

**CARTAGENA DECLARATION. AIPRAL MEETING ON FAITH AND ECONOMY ON  
“UNFAIR COMMERCE OR HUMAN DIGNITY”. CARTAGENA, NOVEMBER 7, 2004**

We, representatives of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches of the Caribbean and El Salvador regions, members of AIPRAL working with representatives from member Churches and in connection with Churches belonging to CLAI in Colombia, met in Cartagena from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2004 for the International Meeting on Faith and Economy, on the subject: Unfair Commerce and Human Dignity.

In prayer and adoration, illuminated by the word of God and moved by the power of his spirit, we discerned the issues that most affect our people. We acknowledged through reflection and testimony the menace to God’s creation, and the suffering of millions of human beings.

We see that throughout the earth one particular economic model is on the increase. It is a model that in spite of presenting itself as attractive and good, in spite of promising happiness to human beings demonstrates, via its effects on our communities, that is in fact the opposite. This model demands all governments and cultures to respond to its laws in order to achieve the promise of unlimited wealth.

This model has authority over many governments and declares war to those who do not submit to it. It presents itself as an absolute and mysterious power to which human beings are to trust their destiny. For those who wish to achieve its promises must serve it faithfully. Yet many are cheated by its false promises.

This model is imposed in our regions by the implementation of the Free Trade Areas of the Americas and the Free Trade Markets, both of which degrade workers rights and working conditions, and accelerate the degradation of the environment. It puts people’s life and health at risk, it deepens the privatization of social support, it bankrupts small and medium sized enterprises, and it stimulates deindustrialization while increasing social exclusion. Society is also militarized and democratic rights become more limited.

In face of this model’s pretensions we state: Only God is the Lord of creation and owner of life. He gives life to all human beings through his love and grace. Life is priceless. Life cannot be sold in the market place. Based on this we commit:

1. To adopt ARM Declaration expressed in its document “Covenanting for Justice in the Economy and the Earth”, approved at its 24<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Accra, Ghana, August 2004.
2. To promote study and take actions on these documents in our Churches and communities in order to raise conscientiousness and unmask this economic model that intends to usurp God’s place in the world.
3. To continue strengthening a movement on faith and commitment, in the Reformed Churches and those belonging to CLAI, in order to resist this model and to transmit the hope of life in abundance promised and inaugurated by Jesus of Nazareth. We join the Ecumenical Alliance that promotes the making of a Global Action Week for Fair Trade from 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> April 2005.
4. To participate in joint actions alongside social and popular movements that intend to construct alternative fair economic models that care for creation and protect the weak of the world.

We invite other Churches, Christian and social organizations to join us in these efforts to fortify resistance to this economic model and to defend life and God’s creation and all the inhabitants of the world.

Churches and Organizations represented at the meeting:

Presbyterian Church of Venezuela  
Boriquén Presbyterian Church in Puerto Rico  
Presbyterian Church of Colombia  
Reformed Church of El Salvador  
United Evangelical Church of the Dominican Republic  
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia  
Christian Mesoamerican Community  
Methodist Church of Colombia  
Anglican Episcopal Church in Colombia  
Baptist Church of Colombia  
Ecumenical Network of Colombia

Cartagena, November 7, 2004.

*Translated by María Eugenia Mendizábal.*