

STATEMENT OF UNIVERSIDAD REFORMADA REGARDING THE CURRENT SITUATION OF OUR COUNTRY.

1. **Universidad Reformada** was born as an educational project committed to building peace in an extremely violated country, Colombia. This commitment is clearly expressed in one of our slogans: "We Educate Life for Peace".
2. Our country is going through difficult times: a pandemic that revealed a flawed health care system; a deepening of economic exclusion and the enrichment of certain sectors of the economy that have seen their profits increase during this period; increased unemployment and the vanishing of entrepreneurships, small and medium size businesses, especially affecting women and young people; the increase in monetary poverty according to data provided by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE in Spanish); the unveiling of the technological gap that prevents access and connectivity to the possibility of continuing educational processes with the most vulnerable sectors of the population, thus denying future possibilities for our youth.
3. Moreover, we have seen that many of the government's efforts have been delayed, erratic, and have ignited the flame of popular discontent. Introducing a tax reform that makes the burden on the poor and the middle class heavier and leaves the privileges of the rich intact, does not correspond with the current situation in the country. However, despite the announcement by the President of the Republic to withdraw this law from Congress, his exclusive attitude of meeting behind closed doors with government coalition parties persists. Furthermore, the current health care reform project will make it increasingly difficult to access the services of an already precarious and exclusive system. Labor and pension reforms were also announced. Meanwhile, the government increases operating expenses and creates new positions in an already bulky bureaucratic payroll.
4. Every day, during this time, we have heard the cries of anguish from our students who have lost or cannot find a job, who do not have health care in addition to the pain for the loss of loved ones by the pandemic. Our students struggle to access technology and connectivity and with this they see the horizon of their future shutting down before their eyes.

5. We have also heard the popular clamor of those who express themselves in the streets demanding justice, bread and peace. As an institution inspired by the faith of Jesus of Nazareth, we stand beside the poor and those who suffer. We support the just protest and resistance to injustice, an inalienable right of the peoples and a pillar of our Reformed tradition. We urge that these protests run by the principles of Nonviolence. We reject the militarization of society to repress the just demands of the people, an action typical of tyrannical and authoritarian regimes and not of a Democracy and a Social State governed by the Rule of Law. We strongly denounce and condemn the brutality and excesses of the public force that has been evident to public opinion. We also reject the use of violent forms of protest.
6. We invite our students, faculty and staff to reflect on all these situations as indicated in the Universidad Reformada president's statement of May 3. Those who wish to demonstrate or express their protests in a nonviolent manner and in accordance with biosafety protocols while protecting life, should feel our institutional support.
7. We welcome and share the concern of the international community about the serious situation of violation of human rights and repression of protest, as expressed in the pastoral letter of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and from the Alliance of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean in a statement dated May 3, 2021. In this sense, we appreciate the manifestations of solidarity we have received from various universities of the Reformed tradition.

In Barranquilla, Colombia, May 3, 2021



HELIS HERNÁN BARRAZA DÍAZ
President