

Conference Statement
2014 Consultation of African and African Diasporan Women
in Religion and Theology

Texts of Terror, Texts of Empowerment: Reimagining Sacred Canon in Africana Womanhood
July 6-10, 2014 ~ Accra, Ghana

The 2014 Consultation of African and African Diasporan Women in Religion and Theology acknowledges the prevalence of egregious acts of violence experienced by women in African and African descended communities. We recognize

- that interpretation of sacred texts validates violence against women and girls.
- that some ancient proverbs and sacred texts are non-redeemable.
- the use of some oral and aural proverbs disempower women and girls.
- that laws across religious, civic, governmental, political and social spheres have failed to protect and value the experiences of women and girls.
- that there are limited spaces for interreligious dialogue.
- that there is domestic and intimate violence perpetrated by men; however, we also stand in opposition against women to women violence that disparages intergenerational bonds between women and girls.
- that the socialization of boys and men encourages wrong doing towards women.
- that the threat of violence often begins within the family but is silenced and shamed.
- that the experiences of girls are often missing in discourse surrounding violence against women.
- that innocent Nigerian girls have been taken by a terrorist group falsely claiming to be working in the name of Islam.
- that privilege can be a barrier to building relationships among African and African descended women and girls.
- that African and African descended women and girls are targets for all forms of violence.

As those who are willing to stand in solidarity and unity to support African and African descended women and girls:

- We commit to creating sacred texts which affirm and humanize women and girls.
- We commit to examine and re-examine ancient proverbs while also developing new wisdom sayings and symbols.
- We commit to teaching and learning life giving hermeneutical methods and models.
- We commit to work towards interreligious harmony.
- We commit to telling and re-telling stories of trauma and displacement in order to share our courage and that of other women and girls.
- We commit to calling the names of women and girls who are in bondage of any form.
- We commit to creating models that connect theoretical concepts to practical solutions for the well-being of African and African descended women and girls.
- We commit to action and recognizing the agency we possess to love and lift, and not betray.
- We commit to utilizing education, intercontinental and transnational communication, and developing safe spaces as tools of empowerment to support women and girls.
- We commit to understanding the issues surrounding women's diverse sexual identities.
- We commit to honoring the diversity of women across economic, religious and academic circles.

- We commit to partnering with our male allies to promote healthy masculinities.
- We commit to use our privilege to advocate for justice on behalf of others.
- We commit to loving our neighbor but also correcting our neighbor if the neighbor is in error.
- We will continue to strive in hope, and in line with the proverb, *Nyame, biribi wo soro, ma enka yen nsa*: God, there is something in the heavens. Let it get into our hands.

In the spirit of Unity, the 2014 Consultation of African and African Diasporan Women in Religion and Theology has adopted the official song of the Federation of Muslim Women's Association in Ghana (FOMWAG).

With U N I T Y, we are all one.

In Ghana, we are all one.

With U N I T Y, we are all one.

In Kenya, we are all one.

In Nigeria, we are all one.

With U N I T Y, we are all one.

Islamic women, we are all one.

Christian women, we are all one.

Traditional women practitioners, we are all one.

With U N I T Y, we are all one.

Addendum

This commitment is captured in the prose delivered by Cecelia Armstrong, a 2014 conference participant. To leave this place and this space, we must *GET UP* and **RESCUE**:

R – Receive others so that we never build obstructions to keep out those who are in need.

E – Expose the corrupt and unjust systems so that injustices are rightly displayed and destroyed.

S – Supplication, which is the act of intercessory prayer, should be used to garner support for those who are in the struggle and for those who have yet to face the inevitable.

C – Challenge ourselves to let our reach exceed our grasp while challenging others with our words, actions, and deeds.

U – Utilize every gift we have been given to do the work for our own souls, while using every one of our senses to hear the Creator speak to us and through us.

E – Enlist others to assist us on this continuous journey so that we never walk alone, and that we walk beside someone who already knows the road.

Our charge is to **RESCUE** as often as we as we are made aware of any violence past, present, and future!