

THE GOSPEL CONFRONTS THE UNFAIR ECONOMY AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH. AIPRAL COOPERATION AND TESTIMONY DEPARTMENT. SANTIAGO DE CHILE, NOVEMBER 4 TO 6, 2005

Brothers and sisters from the Argentinean, Bolivian, Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian and Peruvian Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, invited by the Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America (AIPRAL), gathered in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in Santiago, Chile. The gathering was follow-up to one of the challenges enunciated by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) in Accra – the Alliance for Economical Justice and for the Earth.

The groans of Creation (Romans 8:22) moved us and led us to ponder our role as reformed Christians in the face of economic unfairness and the earth's destruction.

We realize God has given us in Latin America wonderful gifts. We have a great biodiversity, diverse cultures with their art, their music and their customs, abundant water, incredible landscapes, exuberating green forests, coasts, mountains and deserts. Glory to God!

We also recognize that we haven't been able to administer the Creation according to the mandate of our Lord (Genesis 1:27-23). We ask for God's forgiveness for we have not been loyal to his call... We are immersed in an economic system that oppresses our people and creates unfair relationships amongst brothers and sisters and with the Creation. This system is supported by violence and corruption, it sells illusions, it tells us what is needed in order to live – consequently this leads us to a blind consumerism (the market is the new idol that rules today). It tells us also that the magic recipes brought to us from the North are the way our countries will become richer. We ask God to forgive us for falling into the traps of a system that generates suffering and for letting it conquer us.

We know that to confront what has been established is difficult, full of risks, and may even mean death. We may believe this is a lost cause. But as the book of Esther says (Esther 4:12-17) we are called to intercede in favor of our peoples and to be God's agents of liberation in order to achieve life in plenitude for the whole of creation (John 10:10). Our silence and inaction are sinful. We ask our Lord to help us understand the signs of these hard times and to give us courage to be the salt and light of this world (Matthew 5:13-16).

We hence recommend our Churches:

- To take up the Accra Confession as their own.
- To dare lift their voices in a prophetic condemnation knowing they have the support of a broad community, that of the Reformed family.
- To create discussion groups on issues regarding environment, business ethics, and studies of alternative systems.
- To join national and international networks with vast experience in the struggles for these causes.
- To reinforce their educational processes, to sensitize their members and strengthen their individual responsibility as Christians and citizens of the world. (John 17)

The Lord asks us to be artisans of Justice, to love mercy and to walk in his ways. We therefore commit ourselves, our time and energies to change, renew and restore the economic system and the earth so that we all may have life in its plenitude.

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Translated by María Eugenia Mendizábal.