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Dr Kenneth D Kaunda, First President of the Republic of Zambia,

Key Note Presentation at the Conference of European Churches 12th Assembly, Trondheim, Norway, 25th June – 02nd July, 2003 meeting under conference theme: “Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles... Our Witness in Europe.”

Chairperson,
Sisters and Brothers,

Exactly thirty-five years ago, I was amongst you at a meeting similar to this one. In July 1968, I was privileged to speak at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden. I spoke on the theme “Rich and Poor Nations.”

Today, you have a European wide assembly. I am touched by your programme’s definition of “Assembly.” You say:

“An Assembly is a MEETING of people with one another and with God – in prayer, worship, and Bible-Study-in fellowship and celebration – in study and reflection - in deciding together on new ventures and challenges.”

Chairperson, two generations later, I feel gladness to be here with you. Yes, I feel joy and a sense of genuine oneness with you as you convene the 12th Assembly of the Conference of European Churches. I am happy to be here with you as you share the theme “Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles, Our Witness in Europe.” I am glad to be with you as you seek the Unity of Life through HIM who HEALS – through HIM who RECONCILES. It is, I feel, extremely important that our Church, Christ’s Church in Europe as elsewhere preoccupies itself with this great and very important message of “Jesus Christ Heals and Reconciles,..... Our Witness in Europe.” Thank you, dear friends, for allowing me a chance to make a presentation on this extremely important subject matter.

Chairperson, Friends, in 1968, in that theme on “Rich and Poor Nations,” I was concerned about the existing injustices amongst nations and peoples. I was not the only one concerned about the issues of a better and a more just world. It was a world-wide concern to world wide problems. Like others, I was concerned about what we all needed

to do to make the world a better place. I was concerned about how we would fulfil Christ's teaching: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength," and "Love thy Neighbour as thyself."¹ Like many of you, I was concerned about how, in a practical way, we expressed the Golden Rule of many believers in God, those who believe "Do As You Would Be Done By."

Two generations later, a lot has happened and a lot is still happening. Recently, after September 11, the war on Afghanistan, the invasion and occupation of Iraq and the developing war on terrorism, we are reminded of the truth in a statement by my long time friend, the great son of Africa, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere: *Peace is the product of Justice. Without Justice, there can be no Peace.* Not in America, not in Israel, not in Zambia, Nowhere can there be Peace without Justice.

Africa is celebrating its 40th Anniversary of the OAU and AU. OAU has changed into AU. Africa has achieved quite a few things. But Africa is also carrying forward some heavy luggage from the past. Africa is also meeting new challenges like the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Many of these are not problems for Africa only. They are problems found in various places of the world. They are humanity's problems. I am very sure that as you assemble here, you are also thinking about Africa. You are trying to appreciate and follow Christ's message of Love.

At this very challenging time, we are here at Trondheim in order to reflect *and try and understand the meaning of **Christ Heals and Reconciles*** in our own lives, obviously as well as in the lives of all our:

fellow human beings East,
fellow human beings West,
fellow human beings North,
And
fellow human beings South.

Each one of us is in HIS image made.

Christ Heals and Reconciles not only individuals. He heals and reconciles communities, nations, and regions.

Healing and Reconciliation of Europe's people can only take place as Europe and the other rich and powerful nations reconcile with peoples in other continents in a common struggle for a socially just and sustainable future. Only then can Europe contribute to a healthy and just world. The Time of Healing and Reconciliation is now. Each time is a time for Healing and an opportunity for being Reconciled to God and Life.

Chairperson, over the centuries, people of Europe have played major roles in the direction of world events. Some of these roles and actions have been for the Common Good while some of the actions have resulted in injustice and human want here in Europe and other parts of the world.

Indeed, people of Europe need to reflect on their Past and on the Future. They need to consider how they related to others, *and how they will relate to others in the future.*

Are there things we did which should not have been done? Were there things we omitted to do but should have been done to favour a better world and better relationships? *What are the root causes of suffering and underdevelopment?* In this reflection, the church is very fundamental. The church is able to touch people's spiritual nature and the whole foundation of the Purpose of Life.

For healing and reconciliation to take place, the life and teaching of Jesus Christ are practical lessons for all of us. We must be frank and thorough with ourselves and all our neighbours. BECAUSE, Sisters and Brothers, this "neighbour," as Christ showed, is not only that person who has natural similarities with us. We are challenged to be with the neighbour who speaks languages that appear different from ours. Our neighbour is also that person of a different race and ethnic group. Our neighbour is indeed also that person whose skin colour is different from ours. Our neighbour is female or male. Our neighbour has what we call disabilities. That person who is poverty-stricken over there is our neighbour. Yes, that person over there whose faith is different from our own, Christ proclaims is our neighbour.

Indeed, he or she is our neighbour who lives across geographical and national boundaries. We are all one as Brothers and Sisters. We are all one as Children of ONE God – our Great Creator.

Chairperson, Friends, reflecting on Europe's Past, we find that people of Europe did landmark acts against fellow Europeans and against people of other places. In their relationship with others, over the centuries, Europe's people were involved in Slavery. That meant bonding and selling their brothers and sisters in other lands. Europe's people were involved in colonial conquest. The Berlin conference of the 1880s affected Africa's people and their future for generations. The European presence was strong in Asia, North America, the Middle East, South America, the Pacific, and various parts of the world. Europeans carved out much of the world amongst themselves and for their material benefit. Then there were the two World Wars that started off in Europe as an arena but later consumed the whole world. We in Africa also had the two world wars adversely affect us through death, injury, and economic disasters. Treated as the powerless, in the hands and under the authority of the powerful, we became part of the TWO World Wars.

It is also in Europe that we had extreme expressions of human brutality. The Genocide against Jewish people destroyed millions of lives and displaced millions others. Just recently, as we have had in Rwanda and Burundi, there was also Genocide in the former Yugoslavia. Yes, Europe has had, and continues to have, ethnic and racial problems. Ethnic conflict has sometimes combined with religion to create terrible conflicts amongst people who should be neighbours or, all being God's children, who should be Sisters and Brothers. Ethnic and religious conflicts are still there in Europe today. Allow me to suggest that for Christ's way of healing to take place, the Church must get involved by working at some way our Lord could approve, to help. In South Africa, during the

struggle days, the South African Council of Churches ran the “Standing for the Truth Campaign.” Standing for the truth, yes, that is the calling of the church.

We also had the “Cold War”, which cut Europe and the world into fixed political camps. The Cold War led to many problems all over the world. God’s children were split into artificial camps. People in Africa were in the arena of East-West armed conflict. When I was privileged to be President of Zambia, I noticed, with sadness, how many of our African nations were being pulled against each other and against the Super Powers of that time. Nations were destroyed. Up to now, the effects of the Cold War are still there in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. We must praise and thank God Almighty that Cold War effects are healing in most parts of our ONE WORLD. At the same time, we realise that we are now faced with the threat of state terrorism and counter-terrorism on a scale that causes the deepest concern around the world.

We also remember that in recent times, some governments and people of Europe and the Western World supported the evil Apartheid regime of South Africa. Again, in recent times, some of Europe’s governments have been involved in policies and actions that have negatively affected economies and people elsewhere. Chairperson, I am here referring to those Western industrial societies which have contributed very adversely to changes in our natural environment in Africa and indeed elsewhere. While in government, I tried to insure that we had programmes to make the environment more sustainable. But this needs a world-wide effort from all sectors of life.

Chairperson and all Friends, please understand that I am not mentioning these issues as punishment for the sins of your ancestors. I mention these because they do not only affect you adversely but affect many people in the rest of our ONE WORLD. I mention these because the actions affected the direction of the world. The actions of people in Europe over the centuries have affected the current relations in the world. Yes, the Past has contributed to our Present.

I mention these issues to you because I believe I am discussing these serious matters with fellow believers, Children of our one God. I mention these issues because, I believe, individually, collectively – yes - together, we can have the process of Healing and Reconciliation as Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour wants us to do.

I mention these because I *do* know that all of us *can* do something about the issues. Many of you here do know, and even do experience, that it is possible to act for the Common Good. For example, just as some of these harmful experiences were going on in Africa, many people of Europe were also fighting for justice and for the Common Good. Yes, this fight was not just by the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world. It was also joined by people of Good Will in Europe and the Western world. These people realised the Truth. They knew and realised we were all God’s children. They realised the Truth of Loving thy Neighbour as you love thyself. They realised the Unity of the world. So, knowing that what affects your neighbour will also eventually affect you, they fought against Slavery. They supported the fight against colonialism. I am a strong believer of Non Violence. Fortunately, in Zambia, we managed to follow a struggle using principles

of Non-Violence as that truly great man Mahatma Gandhi taught us. We believed both the oppressor and oppressed were children of God. I also remember that in our struggle for independence from the British Empire, and to achieve independence in 1964, we received moral and material support from people and organisations in Europe. This included people from Britain itself. The support was from people in the North, and People in the South.

Against racism and apartheid, people in Europe got involved in protests and sanctions against the racist regimes. They realised that apartheid was against human wholeness. It was a crime against God's children. Europe's people acted together with others until we managed to get Nelson Mandela out of prison and into a democratic South Africa in 1994. Many of you here sang with us "Nkosi Sikeleli Africa," God Bless Africa. I, and many people of Africa, thank you for your role against racism and Apartheid.

The experience was similar in Asia, Latin America, the Pacific, and other European colonies. It was a fight taken on by members of a common humanity.

Chairperson, Friends, recently, people of Churches and Civil Society in Europe have combined efforts to campaign against the Debt Burden of people of the non-industrial world. They refused to be enjoying lives of privilege at the expense of their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. Here in Europe, I was privileged to join people in Germany and Norway in sharing issues of the Debt Burden.

During my time in office, we tried to fight against negative IMF and World Bank conditionalities. The conditions were making our people poorer. The gains post-independent Africa made in Basic Needs quality and access were being reversed. Instability was increasing. The debt service conditions were unfair and unsustainable. In May 1987, when we decided to cut off from the IMF programmes, our economy did better. People enjoyed a better life. However, the IMF and donors came down heavily on us, forcing us to later get back on the programme. At that time, not many governments stood with us. We were almost alone in our stance. Now things are different. The indebted countries are trying to act together. The church movement has made people and governments more aware about the need for courageous and practical action against unfair economic conditions.

The Jubilee Campaign involved people all over the world. The Churches were a strong anchor and network for the Jubilee campaign. Jubilee achieved awareness amongst people and governments of Europe and the creditor nations. Some debts were cancelled.

However, there are still many challenges for Europe and their brothers and sisters in other parts of the world. Within Europe, you have differences over Monetary Union and the Single Currency question. As in other places, one can also detect some inter-generational tensions. Europe's people are becoming older and older, and there is concern that there may not be an age balance and energy to support the future elders.

If we consider the whole world, relations and conditions are still unfair for most peoples of the world.

Billions of people suffer because of unjust economics. The Jubilee Campaign made achievements. However, the creditor governments' conditions for debt relief continue to bind the peoples of the world into bonds of poverty and injustice. The European governments still go on supporting the negative conditionalities of IMF and World Bank, conditions which have impoverished the world's people. They are unjust. These are conditions that are bringing back, through other windows, the processes of Slavery, Colonialism, and Human Bondage. They bring terror to people's lives. They are doing to us, we your brothers and sisters, what they would not be allowed to do to you the people of Europe.

Europe today stands at a very challenging point. With Europe's challenges so come great challenges and responsibilities affecting the Christian Churches. We've just had the invasion of Iraq. This has been very unpopular amongst the people of Europe. Their governments have not been democratic and have gone against the wishes of Europe's people. Millions of Europe's people protested against the plans for invasion of Iraq and the actual invasion. I was touched to be in London that February afternoon when millions of people marched against the war in what has been the biggest demonstration in Britain. Elsewhere, people in Europe, Africa, Asia, and even the United States, protested en masse. I am sure many of you here were amongst the protestors. I have just said in the USA, millions also protested. Apart from the arts, the members of Win Without War came from various backgrounds, some from religious groups. Chairperson, one banner by young people in Boston, Massachusetts, was striking. The banner asked, "Would Jesus have Dropped a Bomb?" This is a cardinal question for the Christian.

The Iraq invasion was done by governments. We must be careful not to demonise the American people. Yes, we must be careful not to demonise the British people. Governments and citizens do not always have the same position.

Yes, some of Europe's governments have taken directions which will have great implications for people in Europe and elsewhere. The Churches, a powerful force, were greatly opposed to the war. Amongst protesting voices were the Arch Bishop of Canterbury, who is going to be with us at this Trondheim Assembly - at some point, I understand. But the invasion of Iraq still went ahead. This was a challenge in the role and actions of the Church and the People, on one hand, and the governments of the Western world. God is the God of Truth - who stands for Justice. God's people in Europe cannot stay ineffective in the face of high government scheming which leads to the instability of the World. The Church cannot remain inactive in the face of an organised and open abuse of public resources and institutions. The Church cannot be silent in the face of action that compromises the very message of Christ and Love, in fact the very foundation of Christianity and existence. The Church must be active in *upholding Justice and in Defense of the Truth*. Without being clothed in Truth, we cannot be Free.

Already, the invasion of Iraq will have a backlash on many people in Europe and, in fact, all over the world. Here, in Europe, as fears of possible attacks increase, governments will invest a lot of time, resources, and energy on fortifying Europe. The lifestyle of people in some parts of Europe will change from the way we know it. Then there are the potential difficulties which may increase amongst people of different religions and ethnic origins. Already, at present there are tensions due to increased immigration in Europe. It is noted that intolerance of migrants, many from North Africa and countries with large Muslim populations, is a concern. All these need to be healed. You cannot have peace when there is fear. Let us remember that these are our neighbours. Nay, these are our brothers and sisters – from the same God. Christ's life and teachings was that of love for every one. The churches can play a big role in healing religious and ethnic rifts that may arise in Europe, Africa, and indeed elsewhere, because of the American-led invasion of Iraq. You, religious people, can help reconciliation between rulers and citizens.

Chairperson, it is clear that in the present world environment, where the USA is emerging as a dominant force, Europe will play a major role. Uncomfortable with the actions coming from Washington, people are beginning to look elsewhere for power alliances. The recent quarrels between the USA and European governments also show that the two parties are wary of each other. Mr Donald Rumsfeld, in a demeaning and dismissive tone, called the European governments that dissented from the USA war plans "Old Europe." This seemed to have been an attempt to paint your values as outdated and irrelevant.

I do not know how many of you here are from " Old Europe" and others from a New Europe. I do not know the boundaries of Old and New Europe. But let me mention that many people in other parts of the world respected the anti-war views of European governments and their people.

Apart from the Iraq invasion and occupation, the USA and Europe have differed over trade in steel and protectionism. The USA and Europe have differed over farm policies and subsidies. Already, the USA is taking the European Union to the WTO over trade disputes.

A major difference has been over GMOs. Just last month, United States President George W Bush made some remarks about how Europe influenced Africa's governments to decline American GMO maize assistance. The assumption, of course, is that Africans have no opinion of their own about what are the right things for them. Yet we have our views. In the year 2002, in Zambia, as with other Southern Africa countries, we did our own local and international research and decided GMOs could not be certified safe. GMOs may also have serious negative socio-economic effects on farming methods in Africa and elsewhere. Small Scale farmers and the public can be greatly affected.

Europe is being blamed by America for our decline. They expect that ours is to gratefully receive only and not to question. For a long time, things have been pushed against our interests.

Chairperson, Friends, some people see in the conflict between USA and Europe somewhat a competition for world dominance or resistance to that dominance. Or it may be resistance against America's recent forceful approach to things. Here, allow me to emphasise: *we must not demonise the American people for the actions of their government.*

However, underneath the differences between Europe and the USA is an underlining difference in the world about which direction humanity should go during this millennium. The interest in the direction is much more than between America and Europe. It is about values. It is about what ways we need to take in order to go into what must be socially as well as economically sustainable development. It is about what ways we should leave behind if we are to have peace and development. It is about human relations. It is about Values AND spiritual direction. Yes, it is every one's concern. Peoples of the world do not want to be driven but want to be active participants in the family of humanity. That is what Democracy is all about. It is much more than ballot boxes and multiparty systems. Friends, you in the church have a major challenge of healing and reconciling the world. Europe's people can make a difference in the interest of justice and peace.

Brothers and Sisters, as church persons, you must be involved in healing relationships across continents. You must explore where the conflicts are coming from and where they are going.

You need reconciliation, within Europe, over the Iraq invasion. Within Europe, differences must be dealt with. The Iraq invasion has led to insecurity amongst people in Europe and America. We sense people gripped in fear of possible reactions. This fear is affecting human relationships all over the world. This fear, my friends, needs your healing.

You need to also reconcile with others in the world, those who have felt some unfairness surrounding the invasion and how America and its friends have treated people of other parts of the world. At a church conference on Terrorism in a Globalised World, in the Phillipines in 2002, the first paragraph of the Conference Statement reads:

We grieve with the American people as we remember the pain resulting from criminal acts of terrorism on September 11. We grieve the death and destruction inflicted on the people of Afghanistan that began the so-called 'war on terror' on October 7. We remember as we grieve the victims of the U.S. wars of direct and indirect intervention and aggression on the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Vietnam, Korea, Philippines, China, Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Columbia, Indonesia, Iraq, Palestine. Indeed, the story of U.S. aggression on many countries in the world and the massive affliction of terrorism did not just begin on September 11. Today, the entire human community, as with all of creation, suffer the devastation of this despicable 'war on terror', and we ask why?

Chairperson and all friends,

Two thousand years ago, our Lord and Saviour in Matthew 13 v 12 and also in Mark 4 v 24 talked about those who had would be given more and those who had not, even the little they had would be taken away from them. What Christ described at that time still exists 2000 years later. Each time I come across this passage, I conclude Jesus Christ was merely describing what exists but was *not* saying this was the ideal. The challenge to Christ's church therefore is to organise to remove conditions in our human society that bring about a situation of this type.

Chairperson, here we are talking about fighting to remove *Poverty* from our human society. The Church has an extremely heavy responsibility on its shoulders. Allow me to refer once again to the issues I raised earlier on IMF, World Bank, and WTO. When we discuss those organisations, we cannot ignore to bring into focus the issue of **Globalisation**. A few days ago, we learnt that hundreds of thousands of people – said to have travelled from all corners of our globe – to protest against monetary policies being pursued by the G7, now plus Russia brought to G8.

I wish to challenge you all my Church leaders to respond positively to these problems brought about by the rich nations against the poor. The people who were protesting against decisions by those nations representing the well-to -do were demanding changes in this extremely serious and yet ugly situation: The rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer.

May I here ask that you permit me to point out that there is nothing we can do – in my opinion – to prevent our one world developing towards *Globalisation*. The powerful forces of *Science and Technology* will continue to make this our ONE WORLD truly a GLOBAL VILLAGE. Those forces of Science and Technology are fast reducing problems we face as human beings of *Time and Space* in this world.

Chairperson – what then is the solution to this problem of the rich growing richer and the poor growing poorer? In a way, I here already referred to the place of the church, the role of the Church in so far as Policy makers are concerned – This is policy makers at all levels. The church has to, *Nay must*

REORGANISE itself in such a way that it can be listened to effectively. It can influence decisions of state.

In Africa, the Church should go beyond just influencing decision-makers. The Church must help fight *Poverty* directly. If we remove Poverty from our human society, we shall have begun to defeat HIV-AIDS, MALARIA, TUBERCULOSIS, and many other dangerous diseases. Wherever we remove POVERTY from human society, these people living with AIDS will live longer than they do today.

Chairperson, the question then is: how can the Church be involved in fighting poverty? I wish to recommend the as follows:

1. (a) The Church must consider issues of Poverty and their root causes at the *grass-root level*.
 - (b) In so far as Africa is concerned, the (a) above means going to the village level.
 - (c) (a) above means helping to develop systems of peasants learning how, when and where to plant suitable crops for any given area and season;
 - (d) When to weed, and when to harvest and how to store the harvest

2. *Communication*: In most countries in Africa, communications between villages is a major problem. It is therefore important for church organisations to help establish systems of communication that might establish in different parts of the continent the following:
 - (a) depend on nature for electricity, such as through solar and wind driven equipment
 - (b) and (a) above would assist in establishing such methods of communication as Internet.
 - (c) all these help to develop human society much faster where they are developed

We must heal conflict and war. We must remove the seeds of war. Brothers and Sisters, we must deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Pandemic threatens not only Africa, but the whole world. We must find ways of helping with medicine and health services in a way which is accessible for most people. In the USA and in other rich countries, you can live long and meaningful lives with HIV/AIDS. Not so in Zambia and in other poor countries. Why?

In our work with people living with HIV and AIDS, we have found that spiritual support tremendously helps people to live better. We also know that we must break the wall of silence on AIDS. When I went for an HIV test in Lusaka, I was found negative. But even if I had been found positive, I would have used my status to campaign against HIV/AIDS.

I congratulate President George W Bush, the Congress, and the American people for supporting the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, by earmarking \$15 billion for 12 African and two Caribbean nations. We must urge them to see to it that the money so generously offered is given without conditionalities.

You must heal the religious divide happening amongst people in Europe. Within the Christian church, you have to build tolerance and healing. This Assembly is a very good

platform for intra-religious healing. Your members must also reconcile with their neighbours of other religions.

Christ is about compassion and healing. Christ is about justice.

We are our Brother and Sister's keeper. We are each other's keepers not as patrons and underlings but as equal Partners working together in God's Work. We must act in the spirit of Love. In 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, Verse 13, we learn:

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

As churches, you can act to improve things affecting your brothers and sisters. The Conference on European Churches has a fellowship of 126 churches of various backgrounds – including Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, and Old Catholic. You also have 43 associated organisations from all countries of Europe. Friends, you therefore reach a lot of people in Europe and world-wide. You can act to remove injustice. You can follow Christ and be witnesses to Justice, Peace, and Development. As you leave this 12th Assembly and Trondheim, may you go into the world and share the Light and Peace of God.

God's Peace and Blessings Be With You.

Thank You
