

25 January 2016  
Matanzas, Cuba

May the grace, mercy and peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you!

It is with great joy and gratitude to our God that we share the outcomes of the continental consultation, *A Gender Reading of the Times: Bi-regional Conversations with Accra 10+*. We gathered in the *Seminario Evangélico de Teología* in Matanzas, Cuba, to celebrate, consider and evaluate the reality of our countries under the guidance of the Word, around the contemporary implications of the confessions of Belhar and Accra. The breadth and diversity of our Americas and the Caribbean space of our gathering challenged us to contextualize our dialogues.

The Bible studies, lectures and learnings we shared launched our reading of violence throughout our continent and worldwide through six lenses:

1. *gender studies* as an instrument for the empowerment for women and as a space for the articulation of new masculinities towards the encouragement of equity in gender relations and a life of solidarity;
2. the ominous and problematic reality of *discrimination on the basis of race and origin* throughout our region, and the insidious ways in which this discrimination is particularly disenfranchising to indigenous communities, persons of African descent, and peoples who are displaced and migrated;
3. *discrimination based on the socioeconomic status of the individual*, the reality of poverty in our countries, and the relentless increase in the gap between the rich and the rest of the population;
4. the *complex and undeniable correlation between poverty, racism and the undervaluing of women, and their sociocultural, political and religious elements*;
5. the *manifold manifestation of violence, a plague throughout our Americas*, and the ways this violence is primarily present in the lives of women, children and disenfranchised peoples; and
6. *the environment requiring actions of protection and reconstruction from the People of God*.

The conversations that ensued revealed multiple convergences and proposals towards pastoral and missional work that witness and act to justice. We affirm that the work before us challenges us to understand ourselves as members of a great Christian Reformed family that shares mission and ministry in solidarity and collaboration as the Body of Christ throughout our continents. This level of solidarity requires of us that we reclaim a spirituality that encourages our relationships and Reformed theological thought.

We are called to a mission of justice that requires from us public and political action. We are called to denounce the unjust systems and to work toward justice and equity, to articulate new models of relationship, and to sojourn with the people for and towards peace. In that walking with the people, we are expected to denounce the way mass media continues to create images that encourage discrimination and the commodification of people. This requires a church leadership that is committed to our Reformed faith and mission and to these projects through local, national and regional acting.

We recognize that there is much that lies ahead on our way to live up to the ways the Belhar and Accra confessions call and challenge our global Reformed family. We also affirm how the Gospels challenge our mission, and how they articulate an unavoidable call to denounce the issues mentioned above. And so we call upon the WCRC—the Executive Committee, its secretaries and directors, and the 2017 General Council—to affirm the essential unity of the Christian Reformed family through concerted efforts toward peace, solidarity, human dignity and creation justice throughout our continents and the world.

In the love of Christ,

Joy Evelyn Abdul-Mohan, Presbyterian Church of Trinidad and Tobago  
Dora Arce Valentín, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba and  
World Communion of Reformed Churches  
Darío Barolín, Waldensian Evangelical Church of the Río de la Plata, and the  
Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in Latin America (AIPRAL)  
Helis Barraza Díaz, Presbyterian Church of Colombia and vice president for Latin America,  
World Communion of Reformed Churches  
Luis Berner Romero, Presbyterian Church of Colombia  
Molly Casteel, Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Yoharllys Cribeiro, Presbyterian Church of Venezuela  
Loida de Valera, Presbyterian Church of Venezuela  
Rosa Hernández Bustos, Presbyterian Church of Colombia  
Gaitri-Singh Henry, Guyana Presbyterian Church  
Shannon Jammal-Hollemans, Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Karen Horst, Presbyterian Church in Canada  
María Jiménez, Presbyterian Church of Venezuela  
Kelvin Marte Sena, Evangelical Dominican Church  
Yvette Noble Bloomfield, United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands and vice president  
for the Caribbean and North America, World Communion of Reformed Churches  
Ofelia Ortega, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba  
Gustavo Quintero-Casadiago, Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico,  
coordinator for youth department AIPRAL  
Miguel A. Rosa Morales, Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico  
Yilza Saliva, Boriquén Presbyterian Synod of Puerto Rico  
Amaury Tañón-Santos, Presbyterian Church (USA), Hispanic/Latino Caucus  
Karen Georgia Thompson, United Church of Christ  
Edelberto Valdés, Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba  
Lisa VanderWal, Reformed Church in America and  
convener of Caribbean and North America Area Council (CANAAC)