



OPEN LETTER

On Peace Building and Conflict Transformation from a lens of Post-Colonialism and Indigenous Christianity

19 December 2019

To our global community, all who journey with us in the pursuit of Mission as Transformation:

In June of this year, young and senior scholars, men and women, from various regions of the world met together to listen and learn from one another on this critical topic. What does it mean to engage in peace building and conflict transformation? And what are the necessary preconditions? This second question is especially critical when we speak of *post-colonialism* and *indigenous Christianity*, because of how Western Christianity has often sought to dominate and impose its frameworks (even through violence and colonization) up to today.

In the following, we present some emerging commitments, and we invite you (our global community) to reflect on and embrace these postures. At the core of these commitments are:

1. **The naming of historical injustice and colonization** (through physical and intellectual violence),
2. **Recognition and learning from diverse narratives and interpretations of Scripture,**
3. **And centering voices and perspectives of the marginalized in processes of re-learning, peace building, and transforming conflict.**

This is an initial offering, just the beginning of a process of research, reflection, and dialogue that will continue. In September 2020, we will hold a public Stott-Bediako Forum on this theme in Latin America (specific place TBD). Additionally, from now until then, we are eager to engage in conversation around this issue. If you are holding a regional or international event, please consider making space for dialogue around this critical topic. Contact admin@infemit.org to find out about INFEMIT representatives available to attend gatherings and for discussion resources.

In the joy and hope of the gospel,

The International Fellowship for Mission as Transformation



Emerging Theological Commitments:

- We seek to decolonize theology, becoming sensitive to the readings of Scripture and understandings of God that emerge from all languages and cultures.
- We seek to rediscover indigenous stories in relation to the Biblical stories as we seek faithful understandings of our origin, our identity, and our cosmic reality.
- We seek to learn in community. Faithfulness emerges in mutually giving relationships between people of the majority and minority worlds.
- We seek a spirituality of peace building that brings us into the public realm. We cannot ignore past nor present injustices, divisions, and conflicts.
- We seek to be sensitive to the time in which we live as a unique moment and as a product of historical processes.
- We seek to name those who have suffered colonization, learn to listen to them, and center their voices in the process of peace building and conflict transformation.
- We seek to embrace diverse ways of knowing and interpreting Scripture in order to discover the Gospel narratives that free and unite us.
- We seek to critically reflect on the “Overarching Story” that we read ourselves into and resist new forms of domination and colonization that attempt to reduce and own that story.

The Role of the Church

The Church has a unique role as a reconciling community. As we pursue the abovementioned commitments, we have the opportunity to model the values and ethics of God’s community as we offer an authentic and responsible voice on the issues of conflict and colonization. We have the opportunity to envision and live out a new “we,” a new community, in which relationships are reconciled with God, humans, and the rest of creation. We are called to embrace this role as we participate with God in giving evidence of God’s reign and God’s justice.