricultural lands on several occasions. The first annual founder's day celebrations were held at MacDonald College on 17 January 1997. Members of Dr. J.C. MacDonald's family travelled to Grenada and visited the college on 21 January 1997. The principals at MacDonald College and Samaritan Primary schools met with me for an orientation session regarding their schools, the education system in Grenada and their concerns".

This sketch provides a flavour of the dizzy schedule which is still part of the life of the sole Minister in Grenada today. Rev. Gilbert McKenzie spent a month with Rev. Dr. Osbert James working in the Grenada churches at the start of 2016. His schedule is also very busy and CANACOM thanks him for his service in the context and looks forward to his ongoing association with the Presbyterian Church in Grenada.

In 2001 CANACOMNEWS, the official newsletter of CANACOM, published an interview with the then missionaries **Rev. John and Mrs. Gladys Bushby** of the United Church in Canada. "He is serving as the Presbyterian Church in Canada missionary partner in the Presbyterian Church in Grenada, facilitated by the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM). John is accompanied by his wife Gladys."

When asked by Rev. Verna Cassells, what the joys of being in ministry were for him, Rev. John Bushby in his response stated:

"Yes, I can talk about that. Those joys present themselves in surprising ways. I think it has happened here in the people we meet. Those you'd never expect would be supportive and we are able to pray with and learn from them. ***I relish that, I love it! I love what has happened here in all three churches.*** The administration of all these things has similarities no matter where you are - in Canada or here. But ***the joys come with the people who really have a grasp of the gospel*** - people who feel that that is what we are really all about and need to attend to. It's present in all three churches and that is a real joy for me..."

Extracts from the report of Interim Minister and Chaplain in Grenada, Rev. Nicole Ashwood, March - May 2012.

The Grenada Presbyterian Church extended an invitation to the EIM Secretary of CANACOM to serve as chaplain to MacDonald College, perform a capacity audit and provide pulpit supply to the Belair congregation.

CANACOM was very pleased to support this request and much success was experienced within the context:

Preaching and Bible Studies at the Belair Congregation were conducted on a weekly basis and were guided by the Revised Common Lectionary.

Chaplaincy at the MacDonald College was both challenging and rewarding.

Mrs. Carole Rowe, a Human Resources Consultant from Jamaica, facilitated Training and Analysis for a **Capacity Audit** of the leadership of the MacDonald College and established a mentorship programme.

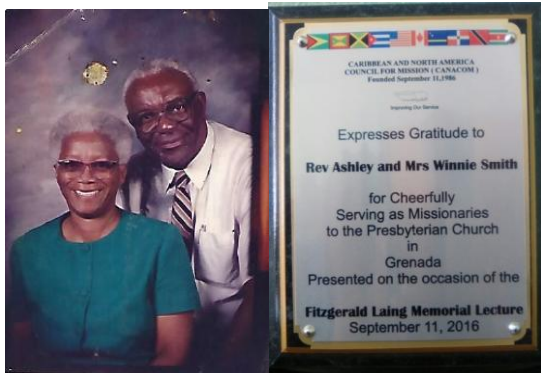
Sanya Beharry provided further scope for **leadership development and empowerment** through training for members of the Belair congregation.

Missionaries in Grenada (1998 - 1999)

The Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG) consists of three local congregations. In 1992 the PCG became a Member of CANACOM. Since then the church has hosted three Council meetings, has invited CANACOM staff to share in mission workshops and the lay training programme, and commissioned a missionary, Tony Julien, for CANACOM's first Joint Mission Action Team, 1995-1996, in Columbia, USA.

PCG has also been instrumental in the development in the "Guidelines for Sharing of People in CANACOM" as the church was the first to request a missionary through the new personnel training system. In 1997, the PCG sent the late Carole Narine and Sasha Narayan to the YIM Work camp in Cuba. In 2000 they sent Jessie Ganpot and Paulette Boulan to the YAM work camp in Canada.

As part of a reflection on missionary service to Grenada, Rev. Verna Cassells conducted an interview with Rev. Ashley Smith on July 27, 2016. Regrettably Mrs. Winnie Smith was not able to participate due to ill health.



Rev. Smith is a minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Throughout an illustrious career, he served in many capacities in Jamaica and abroad. He was Moderator of the United Church and President of the United Theological College. Until very recently he was still associated with the University of the West Indies, Mona, as a supervisor of Graduate Students.

At an earlier stage of their retirement the Presbyterian Church in Grenada facilitated by the Caribbean and North America Council for Mission (CANACOM), were privileged to have Rev. and Mrs. Smith as missionaries in their context.

Rev. Verna Cassells who was the Education in Mission Secretary for a portion of the Smith's tenure in Grenada, assisted by Ms. Leslene Laing, (Admin. Assistant) was delighted to spend some time reflecting with Rev. Smith.

He was happy to engage in good conversation and very pleased to offer some thoughts for publication of this volume.

The Interview:

VC: It has been a little while, I remember when I came to CANACOM that you were both in Grenada.

AS: Yes, we went there in '98 and came back in August '99. I went one month ahead of Mrs. Smith when they were completing the addition to the house.

VC: were you retired then?

AS: Yes, we both were.

VC: What was it like settling into a new context? Of course, it wasn't the first time that you had moved.

AS: But I was the first Afro-Caribbean person to be inducted into the ministry of that Church.

VC: So who was the person immediately before you?

AS: There were East Indians but no Afro-Caribbean persons.

VC: What helped you to settle into this new context?

AS: I was quite experienced in the business of ministering to persons of other cultures and nationalities following on our assignments in America and Ireland. The people in Grenada were receptive and I had had the experience of ministering to other nationals; I could anticipate certain things.

VC: What were some of your expectations?

AS: The people getting accustomed to dealing with an Afro-Caribbean person. They had dealt with white persons from overseas and Indian persons from Guyana and Trinidad but they hadn't dealt with Afro-Caribbean persons at the leadership level. I was the first. Most of the members of the congregation were half-Indians, and those who weren't half-Indians were a cross between Indian and Caucasian. I knew beforehand that I had to be ready to communicate with the people by listening to them. Even if they were critical of somebody like me I would listen to them because I had become used to that, ministering to a white American congregation.

I remember the white American gentleman, who, after being in his house for a few hours he said to me "Mr. Smith, what do most of the people in Jamaica look like" so I said, "They look like me" and he said "where did I get it from that most Jamaicans were negroes?" I said "But you are right, we are negroes" he said "but you are not a negro sir," and I said "I am you know" but he couldn't believe it because I wasn't hostile to him and I wasn't afraid of him as was the custom in America.

AS: I know that in explaining the presence of a black man to his neighbors he would have said I was a minister of the Church of Scotland...

VC: You were accepted!

AS: Yes. It was very interesting.

VC: You are a Global Citizen able to fit in anywhere.

AS: Before that we had gone to Ireland you know, for three months.

VC: Where in Ireland was that?

AS: I was with a Church in Northern Ireland but I had visited the Republic of Ireland too. I had a car, we stopped with an Irish family and of course the man heard that I was black, so he assumed for example, he didn't know that we were accustomed to modern plumbing. On seeing our comfort with the facilities he grew very shy with us. He felt ashamed seemingly having shared his negative assumptions with persons who would also have been at the general assembly.

VC: What was your assignment in Grenada?

AS: They had had a Guyanese Minister there who had moved on to another assignment. That led them to "experiment" with persons other than the Guyanese and the Trinidadians. We were retired and available to serve. Our availability for only a short period of time was a significant factor. Funnily by the end of the period the people got used to us and didn't want us to leave.

VC: How many congregations did you serve in Grenada?

Ashley: Three: St. Andrew's Kirk, Belair and Samaritan

VC: What did this work involve? You were Moderator?

AS: I performed full ministerial duties. Yes and no, I served as Moderator because their work is organized under a Synod. There being only one Minister, the incumbent works as Moderator. I was also Chairman of the Board of the school at Belair.

VC: What was the difference between these three congregations? What was the uniqueness of each?

AS: The one at Belair, was a good mixture of Indian and African. And I use African rather than Negro. The one at Samaritan was mostly Indian. The whole culture was Indian. The one in St. George's was a mixture of upper middle class, Anglo African people. Mostly indo-African, they were half Indian/Half Caucasian. They were entitled to have a minister who was from either Canada or Scotland. When they didn't get a minister from Canada or Scotland, they settled for an interim one from Guyana or Trinidad.

VC: Were you involved in any ecumenical activities?

AS: O yes! I still am. One of the devotional books we used up to this morning is Methodist. The Methodists invited me to be their Retreat Leader in Grenada. More occasions than one, the Roman Catholic Bishop and the Anglican Priest and I met. I don't remember our having any meetings with the Pentecostals but I remember we had a relationship. Our ecumenical meetings were held in the Presbyterian Church Hall.

VC: Did you encounter any challenges in Grenada?

AS: Well, coming from a church that was established as a national church, the United Church, it was a little challenging getting used to a church where the people looked like my people but in matters of autonomy reference had to be made outside of Grenada. The people were accustomed to their church being outposts of both the Church of Scotland and the United Church of Canada.

During our time in Grenada, we noticed that race relations between the Caribbean and North America were still being developed towards equality. We had noted a similar phenomenon in Jamaica, of congregations becoming accustomed to Afro-Caribbean Ministers. Working in the Jamaican church over many years taught us a lot about race relations. After its long history of slavery and colonialism, not even independence was able to erase negative responses to people with dark complexions. We had also known that the church in Grenada had not historically paid for the upkeep of its minister. We therefore arrived with very open minds and hearts.

CANACOM believes that the work of the Lord can be performed by members of any ethnic group. The programmes and placement of Missionaries through the Sharing of People has further contributed to people learning to work respectfully together.

You young people wouldn't understand what we have come through you know, to have...

VC: Yes. It's a wonderful time to be alive!

AS: Yes!

VC: After your year in Grenada, what were some of the relationships that you established there?

AS: I thought they were very good. Friends from Grenada still keep writing and sending greetings to us. What is interesting is I hear most from an Indian lady at Samaritan. Our most frequent correspondent is a fine lady

who came originally from St. Vincent. She's Presbyterian but her husband was Methodist.

As I said, the real problem for them was not the colour of the Minister but whether they had to pay the minister. It's the same thing in Jamaica.

VC: I recall when I was EIM hearing from one who had achieved much but was unwilling to give proportionally of her time, talent and resources. She came to mind when we were talking about the unwillingness of members to actively contribute to the growth and development of the church. Some members are quick to say that tithing, witnessing and sharing belong to the Pentecostals and the Adventists. That is a great pity. What was your vision for the Presbyterian Church?

AS: That they would find at least one candidate for the ministry and send him or her out to be trained and return home even for a short time. That person would go elsewhere and then another Caribbean national would come to Grenada. The people would then begin to give for the maintenance of their own ministry rather than being so dependent upon Scotland and Canada. It worried me that people so middle class were so dependent on other people elsewhere.

It has been years since that church was damaged by the hurricane and they haven't yet succeeded in rebuilding despite attempts at fundraising. Will it ever be rebuilt?

VC: Your vision for Grenada having a local person in the leadership was partly fulfilled with Rev. James.

AS: True. Rev. James may have faced some degree of problems settling in, not only because of his denominational history but as a local person there would be no overseas contribution to support his ministry. I am glad to say that Mrs. Smith and I were accepted and assisted to settle in. One difference between our serving as missionaries in Grenada and Rev. James' being native is that his situation would be more permanent. Unlike other earlier Grenadian Ministers, Rev. James expressed a real zeal to return and settle in his country. People were happy about his enthusiasm.

VC: What were some of the blessings from your experience?

AS: Ministering to a set of Caribbean people other than those in my own country was good for us. Arriving at a point of mutual trust was a real reward.

VC: What would you say is the role of CANACOM in relating to Grenada now?

AS: CANACOM should try to get at least one candidate for the ministry for each congregation. It is almost impossible for one minister to run the three churches in an efficient manner.

VC: We have a Lay Pastors Programme in Jamaica. Do you think that Grenada should explore the benefits of this programme?

AS: With the person beginning as a Lay Pastor? That's fine.

VC: If the person was involved in the context as a Lay Pastor on a short term basis then maybe CANACOM and UTC could collaborate electronically on a Training Programme to enhance the candidates' qualifications. This could lead to a greater sense of empowerment for transformational leadership in, of and among the Grenadian people.

AS: I would like to get some money in order to help to rally the people to intensify their efforts to raise more money to rebuild their church in St. George's. That is my greatest wish.

In closing I will lift up Grenada and CANACOM in prayer.

Empowerment and Project Grants

Empowerment Grants were established to assist in the creation of development programmes within Member Churches which would be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. Such grants have been allocated to several Member Churches over the years to help with financing various mission projects in their contexts. Some programmes are planned to be short-term whereas the objectives of others require a greater level of sustainability.

Section 5 of the Constitution which is set out below describes the commitment to mission and the means by which it would be realized.

Aims

In expression of our partnership in mission we shall:

- Share our understanding of, vision for, and commitment to mission.
- Share people in mission.
- Share financial and material resources for mission.
- In pursuit of these aims, each Member Church is called to share its resources of prayer, people, money, gifts, faith, experience and understanding with all other Member Churches, as labourers together with Christ. This means both giving and receiving.

In the years between 1986 and 1991 much discussion and strategizing took place around the matter of *funding mission*. The table below shows the year, type/purpose of grants and receiving Member Churches:

Table 4: Empowerment and Project Grants

YEAR	TYPE/PURPOSE OF GRANT	MEMBER CHURCH
1991	Drug Rehabilitation Program	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
1991	Preservation of 1800s Records	Presbytery of Guyana (POG)
1991	Library	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU)
1991	Minister to the Aborigines of Canada	Presbyterian Church of Canada (PCC)
1992	Assistance re travel	Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA))
1992	Public Address System, Generator, Electronic Key Board	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU)
1992	Drug Rehabilitation Program	United Church in Jamaica and

		the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
1992	Lay Training	Presbytery of Guyana (POG), Guyana Congregational Union (GCU) and Guyana Presbyterian Church
1993	Equip Women with Saleable Skills	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU)
1993	Programme for Unemployed Women	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
1993	Support for a Minister (Contribution to stipend each year for 2 years plus pension and travel)	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
1994	Amount pledged to Grenada in 1994 was withdrawn because they have been unable to recruit a Minister.	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
1997	16 Channel mixer the United Church's Radio Studio	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
1997	Purchase of Computer Equipment	Presbytery of Guyana (POG), Guyana Congregational Union (GCU) and Guyana Presbyterian Church
1998	Two of three projected workshops	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)
1998	Assist with the purchase of a vehicle	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
2001	Musical lessons for underprivileged children	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
2001	Compact Disc Recorder for the Recording Studio at UCJCI	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
2003	Three day conference on Evangelism to train Ministerial and lay personnel	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
2003	Good Samaritan Hospital Support Project	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
2003	Fixing of the roof of the Ebenezer Church	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
2003	Educational Literature for Christian Education Programme Project	Eglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)
2003	Fixing of damaged churches and homes caused by earthquake	Eglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)
2004	Summer Youth Missionary	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
2005	Outreach to Youth in the Samaritan Community	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)

2005	Literature Production	Eglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)
2005	Restoration of Matanzas Seminary after Hurricane Ivan	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)
2005	Series of Conferences on Evangelism	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
2005	Lay Leadership Training	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)
2008	Train CMMS Students in Computer Skills	Guyana Congregational Union (GCU), Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG) and Guyana Presbyterian Church (GPC)
2008	Improve Youth (8-25 years of age) Training through Multiple Life Skills	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
2008	Team Visit to Haiti	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
2009	Short-term Missionary Training for Youth/Young Adult Leaders	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
2009	To help rescue street children and gang member who do not have a stable home life	Eglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)
2009	Publish Christian Education Materials with Gender Perspective as Central	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)
2010	After School Program for Kids	Church of Scotland in Trinidad
2010	Training Agents as Agents of Peace	Eglesia Evangelica Dominicana (IED)
2010	Formation of Christian Education Resources for Children and Youth with a Gender Focus	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)
2010	Youth Leadership Development Programme	Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG)
2010	Build a Kitchen/Office Facility to support feeding of Needy Children	Presbyterian Church of Guyana (PCOG)
2010	Equally distributed between Board of Youth Affairs (BOYA), Board of Women (BOW), Board of Men (BOM), Board of Social Responsibility (BOSR)	Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago (PCTT)
2010	Save a Child from Sexual Abuse Programme	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)

2011	Outreach Programme to Teach Computer and Music Skills to children as well as offer tutoring	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
2011	Save a Child from Sexual Abuse Programme	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
2012	Conference to Combat Gender Violence	Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao (VPGC)
2012	Balance of Grant Request	Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba (IPRC)
2012	Save a Child from Sexual Abuse Programme	United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI)
2016	Provide a ministry of outreach, case management and pastoral care to survivors of human trafficking individuals involved in the sex-trade	Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC)

Formation for Ministry and Mission (FMM)

A Crucial Project for Ministerial Training in Guyana was the Formation for Ministry and Mission Programme (FMM). The FMM programme which was started in Guyana in 2002 still stands in 2016 as a well designed programme which has been able to evolve with relevance over these years. The FMM which is described below is presented as an example of a programme which was made possible in part through an Empowerment Grant to the three Guyana churches. At the end of the expose', a table showing the range of grants is provided. The Council meeting minutes of 1996 describe in detail the discussions which led to the realization of a project which had been formally shaped over a period of over six years:

There was extensive discussion on the process by which this new form of training persons for the ordained ministry could be implemented. It was agreed that the three churches in Guyana needed to issue an invitation to ITLD to visit Guyana and sit in on their discussions. CWM assured the meeting that they were prepared to fund this visit as such a visit to the GCU alone had already been agreed on. Member Churches indicated that other resources in their denominations could be tapped. (Minutes CNL 1996)

Discussion, planning and preparation pertaining to the launch of the FMM proceeded over a number of years. The project faced many specific requirements and consequent constraints for the group. They persisted.

Help was sought and garnered from a number of sources as recorded in the minutes above.

Part of this network of support included an Empowerment Grant which made it possible for operations to begin in 2002. CANACOM had felt that it was important that this particular project should remain sustainable in order to support the ongoing training of church leaders. There was a sense that this process should not be rushed in order for its success and longevity to be guaranteed. The careful planning has paid long term dividends and we thank God that the programme is still in existence.

Portions of the 2002-2005 FMM Report are shared below (Introduction to Future Plans):

Introduction

Traditionally, ordained ministers of the Reformed Church in Guyana had been trained overseas, but for many years this was not possible because of the prohibitive cost of training. Following many years of prayer and partnership among the leaders and representatives of the Guyana Congregational Union, Guyana Presbyterian Church and Presbytery of Guyana, **the Formation for Ministry and Mission Programme was launched.**

As expected, we were not spared difficulties as in the case of the flood in 2005. The death of our esteemed Hospitality Worker, Ms. Carole Jordan, brought deep sadness. Despite these hurdles, we persevered.

Funding

Funding was raised from a combination of sources including the Presbyterian Church in Canada, CANACOM, Member Churches in Guyana and in some instances by the students themselves.

Staff

Three members of staff were appointed, namely a librarian, a hospitality worker and a programme coordinator.

Library

Generous donations have made the establishment of a library possible. We owe a debt of gratitude to our donors: Guyana Congregational Church, Presbyterian Church of Canada, Rev. Christopher Jorna, Rev. Claire Smith, Langham Trust, Rev. Dr. Lewin Williams and to Ms. Jet den Hollander for the provision of magazines and books.

Programme

In September, 2002 twenty-two persons were registered for classes. By the end of the first week, two persons withdrew, and the remaining twenty

persons completed the three-year programme. The student population comprised eight students from the Guyana Presbyterian Church, seven students from the Presbytery of Guyana and five students from the Guyana Congregational Union. Ten of the students were male and ten were female but this distribution was merely a coincidence.

The FMM Programme was designed as a part-time, residential, three-year programme. Each term was of seven-week duration but spread over a period of three months, with sessions held on alternate weekends. Lectures were held on Friday evenings and on Saturdays.

The lecturers were all ordained ministers with one exception, and they presented eighteen compulsory courses. In Year 1, these included Introduction to the Old Testament taught by Rev. Elias (the Methodist Church), Worship and Homiletics (Rev. Keith Haley - Guyana Congregational Union), Spiritual Formation (Rev. Christopher Jorna - Presbyterian Church of Canada), Introduction to Theology (Rev. Jorna). In Year 2, Church History was taught by Rev. Oswald Best (Presbytery Of Guyana), Mission and Evangelism by Rev. Prince Denny (Lutheran Church), Theology and Major Doctrines by Rev. Dr. Dale Bisnauth (Guyana Presbyterian Church), Ministry of Youth by Rev. Evadney Hannibal (GCU). Contemporary Theologies was presented as an intensive vocation programme in August, 2004 by Rev. Dr. Lewin Williams, President of the United Theological College of West Indies. This was an invaluable experience for students. We owe a debt of gratitude to CANACOM for initiating the proposal of vacation courses and for steering FMM through its arrangements for the first of its kind in August, 2004. Year 3 included courses such as Comparative Religions by Rev. Dale Bisnauth, Romans by Rev Denny, Administration and Polity by Mr. George Rutherford (POG).

For example, to bring contemporary issues to the fore, for the benefit of the course on Pastoral Care and Counselling, there was a panel presentation by persons associated with Help and Shelter an organization that provides for women subject to domestic violence.

Practical aspects of the programme comprise:

- Preaching, visitations, school organization and teaching, Women's and Men's Guild activities, etc.

Graduation

We praise God that all twenty students completed the programme in July 2005. Nineteen were awarded Diplomas in ministerial Studies and one was awarded a Certificate of participation. These awards were announced

on Saturday, 19th November, 2005 at the first Graduation Service of the College of Ministry and Mission Studies which was held at the St. Andrew's Kirk.

The guest speaker was Rev. Dr. Osbert James of Grenada, the current serving Chairman of CANACOM. The Charge was given by Rev. Dr. Dale Bisnauth and the certificates were distributed by Ms. Magda Pollard, a member of the Steering Committee.

Future Plans

A new batch of fifteen students including two from the Moravian Church registered for the programme in November. We plan to continue extending invitations to applicants from other churches. This will serve to build bridges and forge alliances that can be mutually advantageous.

Maureen Massiah
Programme Coordinator
(FMM Report, 2002-2005)

Remembering Rev. Earl Thames

When this project was conceived by the Administrative Committee (AC) and the Finance and Administration Support Group (FASG), along with everyone else, Rev. Thames approved the prospect as being very timely and appropriate. No one had any idea that before the book would go to press, he, would no longer be with us in the flesh. We thank God for his life among us. We love him and offer this small token of appreciation in his memory.

He served as founding Chairman of CANACOM in 1986 and continued in different capacities as an active Officer and member of this body until the very day of his passing. Rev. Thames and CANACOM were seamlessly woven together. It is noteworthy that he had prepared and written his contribution which *he* would have delivered at CANACOM's Council Meeting (CNL16) to be held in Suriname.

However, upon reflecting on an initial, appropriate way to mark his contribution to CANACOM and to public theology it readily became evident that sharing a few of his published letters in this book would be fitting. The appropriate **Licence Agreement** has been entered into with the Gleaner Company Limited.

Three (3) Articles appear below, the first being the one that speaks of his passing:

Article 1

United Church Mourns Rare, Gifted Minister

Published: Sunday | August 14, 2016 | 12:00 AMThames



Straight-talking minister of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), the Reverend Henry Earl Thames, is dead.

Thames, described by the UCJCI as "a rare, gifted and self-effacing individual", and a special and celebrated treasure of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands, made his transition while doing one of the acts of ministry he loved best, serving and interacting at youth camp, an activity he engaged in for **52 consecutive years**.

He was equally instrumental in the formation of the UCJCI Young Adults Action Movement of which, at the time of his passing, he was an adviser.

A devoted and committed servant of Christ, Thames described his decades of ministry as "a celebration of marriage" - a vocational union which began with his ordination in 1964.

Thames served the United Church as pastor, moderator (twice); theologian; chairman of synodical committees; member of Christian Education, Finance and Property Committees; chairman of school boards and institutions, and lecturer at the International University of the Caribbean.

He was also the coordinator of the preliminary year for United Church theological students.

Thames was pivotal in the union of the Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches in 1965 to form the United Church in Jamaica and Grand Cayman, and in 1992 the merger with the Disciples of Christ to form what is now the UCJCI.

A GREAT LOSS

UCJCI moderator, the Right Reverend Christopher Mason, argued that the passing of Thames was a great loss to the church.

"Indeed, it is true to say that Rev Thames is an institution within this United Church, and the UCJCI, throughout his years as minister, experienced added value through his leadership, commitment and contributions," said Mason.

In the meantime, the Reverend Norbert Stephens, UCJCI General Secretary, noted the passion for children which marked the life of the 1959 Jamaican Rhodes Scholar.

"What has been clear throughout Rev. Thames' long and outstanding career was his passion for children and young people, his advocacy for justice for the marginalised, his pursuit of high morals for the society and his push for evangelism for all.

"In fact, Rev. Thames passed while carrying out his ministry to the youth of the church, who had gathered at the Madge Saunders Conference Centre in St. Mary for their Youth Camp with its theme: 'Discipleship: Action - Not a Bag a Mout'," noted Stephens.

Thames has several publications to his credit, the latest being *The Book of Revelation: A commentary for Lay Persons*, published in 2015.

Article 2

Letters of the Day

We at CANACOM can declare that June 17, 2016 was a most momentous day in the life of Rev. Thames. However, in characteristic fashion he neither recognized it as such, nor was he fazed by the sequence of interesting and stimulating activities. The letter below was determined to be a **“Letter of the Day”**. He was also a lively participant in the Skype call organized for the Mission Consultation Working Group chaired by the Rev. Dr. Osbert James of the Presbyterian Church in Grenada (PCG). However, he had to be excused before the end of that meeting in order to be on time for a very engaging radio interview with the Rev. Ronald Thwaites. The subject of the discussion was the findings of the Commission of Enquiry on the Tivoli Gardens incursion.

What is amazing is that he had completed all of these activities before 12:00 noon! From this time and for the next hour he had a comprehensive conversation with the EIM about the four activities which were being planned for our 30th anniversary celebrations. At the end of this marathon he was as happy as a lark and raring to continue the remainder of his day’s schedule and already talking with great excitement about camp and possibilities of **church growth** which could arise from camp ministry. The letter is here presented:

Tivoli Report Excuses Evil

Published: Friday | June 17, 2016 | 12:00 AM

THE EDITOR, Sir:

I disagree with the conclusions and some of the recommendations made by the learned commissioners in the west Kingston commission of enquiry.

I disagree that the Government should apologise to the residents of Tivoli Gardens because one does not apologise for punishing those who willingly and knowingly aid and abet a criminal who is seeking to evade trial.

I disagree that the Government should apologise for counterattacking those who attacked and set fire to police stations - the symbol of law and order in the nation.

I disagree that the Government should apologise to a community that set up barricades and imported an army of criminals from other communities to resist the lawful security forces.

I agree that excessive force may have been used to overcome those who were seeking to defend and hide a person now convicted, but what took place in Tivoli Gardens was war. And what is excessive force in war?

I admit that the high loss of life was regrettable and that some may have been avoidable, but how can the loss of life be controlled when the State itself is attacked? The Tivoli Gardens insurgency was an attack against the State, and the State had the right to defend itself.

I fear that the conclusions of the commissioners, while undoubtedly pleasing to some persons, could be interpreted as a justification of crime, of community support to criminals, and a deterrent to the security forces to secure law and order in the nation. Worst of all, this report could be viewed as the official sanctioning of evil.

I fear that this report could also justify future actions of wicked persons by awarding compensation for any loss that may be suffered because of their unrighteous actions.

EARL THAMES

earlthames@yahoo.com

Spauldings, Clarendon

Article 3

The founding Chairman of CANACOM did not sway from his opinion that a clear space of time was to be dedicated for both Sunday and Sabbath worshippers. This was to be a time of rest and reflection. He expressed the understanding that certain emergency duties would always need to be carried out. He fought a number of battles in many fora to lay bare any possibility of crucial information being kept away from the public on the matter of "Flexi Time". The letter below throws down the gauntlet:

Misinformed Attack On The Church

Published: Tuesday | January 12, 2010 | 12:00 AM

The Editor, Sir:

When I was much younger and used to play football, it was a common saying, 'If you can't play the ball, play the man!' In a recent article I conveyed the statement by the Concerned Church Leaders Group, a body which consists of almost all the churches in Jamaica, in which objections were raised to the proposed implementation of a flexi work week programme, without providing the safeguards of the right to worship, which were agreed to in the national plan formulated in 2003.

Hunter Gray, in an article in The Gleaner of December 28 titled 'Attack on which worship?', instead of indicating the benefits which he felt could be obtained from a flexi work week, launched an attack against the Church in which he declared that the Church was now self-serving, and did not care about the welfare of most of needy citizens.

He stated that the Church must do more than merely give them evidence of things unseen, but must provide them "with the means to make a living". Gray is clearly misled. This is not the main function of the Church, this is the function of the Government. But it is amazing how much the Church has actually done to fulfill this expectation of Mr. Gray.

Without doubt, the most important resource which will enable citizens to make a living is education. It is now the role of the Government to provide the financing of the nation's educational system, but what body was it which put the schools and other educational institutions in place so that they can now be financed by the Government?

Let us look at the fact:

Before 1900, every primary school in Jamaica was a Church foundation. Until today, the main secondary schools were founded by the Church e.g. Kingston College, St Georges College, Calabar, Campion, Ardenne, St Andrews, St Hugh's, St Hilda's, Westwood, Meadowbrook, Clarendon College, Knox, to name only a few.

It was those who do the odd thing called 'worship' who established the first teacher-training institutions - Lady Mico was a devout Christian. Bethlehem, St Josephs, Church Teachers Colleges are all Church foundations. The first person to commence early childhood teacher training was the Rev Madge Saunders, a 'worshipper'.

At the tertiary level, Knox Community College, Northern Caribbean University and the International University of the Caribbean are Church institutions.

The first skills-training institution was Carron Hall Vocational Institute, established by the Presbyterian Church.

The education of persons with disabilities, the disadvantaged in the society, has been almost entirely the work of the Church - the Salvation Army taught the blind to read and the dumb to speak; the Caribbean Association for the Deaf at Knockpatrick first made the deaf hear and speak through sign language.

With regard to care for the needy in the ghettos of Jamaica, it was the Methodist, Father Hugh Sherlock (who wrote our National Anthem) who established Boys' Town in Trench Town. Girls Town was founded by Christians. The St Andrew Settlement is an Anglican foundation. Father Holung and the Missionaries of the Poor attribute their motivation to One whom they worship. It is Food for the Poor who continues to build houses for the homeless and provide many other kinds of material help for hundreds across Jamaica.

The founder will tell you that it is his relationship with the unseen Christ which brought it into being. To refer to the challenge of Hunter Gray, it is the Salvation Army and countless churches in Jamaica which provide soup

kitchens for the poor, breakfasts and lunches for school children, and "feed more than 5,000" every day.

With regard to the link between religion and morals, which organisation has guided and developed the moral values of children, young people and adults more than the Sunday Schools, sabbath schools, Boys and Girls Brigades, Boys Scouts and Girl Guides, youth fellowships, inter-schools Christian fellowships, Schools Christian Movement, and Inter-Varsity Fellowship, all under the auspices of the Church?

When the burdens of life begin to take their toll on employed as well as unemployed and their lives are falling apart, to where do they turn? It is the counselling services of the Church which have rescued many from abject hopelessness and despair. The unseen is more powerful than the seen. But physical as well as spiritual health is important. The Church has led the world in establishing hospitals. Here in Jamaica, the Nuttall hospital, St Josephs, and Andrews Memorial hospitals are all Church foundations, not to mention the many free clinics operated by 'worshippers' throughout the island.

I have stated facts. Would Mr. Gray be kind enough to indicate the many comparable benefits which would accrue to the society if worship were minimized and flexi work week implemented, using statistics from 'other jurisdictions' as his evidence? Need I add, the ball is now in your part of the field. Please, kick it instead of the Church.

I am, etc.,

Rev. EARL THAMES

His letters quoted in full above demonstrate his strong desire that we should live in a world governed by righteousness. Let us do our part, **with renewed vigour**, in memory of him.

CELEBRATING OUR 30th ANNIVERSARY



CARIBBEAN AND NORTH AMERICA COUNCIL FOR MISSION (CANACOM)



Improving Our Serve

Commemorating
30 Years of God's Goodness
September 11, 1986 to September 11, 2016

Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture,
Rev. Earl Thames Mission Consultation,
and
2016 Council Meeting in Suriname

Held under the theme:
Engaging Mission in the 21st Century:
Re-visioning for the Future

The Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture

On Sunday September 11, 2016 at 4:00 p.m., the Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture which was organized by CANACOM, was hosted by the Kings Gate United Church. This poignant event brought to the fore the life of one who had served Christ's mission in the world. It was attended by family, friends, members of the churches and wider community. CANACOM was very pleased in particular to welcome Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans, President of the International University of the Caribbean and significantly, one of the founders of CANACOM. We were very happy

that Rev. Raymond Coke who had been present at the establishment of CANACOM in 1986 was able to take active part in the proceedings. The keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Evans, responded eloquently to the request to address the Council 2016 which is “Engaging Mission in the 21st Century: Revisioning for the Future”. He enjoined us to reflect upon the movements in the 1970s and 1980s which had propelled CANACOM into being and challenged the gathering to become part of a missional church that is open to a shifting of paradigms which will make us truly relevant to the cries of today’s world. There was a brief but engaging session of questions and answers involving the congregation.

As part of the ceremony in the church, some historical photographs of the life of CANACOM were presented and greatly appreciated by the recipients. The second part of this event took place in the offices of CANACOM and involved the unveiling of memorial plaques and a permanent display of photographs tracing the development of CANACOM over the years, the cutting of CANACOM’s 30th birthday cake and a joyful time of fellowship and refreshment in the Cecile Nelson Room.



Mrs. Karen Francis, Council for World Mission Region, Mission Secretary, presenting Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans, Keynote Speaker with a photograph of "Evans and Thames visioning CANACOM" in the company of Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, EIM Secretary



Mrs. Sadie Findlay, Chair of CANACOM's Finance and Administration Support Group, presenting Mrs. Karen Francis, Council for World Mission, Mission Secretary with a memoir of her CANACOM Experience



Rev. Norbert Stephens, General Secretary of the UCJCI makes public the tribute in honor of the late Rev. Earl Thames.



Mr. Clinton Laing reveals the portrait of his father, the late Rev. Fitz Gerald Laing.



Mrs. Joyce Williams prepares to cut the Birthday Cake as Mrs. Jennifer Martin and Rev. Raymond Coke looks on.



Members of the Laing Family, FASG, Friends of CANACOM and Staff.

Opening Worship

The Opening Worship for the CANACOM Council 2016 was held at the Centrum Kirk on Thursday 22nd September at 7 p.m. The Liturgists were Rev. Naomie Neslo-Claver and Mrs. Anne Phillips, Chair. Rev. Diana de Graven brought the message on the theme “To Rejoice”. Ms. Jet den Hollander of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and CANACOM’s first Education in Mission Secretary was welcomed by Mrs. Jennifer Martin, Education in Mission Secretary. Special appreciation was expressed for the effort involved for having travelled from Palestine/Israel to be a part of the 30th Anniversary celebrations. Mrs. Joyce Williams,

CANACOM's first Administrative Assistant, another special guest, was also recognized. The service included delegates from the Council and Local Church community. The entire worship service reflected the vibrancy of the Surinamese culture. It was truly uplifting and inspiring.



Greetings from Council for World Mission on the Occasion of the Biennial Council Meeting and 30th Anniversary Celebrations

After observing all protocols, Rev. Diana de Graven read these greetings in place of Mrs. Karen Francis who was not able to join the consultation in time for the Opening Service:

In 2017, the Council for World Mission will celebrate our 40th anniversary of a mission movement re-born in 1977 following a time of introspection, prayer and discussion which saw an about turn in our understanding and pursuit of mission.

The London Missionary Society – forerunner of CWM – was formally born in 1795 with the object of spreading the knowledge of Christ throughout the world. This objective has not changed, but what changed in 1975 and subsequent years is the character of a once Eurocentric and donor-recipient model of mission to a partnership model in which every Member Church is recognized as having resources to share and comes to the table willing to both give and receive. So when CWM was born it was with the understanding that we share the resources of people, money and ideas from anywhere to everywhere.

This is the foundation on which CANACOM was envisioned in 1986. We pay tribute to a great man – the late Rev. H. Earl Thames – a visionary who was instrumental in helping to re-think and re-shape CWM in 1975 and instigator for the founding of CANACOM out of the missionary

impulse of CWM which led to substantial monetary investment for the establishment of the CANACOM organization.

As a ‘mother movement’ of sorts, Council for World Mission through the Caribbean region and specifically the Caribbean regional office with my colleague Viqueisha King-Burke, maintains the umbilical connection with CANACOM working together on projects, thinking and visioning together as we engage in God’s mission. One of significant note was a youth forum on human trafficking held in Guyana in 2015 with common planning, leadership, funding and youth participation.

Your chosen theme: Engaging Mission in the 21st Century: Re-visioning for the Future is one which accords with the ethos and spirit of mission movements which recognize the need to be nimble yet grounded as Christian believers committed to following in Christ’s footsteps.

It is entirely appropriate that having achieved the milestone of 30 years CANACOM would choose to take stock of your stewardship in line with your calling to bear common witness, to challenge and empower one another for creative involvement in mission. Council for World Mission joins you in this endeavour.

So it is with great pride that I bring you greetings on behalf of the Council for World Mission. CWM and CANACOM have more dreams to pursue greater adventures to undertake and more paths to forge. I welcome the opportunity to go together and look forward to further collaborations with my colleagues Jennifer Martin and Leslene Laing in the CANACOM office and the wider community of CANACOM as we seek to spread the knowledge of Christ throughout the world.

Thank you.

Karen Francis (Mrs.)
Mission Secretary,
Council for World Mission Caribbean



CNL 16 Delegates at the Opening Service, Centrum Kirk, Suriname

1st Row left –right: Leslene Laing, Jo-Ella Holman, Denyse Rattansingh-Atwarie, Mryna Husbands, Maritza Bakhuis, Merle Buchanan, Alison Infante Zamora, Diana Thomas-Jones, Anniya Tomlinson-Morris, Jeanette Adams, Osbert James.

2nd Row: Diana De Graven, Cicely Adams-Crawford, Jennifer Martin, Annabell Lalla-Ramkelawan, Farida DaCosta Gomez, Anne Phillips, Valdir Franca, Simpson Rushton, Joyce Williams, Johan Vegh, Anna Shrikissoo-Sharma, Michael Shrewsbury, Izett Sama, Sairy Marte De Matos

3rd Row: Osrick Best, Carl Dattoo, Shadell Stafford, Carlington Keen,

The Earl Thames Mission Consultation Highlights

Paramaribo, Suriname, 24 September, 2016

The day started with worship led by Mrs. Jennifer Martin. Rev. Dr. Osbert James, chair of the Earl Thames Mission Consultation (ETMC) Planning Committee, was invited comment on the preparatory work accomplished by the committee. He introduced the members who included Rev. Diana de Graven, Rev. Dr. Jo Ella Holman, Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, Ms. Leslene Laing and remembered the late Rev. Earl Thames.

Mrs. Anne Phillips paid tribute to the late Rev. Earl Thames. She mentioned that he was pivotal in the growth and development of CANACOM and that we are guided by his model today. He would be dearly missed but his legacy remains in CANACOM and beyond.

Rev. Dr. Jo Ella Holman had the pleasure of introducing the Keynote Speaker for the day, Ms. Jet den Hollander, first Education in Mission Secretary in CANACOM from 1992-1998 in Jamaica. At that time she was working as the Local Programme Coordinator of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), a project of the World Council of Churches based in Jerusalem.

Ms. Hollander spoke on the theme “ENGAGING MISSION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: RE-VISIONING FOR THE FUTURE”.

Ms Jet den Hollander shared that her time with CANACOM was a very fulfilling experience and working with Rev. Earl Thames was very rewarding and saw CANACOM as a platform to invent new ways of mission. She gave the history of the formation of CANACOM, which came about as a regional expression of the Council for World Mission. Her presentation was undergirded by a recognition of the importance of unity in mission. The group was pleased to be reminded of the Jamaican folk song by Ms. Jet den Hollander.

One Han Caan Clap

“The CANACOM time taught me a beautiful Jamaican folk song, of which the chorus goes like this:

One han' caan clap, no, one han' caan clap, Tell
it to de worl' dat one han' caan clap!

The song points to a basic truth about life and being human. We all know it from daily life: none of us can go it alone. We need one another to share our joys, our sorrows, our strengths and our weaknesses. One hand alone cannot clap!

It is my wish that as CANACOM enters its fourth decade, your interdependence for the sake of optimal missional functioning, which Paul illustrates in his imagery of the One Body with its many members, continues to grow and will result in ever more creative ways of strengthening one another in and for our part in God's mission, individually and as a Partnership.”



Reception

The delegates and members of the Reformed Church in Suriname and their guests came together on Sunday evening for fellowship at the lush gardens of the Suriname Bank. Everyone was treated to a performance by members of NAKS (After Work Comes Play), a local cultural group. The dinner catered by Mrs. Dulcie Graanoogst-Muringen was exquisite thereby completing a wonderful evening.

Presentations of framed photographs and CANACOM's Birth Certificate were made to Ms. Jet den Hollander, Mrs. Karen Francis (Representative from CWM), Mrs. Anne Phillips.

In addition, a framed citation was presented to Mr. Peter Quinland in memory of his late wife, Deaconess Wendy Quinland.



Words of appreciation being expressed by the Chair, Rev. Carlington Keen to the outgoing Chair, Mrs. Anne Phillips



Enjoying the cultural display with Mr. Peter Quinland, Rev. Diana de Graven, Rev. Sairy Marte Jet den Hollander, Mrs. Karen Francis, Rev. Izett Sama Hernandez, Mrs Merle Buchanan, Rev. Denyse Rattansingh-Attwarie, Ms Leslene Laing and Ms Leandra Nobibux.



Mrs. Anne Phillips makes a presentation to Mrs. Karen Francis



A moment of remembering with Ms Jet. Den Hollander, Rev. Denyse Rattansingh-Atwarie, Rev. Carlington Keen, Mrs. Anne Phillips, Mr. Peter Quinland, Mrs. Jennifer P. Martin, Mrs Karen Francis & Mrs Joyce Williams

CNL 2016 Closing Service

Rev. Carlington Keen was the Liturgist at this worship service which was held at the Ons Huis. The charge was given by Rev. Diana Thomas-Jones, the reading taken from 2 Timothy 4:1-3. She charged the delegates, in part to preach the Word:

"Brothers and Sisters, my message to you is very simple and very precarious. It is 2 Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word (share God's message)." I call it precarious, because there is a constant temptation to do other things in the place of this. There ARE other things to do in the ministry, as these letters to Timothy show. And we must do them to be found faithful. But none of them is treated as solemnly and forcefully as this one simple exhortation from the apostle: "Preach the Word." "

The service included Holy Communion which was presided over by Rev. Diana de Graven and Rev. Carlington Keen. Rev. Dr. Osbert James performed the Dedication ceremony for CANACOM's new Administrative Committee.

During the passing of peace, delegates were invited to exchange tokens. Presentations were made to Mrs. Joyce Williams and Mrs. Anne Phillips. Rev. Diana de Graven was delighted to be unexpectedly presented with a photograph at the Centrum Kirk.

Appreciation cards were presented to Mrs. Denise Terborg-Lang (Moderator RCS), Ms. Hanna Burnett and Mr. Sudesh (Caretakers of the church and Ons Huis), Ms. Leandra Nobibux (Church Office Assistant) and Rev. Naomie Neslo-Claver.

Rev. de Graven accepted a special token on behalf of Mrs. Dulcie Graanoogst-Muringen (our caterer) and her staff in appreciation for the wonderful service provided for the entire meeting.

Rt. Rev. Annabell Lalla-Ramkhelawan made a presentation to Mrs. Jennifer Martin – a book written by Rev. Winston Gopaul entitled "The Reshaping of Mission in Latin America" – and also presented to the Reformed Church in Suriname (RCS) a Chulha symbolizing the responsibility to feed one another.



CANACOM: Entering the Fourth Decade

All the events surrounding the 30th anniversary celebrations have been significant. The Earl Thames Mission Consultation was deemed to be particularly symbolic in helping us to review our past and begin to plan a course of action toward our future. The keynote address recognized that at its core CANACOM is a partnership of churches but called us with urgency to a deeper and wider partnership in mission.

It is not by accident that the keynote speaker, Ms. Jet den Hollander had lovingly dedicated the presentation to the late Rev. Earl Thames whose life was dedicated to partnership in mission across a wide array of churches and in various settings. Ms den Hollander eulogized his “contagious faith and witness” in her presentation. He understood Christ’s mandate for his followers to live mission and evangelism. Thus, the question regarding the status of evangelism alongside CANACOM’s understanding of mission was strongly raised by two of our writers – Mr. Terry Tan and Rev. Earl Thames.

This **concluding section** will therefore raise CANACOM’s four Mission Priorities which have been designed to guide our work into the year 2020. It will thereafter record, from among the many signposts which were shared in different fora and formats, a selection of Seven questions/challenges posed by Mr. Terry Tan, Rev. Earl Thames, Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans and Ms Jet den Hollander. CANACOM Member Churches need to address these as we seek to re-vision the future for an effective engagement in 21st century mission.

CANACOM's Mission Priorities (2014 - 2020)

1. Church Growth and Renewal
2. Gender and Violence
3. Poverty and Inequality
4. Human Trafficking

*Questions/Challenges for CANACOM's Mission Priorities
(2014-2020)*

Evangelism

However, the one activity with which we had very minimal contact with was the issue of evangelism.

Interestingly enough, I've discovered that this topic isn't very much considered as a top priority by the majority, even though it would seem biblically probable that it is where the Spirit of God would be "blowing"...

(Excerpt from "Divi Divi' 2003 Article in this book)

Terry Tan
YAM Participant 2003

Question 1: "How do you address evangelism in your context?"

Evangelism

Read Acts 2: 14-24, 41-42

He preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an Open-Air Meeting and 3000 persons made the Confession of faith in Christ. That was **how the Church was born**. That was **how the Church began to be built**. That pattern is the pattern which we have been given by Christ. It is called **"Evangelism."**Or Gospel-centred proclamation of the Word of God.

Other forms of Evangelism

Other forms of Evangelism are mentioned in the Scriptures, for example:

- ✓ Social Action Evangelism
- ✓ Evangelism through Teaching
- ✓ Friendship Evangelism
- ✓ House to House Visitation Evangelism
- ✓ Personal Evangelism or "One on One"

(Excerpt from Bible Study on Church Growth and Evangelism 2016)

Rev. Earl Thames
Founding Chair and Officer of CANACOM (1986 - 2016)

Question 2: How does your church address the matter of evangelism?

Envisioning for the Future

I have chosen to link our traditional use of mission with an intentionally expansive use of the term congregation and further to link congregation with community. This usage is being driven by two important factors. First, there is value in not only being identified as a congregation but also to be congregational in terms of our identity and purpose. This congregational identity, far from being linked to historical denominations, is deemed to emphasize the nature, reason for being and spiritual identity of the gathered and ready to be scattered people of God. In this understanding there is much correlation between whom the Christian is called to be and what the Christian is called to do. One could say then, it is on the basis of the continuity between the gathered community and the scattered community that our spirit inspired ministries exist to demonstrate, demand and produce the change that only the church can responsibly deliver in our time. It is a tall order but it is the church that can do all things through the Christ who strengthens her.

Let the congregational communities of the north and the south stand up and be counted in this enterprise of redefining and affirming the resources of the church. When Jesus came face to face with a context defined by scarce resources, he departed from what would be normal protocol as a way of securing our attention regarding some key principles that would apply in those kinds of situations. In the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus outlined a strategy that demonstrates the way ideas and principles combine to provide a plan of action. Jesus acts out the process.

Excerpt from Keynote Address, September 11, 2016 at Fitz Gerald Laing Memorial Lecture

Rev. Dr. Maitland Evans

President

International University of the Caribbean (IUC)

Question 3: Using this reading as a framework, how would your congregation/denomination begin the journey to becoming congregational communities?

Mission from the Margins

Much is said today about “Mission from the margins”. How does such mission find expression in CANACOM? How have people from the margin shaped and enriched CANACOM’s ministries in the past 30 years? How are people from the margins missionizing our churches? Rev. Dr. William Watty (Dominican theologian) in the 1980s: The Caribbean is a laboratory in intercultural relations that can teach the world many lessons.

Excerpt from the keynote address at the Rev. Earl Thames Mission Consultation in Suriname, September 24, 2016

**Ms Jet den Hollander
WCC-EAPPI Local
Programme Coordinator**

Question 4: How will your church be guided by the experiences of people from the margins in shaping the future mission of CANACOM?

Education in Mission

From its beginning, CANACOM has prioritized Education in Mission, with a view to undergird our partnership practice with systematic reflection. What are the main learnings and what are the areas of significant growth that this systematic action-reflection process has produced?

John Calvin in the 16th century: “Omnis recta cognitio Dei ab oboedientia nascitur” (all true knowledge of God comes from obedience). It is in the process of doing God’s will, of concretely engaging in mission, that we will gradually find out more what God’s will is and what our mission and our church and our unity should look like.

Paulo Freire in the 1960s and 70s: Action without reflection runs the risk of remaining empty activism.

Excerpt from the keynote address at the Rev. Earl Thames Mission Consultation in Suriname, September 24, 2016

**Ms Jet den Hollander
WCC-EAPPI Local Programme
Coordinator**

Question 5: Education in mission has been a foundation priority of CANACOM from the beginning. How will your church contribute to the process of educating members for missionary endeavours?

Accompaniment

The model of Jesus' "accompaniment" of Cleopas and his friend on their way to Emmaus offers a specific way of interacting with people. Jesus in first century Palestine (Luke 24: 13-35) What is it that you are talking about as you walk along? Is accompaniment, in one way or another, part of your church's understanding of mission? Please share examples and lessons learnt.

Excerpt from the keynote address at the Rev. Earl Thames Mission Consultation in Suriname, September 24, 2016

Ms Jet den Hollander

WCC-EAPPI Local Programme Coordinator

Question 6: Is accompaniment, in one way or another, part of your church's understanding of mission? If not, in what ways could such a process be started in your context?

Future Contribution of CANACOM

In addition to the contribution made by this body to projects and programmes of the individual Churches, the influence of CANACOM on the world of missions has been mainly through the young adults who have benefited from either the JOMAT or the YAM programme. *The real contribution of this body is therefore yet to be realized.*

Excerpt from the paper "History of CANACOM" (published in this book)

Rev. Earl Thames

Founding Chair and Officer of CANACOM (1986 - 2016)

Question 7: As we move into our fourth decade, how do we define the real contribution of CANACOM?

Conclusion

And so 2016 draws to a close and CANACOM has stepped into its 4th decade. In the parlance of some Member Churches we are *young* adults. Yet we are **adults** and part of truly being adult is to undergird our actions with reflection.

It is in this spirit that our time of commemoration has been deliberately designed to include reflection and listening to our diverse voices. Repeatedly the practice of action and reflection was re-introduced into our discussion during this period and our records remind us that we have a tradition of action and reflection.

The formation of CANACOM was deeply influenced by the desire to create a new paradigm in mission partnerships between the Caribbean and North America. In a letter dated 30 October 1992, the then Chairperson in writing to the Verenigde Protestantse Gemeente van Curacao stated:

CANACOM is not intended to be ‘yet another regional structure where church leaders meet’, but rather a platform for common mission action, reflection and learning. The hope is that by concretely practicing partnership - by mutual sharing of resources, common decision making and common mission action - the Member Churches may develop as truly interdependent ‘churches in mission’.

Chronologically 1992 is well behind us. CANACOM is well established as a partnership of churches. The question remains, 'Are we truly churches in mission'? The challenge to us is to move forward with our four mission priorities, guided by the seven questions which have been put squarely before us. We hope that the Member Churches will rise to the challenge.

Each Member Country is faced by issues which require urgent attention. The prayer requests presented by Member Churches in the CNL 2016 Member Church Reports and shared in summary here attest to this fact. Among the concerns are:

- * *The future of the church*
- * *The strengthening of evangelism*
- * *Suicide reduction*
- * *Racial harmony*
- * *Gender justice*
- * *Poverty and inequality*
- * *Youth unemployment*
- * *Economic instability,*
- * *Violence*

- * *Latin American politics*
- * *Restoring relationships between indigenous and other nationals*
- * *Good governance*
- * *Missing persons*
- * *Murder rates*
- * *Prophetic voice of the church in the midst of societal problems*
- * *Constitutional Reform*
- * *Dismantling barriers*
- * *Ministry to children*
- * *Disparity between rich and poor*

The fact that this is only a sample of the prayer concerns of our Member Churches causes us to realize even more that CANACOM is surrounded by strong mission needs. As we engage in fervent prayer, let us continue to labour with assurance of success through the Holy Spirit as instructed by Acts 1:8:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” _

It is through obedience to this instruction that the work of CANACOM will confidently engage in mission in the 21st century and beyond. **AMEN.**

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