

# Statements of Confession at Harare, Zimbabwe 2006 And Berlin 2005

1st September 2006

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### 1. Austria/Hungary (Christa Behr)

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

I come in the name of Jesus humbly before our brothers and sisters  
of Africa and stand in the gap for our nation because of the sins of  
our forefathers.

1. I confess that the nation of Austria participated in the Berlin  
Conference 1884/5, not doing anything against the decisions.  
We were too weak at that point to colonize any country; we  
would have done so if it were possible.
2. I confess that Austria produced the weapons for the  
colonisation.
3. I confess that Austrians were involved in the slave trade. I

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confess our pride over people coming from Africa and repent of any downgrading of Africans to be second-rate humans.

4. I confess that some of our missionaries tried to change Africans into Europeans before they could become Christians. We brought religions and denominationalism to Africa instead of the gospel.

5. We robbed the Africans of their game, and even killed Africans, as if they were animals themselves.

6. We have abusively used pictures of misery in Africa for fund raising purposes of European so-called "mercy ministries".

We confess these things as sins, and ask the Lord and our African brothers and sisters to forgive us and our nation.

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## **2. United States of America (Dr. William Schenck)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies, Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa:

As a representative of American Christians I confess the sins of the United States and our silent participation and assent at the Berlin West Africa Conference 1884/5. We chose to embrace imperialism both as a philosophy and a strategy and as a means of accomplishing our own global aspirations. We supported the imperialistic aspirations of the European governments and share responsibility for all the resulting consequences. This significant step as a nation positioned us to enter into our own new-colonial, geo-imperialist initiatives in Africa and elsewhere in the world. Our responsibilities for the suffering and arrested development of Africa run very deep. Despite being a former colony ourselves and although we had already ended slavery in the USA and fought a civil war of emancipation:

1. As an observing nation to the Berlin Conference we gave assent

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to the European Nations gathered in Berlin to pursue their colonial ambitions in Africa.

2. America was first to give political recognition to the International Association of the Congo, the pseudonym of King Leopold II's personal empire in Congo.
3. We were often aware of the abuse of power and the atrocities being committed, but our silence gave license to our European brothers in the brutalization of African peoples and Nations.
4. We benefited enormously from the enslavement and trade in African people.
5. Africans were not invited or allowed to immigrate to our country but came in the bellies of ships, treated as chattels – as property to be bought and sold, to be used, abused and mistreated in our pursuit of power and wealth.
6. America fought the Cold War by proxy in Africa, selling arms to both sides in conflicts, seeing African nations as pawns in our greater war against the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact and thereby denying our own Declaration of Independence, which says, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
7. We have impoverished, imperiled and enslaved African nations through our technology and through our loans – requiring exorbitant interest rates to repay their national debt and limiting their ability to participate and compete in the international community and markets.
8. We have pushed our own religious and cultural models of Christianity, the conflict and competition of denominationalism

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rather than seeking to allow Africans and African nations to contextualize the Christ of the Gospels into their own language, culture and lifestyle.

For this and so much more we sincerely repent before God and you all and ask for your heartfelt forgiveness – as difficult and painful as that might be.

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### **3. The Netherlands (Mr. & Mrs. Pieter & Helene Bos)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies, Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

We, as Christian representatives of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, supported by the Dutch prayer movement and the Dutch Evangelical Alliance, acknowledge and confess:

1. That we, from the mid 17th century, introduced in South Africa the SLAVE TRADE as well as SLAVERY.
2. That we modeled APARTHEID. By this we created the lie that white people were superior to others. This resulted in a lack of respect for African people, for their intelligence and their culture, thus robbing them of their dignity.
3. That at the time of the 1884/5 Berlin Conference, Dutch merchants, with almost 50 trading stations, were the most powerful commercial presence around the mouth of the Congo river. For their trading purposes they demanded such goods from the Africans that the local agriculture and trading infrastructures were crushed, causing immense suffering.
4. That we, at the 1884/5 Berlin conference, did not support an English proposal to discuss the humanitarian aspects of the European presence in Africa, out of an attitude of contempt for the Africans, and to safeguard our commercial interests.

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5. That in certain areas of Dutch, European and international diplomacy the attitude of imperialism still pervades.

6. Lastly, it is terrible that only now, more than a century after colonization and more than half a century after your independence, we at last come to acknowledge the wickedness of our ways. And even now there is only a limited national support.

We confess these sins to God, and to you, representatives from Africa, and we ask for your forgiveness.

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## **4. Spain (Mrs. Philippa Gardner)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

As a woman with Spanish ancestors and on behalf of Christian people in Spain, I ask for your forgiveness for having participated in the Congress in Berlin in 1884-1885.

1. I ask for forgiveness for the consequences of colonization. I ask for forgiveness for the sin of greed, for robbing your land, your inheritance.

2. I ask for your forgiveness for the sin of pride.

3. Please forgive us for idolatry.

4. Please forgive us for having robbed you of your honor and your dignity.

5. Please forgive us for separating your families. Mothers, please forgive us for the pain we caused in your hearts. We ask for your forgiveness. Young people, please forgive us for taking away your family security and protection.

6. We ask for your forgiveness for looking down on you, for demeaning you.

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7. Please forgive us for failing to defend you.

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## **5. Germany (Rev. Samuel Wessel)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

1. We Germans believed that we were able to make things better and we believed that we would do just that. We came in order to show the other European nations how to do things right. Our insincerity in this claim was unlimited.

2. Bismarck appeared as an honest broker between the European and African interests, but in reality it was all about power and influence. We played the African nations off against each other in order to gain benefits.

3. The biggest lie ever was the heading of the general file of the Berlin Congo Conference 1884/5: "In the name of the Almighty God". The Germans thought of themselves as being friendly and willing to help – but none of it was true. Even 200 years before the 1884/5 Conference we had been gaining from the slave trade and exploiting Africa.

4. The influence we did not have in Europe we sought to achieve in Africa. We abused African countries as trophies of our strength and greatness. The biggest sin was trying to heal the German soul, torn between inferiority and striving to dominate, through the robbery of Africa.

5. God could have healed us, but we used you in our futile attempt to heal ourselves. We did not give you anything but robbed you of everything and we were not healed in the process. We exported poisoned theology and you were badly served.

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6. The damage that Germany did to Africa is immeasurable – we do not know how you can ever forgive us, but we need your forgiveness. There had only been a false repentance in our country before the First World War. We had attacked you and soon after that we attacked the whole world. Our sins are so immeasurable – please, we need your forgiveness. We also continued to abuse Africa even after the two World Wars in order to feel better.

7. As the nation of the reformation we should have known better. Even today our industry regards Africa only as an inexpensive source of supplies for their own gain.

8. Out of pride and other attitudes we used this conference to destroy your destiny. We used the fate of Africa to feel better about ourselves. As would be colonial masters we brought death to your nations and treated you in an inhuman way. We killed 70.000 Hereros. We deeply regret that.

9. We are guilty of the sin of not loving you, of not learning from you, of not standing by your side. We confess our sin and ask you for forgiveness.

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## **6. Portugal (Mrs. Trish Perkins)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

On behalf of Portugal, I confess and repent of the sins we have committed against Africa and Africans from many nations, and against the Lord. I repent of the following:

1. Being the leading European nation to colonize Africa with all its evil consequences
2. Being the first nation to bring slaves from Africa to Europe,

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holding slave markets in Portugal and transporting African slaves to the Americas

3. Enjoying an abusive trading role with Africa for centuries, including being the last European nation to abandon the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the last to abolish slavery

4. Treating Africans with great cruelty and inhumanity, including taking women for ourselves, killing Africans with little conscience and disregarding African culture and identity

5. Behaving wickedly in Africa with pride, arrogance, cruelty, greed, jealousy and hatred

6. Imposing our language not just as a lingua franca but as a replacement for all African languages spoken in your possession, calling your languages, "the language of dogs"

7. Denying the value of African distinctiveness in their identity, culture, history and language and brutally robbing you of these things

8. Coveting the riches of Africa and treating Africa as a source of wealth for ourselves, including the large immigrations of the 20th century, where we rushed to your lands to make ourselves rich

9. Bringing a spirit of division to the people and to the land

10. Competing with and coveting against the European nations as they scrambled for Africa, causing more division

11. Wrongly preaching the gospel by encouraging Africans to stay poor whilst we continued to rob you

12. Arrogance in the education systems we created in Africa, teaching only Portuguese history and glorying in past conquests

13. Presenting the Africans with the option of assimilation as the only way of acceptability



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14. Vindictiveness as we left Africa without any satisfactory means of social, economic or political stability and security leading to civil war and appalling poverty

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## **7. Belgium (Miss Lynn Badcock)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

As the Belgian delegate, I wish to come before you and confess the weight of sin upon my nation.

1. King Leopold II of the Belgians was guilty of playing a leading role in the Berlin West Africa Conference 1884/5. Our nation and our governments coveted your nations, your land and your possessions, regarding them as our own property. They did not show you any respect. Their hearts were hardened towards you and were guilty of enormous sin.

2. I ask you for forgiveness from the bottom of my heart for the denial of your rights, the theft of your goods, all kinds of abuse against your territory and your inhabitants; for the pillaging of your minerals, of your flora and fauna, and for the corruption that we exported to you.

3. I ask forgiveness for the insensitive remarks made by our politicians that caused offense, where you were accused of corruption – a practice which you learned from us.

4. I ask forgiveness for the systematic pillaging of the Congo Basin in particular and the exploitation and abuse of people in industries such as the rubber plantations.

5. I ask forgiveness for the spirit of control and manipulation and for the spirit of imperialism that manifested itself in a satanic way at the highest level in your nations, including the tyranny

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that was the result of it.

6. I ask forgiveness for our pride, arrogance, contempt, rejection and a spirit of superiority towards Africans.

7. I also confess the horrific acts – the sadism, torture and genocide of perhaps 8-10 million. That breaks our hearts. All methods of punishment were practiced: whipping, mutilation, chopping off of hands, abduction and imprisoning children among others.

8. I also ask forgiveness for the dehumanization which the Belgians brought to you. This included the destruction of your cultural and ethnic identity and the failure to train you to manage your own resources.

9. We contributed to the division and the separation of the tribes, carrying the Flemish/Walloon conflict into Africa. In our history books we lie concerning the historical facts and are remain silent concerning our sins.

10. I confess the attitude of the church and of the missionaries who propagated white superiority in Africa.

11. I confess that, when DRC became independent, we abandoned your nation and did not give you adequate support. Even today Belgium does not do enough to support Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

12. I need to confess that even today in Belgium, Africans – and Congolese in particular – do not have equal schooling and job opportunities. This reveals the continued sin of racism in the Belgians, even seen among Christians.

I sincerely repent for all these sins and humbly ask for your forgiveness.

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## **8. France (Mr. Robin MacAlpine)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

I speak in the spirit of repentance of the French people. When we were seated around the table of the Berlin-Congo Conference in 1884-85, we believed, with our thirst for power, that we were intellectually superior. I want to say to you today, that it is absolutely not with that same heart that I am, and we are here today, but rather carrying deep shame for what was decided around that table in Berlin in 1884/5 and for our attitude throughout our colonialist presence on your continent.

1. I ask your forgiveness firstly for not having considered you as brothers and sisters, made also in the likeness of God. I want to say to you that the reality of our sins weighs extremely heavily on our heart, and that we recognize that we are still paying the price today for what we caused you to suffer.

2. There were many grave wrongs, among others, that characterized our colonialism in Africa: extreme arrogance, pride, manipulation, lust for wealth, and all combined with our competition with England that France exported to your continent, and which persists today.

3. A list of our sins would be far too long to detail here, so allow me to cite but a few: extreme arrogance, violence and torture, intellectual manipulation, control through philosophy, domination of your languages and cultures by ours, the fact of having set tribe against tribe, of having traced artificial frontiers without regard for distinctions between tribes and their lands, to continue to steal from the ground of Africa ... and the list would continue.

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4. After so many years of abuse, I do not presume for a moment that to ask forgiveness for all these afflictions could respond to more than a fraction of your pain and suffering. But we believe and I believe that our humble repentance during this long process of which this conference is but a part will have a cumulative healing effect.

5. So, I do humbly ask forgiveness of Africa, but I specially ask forgiveness of the francophone nations that were created from French colonies of so many different tribes and peoples. I ask forgiveness of Togo and of Senegal, of Niger and of Mauritania. I ask forgiveness of Mali and of the Ivory Coast, of Guinea and of Gabon, of the republic of Congo and of Chad. I ask forgiveness of the Central African Republic and of Cameroon, of Burkina Faso and of Benin, of Morocco and of Tunisia and of Algeria, as well as for French implication in the more recent problems in the Great Lakes region.

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### **9. United Kingdom (Messrs. Christopher Seaton & Roger Mitchell)**

Your Excellency Mr President of Zimbabwe, Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Dignitaries and all people of Africa

We as the nation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland confess and repent of the sins we have committed against Africa and Africans from many nations, and against the Living God – Father, Son & Holy Spirit. We repent with a deep sense of guilt and shame of the following:

1. Competition with our fellow European nations for imperial domination in the world that contributed to the Scramble for Africa and the Berlin West Africa Conference of 1884/5
2. The imposition of the Empire Spirit upon Africa carrying as it

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does racial, cultural and linguistic superiority, the will to rule and an exclusive spirit

3. Taking rather than giving – we greedily pillaged the nations, taking the riches and resources of the lands of Africa such as gold, silver, copper, diamonds, oil, rubber and cash crops like cotton, coffee, tea, cocoa and ground nuts

4. Dehumanizing and degrading Africans, treating them as goods, calling them “black ivory”, perpetrating the evil of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, failing adequately to judge and reform slaving within Africa and categorizing Africans as inferior people.

5. Robbing Africans of their destiny and identity through an ideology of superiority which was carried through education, government and employment opportunities

6. Covenant breaking as we lied and deceived African leaders into signing away their rights and their lands for trivial returns, especially here in Zimbabwe we repent of the Rudd Concession and the cheating of King Lobegula

7. Allowing our nation to be a seedbed for a global demonic spirit that today through globalization in Africa perpetuates the locking up of the destiny of nations, particularly thinking of the legacy of Cecil John Rhodes

8. Shedding innocent blood through wars of conquest, economic and social displacements and unjust governance

9. Imposing concentration camps in South Africa which created the ground for apartheid and was recycled by the Nazis

10. By the roots of our arrogance and selfish ease, we gave room to the fruits of freemasonry & the occult that we were already approving in our own lands

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11. Creating unjust trade patterns: taking primary resources from Africa and selling them back as manufactured goods to the detriment of the balance of payments in African economies
  12. Corrupting the agricultural patterns of African nations so that instead of growing food for its people, we encouraged cash crops to be grown for European markets.
  13. Cultural domination through the imposition of British values including the English Language in education, politics and all areas of life
  14. Inflicting the unresolved spiritual wounds of our own islands upon Africa through our damaged children, e.g. Henry Morton Stanley and Frederick Lugard
  15. Presenting the gospel to the African peoples without separating adequately the unholy alliance of the Church from the Empire and the Empire Spirit, which included imposing denominations and failing to recognize that God had opened Africa to Britain for the expansion of the Kingdom of God
- “We have plundered many nations, shed innocent blood and built our realm by unjust gain. We have plotted the ruin of many tribes and peoples. We have piled up stolen goods, making ourselves wealthy by extortion and have by deceit and treachery made false covenants.”

Habakkuk 2:6-10

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Appendix :

**Other Statements made to the Europe-African  
Reconciliation Process Conference in Berlin, November  
2005.**

**Denmark**

# **Statements of Confession at Harare, Zimbabwe 2006 And Berlin 2005**

On behalf of the Kingdom of Denmark we hereby declare and confess, that we have sinned against God and you, the African people, by being a part of the Berlin – Congo conference in 1884 and the consequences of doing so.

The nation of Denmark did this out of greed, pride and for its own benefit. We confess that we as a nation have taken advantage of the African people, in particular in West-Africa, by being highly involved in the Transatlantic slave trading. We acknowledge that transportation conditions were completely inhuman.

We want to confess that Denmark has forced African people to be slaves in the Danish colonies. Even though the abuse, idolatry and even killings that took place in the colonies were reported to the Danish King, he chose not to act on them and stop the injustice.

We ask you, those who are representing the African nations gathered here today, to receive our confession. We as ambassadors of Denmark want to repent of all that we have done wrong towards your people.

We want to declare that we are equals and that you are a beautiful people made in the image of God.

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## **Sweden/Norway**

The nations of Sweden and Norway want to declare that we have sinned against God and our African brothers and sisters and their continent:

In attempting to appear neutral and passive in relation to the rest of the world, we have in practise actively, in our pride, taken advantage of and assisted in the slave trade, in the colonisation and in the greedy exploitation of your continent. By doing so we have committed the sin of negligence against evil, falseness and

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cowardice.

We have stolen your resources and robbed you of your dignity.

In our extensive missionary work in Congo and other nations on the African continent we have looked down on you with prejudice. We have not just brought you Jesus, but also a strong spirit of dominion, empire and division.

On behalf of Sweden, Norway and our people we want to ask for your forgiveness and mercy!

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**Turkey** (This statement was made in Berlin in November 2005)

In the name of Allah we fought war after war in Africa. From our point of view there were no lords but us. The word Turk means Destroyer, Wrath, Allah's Whip, and that's how we feel about Africa. We brought confusion and destruction to Africa, exploitation through heavy taxing, idolatry, bloody justice, and a destructive mentality of self-sacrifice. We brought manipulation and suppression.

We dislocated humans through the slave trade; we have Islamized through pressure, and abused those who resisted.

We confess these sins as sins, and ask for forgiveness.

**Russia** (This statement was made in Berlin in November 2005)

Russia pushed herself into this dynamic, but did not stand on the side of justice.

Russians consider Africans as second-rate humans, as a lower race.

Up until today Russia has abused African nations in the Cold War, and even up to today she is selling arms to Africa.

We confess these sins and ask for forgiveness.

**Italy**

On behalf of our nation Italy, we stand before God and before our



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African brothers:

We confess the pride of Italy thinking herself to be better than other nations. We confess that we have been covetous as we also wanted to have colonies.

We have brought to Africa a false religion, worshipping Mary, instead of the true faith in Jesus Christ.

We have brought rape and prostitution.

We have committed murder, bloodshed, violence and cruelty.

We have acted in injustice and unrighteousness and without conscience.

We have brought strife and separation, corruption and misuse.

We have broken and misinterpreted treaties with Africans.

And especially we ask our brothers from Ethiopia and Eritrea for forgiveness because we broke into a Christian brother nation which has been Christian since the earliest centuries.

Unlike other nations we didn't come under the cover of christianization into Ethiopia and Eritrea but we were striving for power and brought war and separation to brothers and we interfered in the succession to the throne. Where they expected help from us (their "Christian Italian brothers") in the fight against Islamic threat we even used that threat for our purposes and deceived our fellow Christians.

We confess these sins and we ask for forgiveness!

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