



For Immediate Release, January 16, 2010

## **A Pastoral Prayer of Comfort and Hope for Haiti and Egypt**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” – Luke 4:18-19*

At the annual gathering of Christian Churches Together (CCT), we have met once again to deepen our fellowship as a diverse group of national Christian leaders. In the midst of this time together, and here on the eve of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, we have been deeply affected by recent events that have led to the suffering of parts of the body of Christ.

We grieve the devastation and loss of life caused by the January 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti. We mourn the death of brothers and sisters, including Archbishop Joseph Serge Miot of the Catholic Church and other faith leaders. In the face of devastating scenes of the “living walking among the dead,” we seek to be icons of the living Christ. We pray that our affected brothers and sisters will be comforted and encouraged by our pastoral presence that includes prayers, visitation and physical aid that our churches have rushed to provide. Such a presence seeks to give witness to Christ’s work of healing and hope.

Likewise, as we “mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15), we are one with our brothers and sisters in the Coptic Orthodox Church who have suffered when parishioners were gunned down in Nag Hammadi, Egypt, after Christmas Eve services. We lament the use of violence in the name of God.

In the midst of the world’s suffering, we pray for God’s compassionate and healing spirit.

*We bow our heads in prayer to Him “Who loosens the bound and uplifts the fallen, the Hope of those who have no hope and the Help of those who have no helper, the Comfort of the fainthearted and the Harbor of those in the storm”, to look, with a compassionate eye, on those who are suffering, and to be as He is, full of mercy, full of compassion, full of love. For He grants us more than we ask for, and more than we need, and more than we understand. – Adapted from the Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil, the Litany of the Sick*

Christian Churches Together in the USA (CCT-USA) is made up of 36 communions/denominations and six national Christian organizations, representing over 100 million Americans. We are the broadest, most inclusive fellowship of Christian churches and traditions in the USA, with national leaders from five Christian families — African American, Evangelical/Pentecostal, Historic Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic. Our mission is to enable churches and Christian organizations to grow closer together in Christ in order to strengthen our Christian witness in the world.

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