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Decolonial Hermeneutics for Socio-Environmental Justice

Call to Action

Santiago Sacatepéquez, Guatemala, 5-8 March 2026

Participants from different dioceses within the Anglican Communion of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Brazil gathered to hold the meeting entitled Decolonial Hermeneutics for Socio-environmental Justice.

The aim of this gathering was to strengthen a network of theologians, theology students, clergy, and lay people committed to a liberating theological praxis. The expectation is to integrate a proposal of decolonial thought and active advocacy for socio-environmental justice through biblical and theological reflection on human, environmental, and territorial rights within the context of Abya Yala.

In a spirit of prayer and participatory reflection, various contextual realities were explored. Each participant shared from their own experience, knowledge, circumstances, and how their local church responds to these challenges. In this sense, the reflections developed around three thematic areas: Education, Ecology, and Social Justice.

Education

Under this axis, topics included popular education, ecotheology, theological education methodology, and key principles for a decolonial theological education.

Given the impact and influence of colonial thought in the field of theological education, we have noticed a disconnection between critical education and ecological awareness. This arises especially from methods that fail to create spaces for questioning, analysis, and critique. We affirm that theological education has often been elitist, showing colonial, dogmatic, rote, and clericalist patterns.

For this reason, during the theological gathering we analysed current practices in theological education within the Latin American context, biblical texts, and theoretical foundations to identify the points of anchorage that have prevented a more collaborative and contextual education. We hold that colonialism and domination have infiltrated our peoples, which is why we have not succeeded in fostering sound ecotheological teaching that promotes care for creation and human dignity.

We therefore propose breaking with these colonial systems by encouraging a pedagogy of questioning that dismantles “banking” education, fosters collaborative spaces, and generates curiosity, awareness, and sensitivity for liberation. We firmly believe that theology will have greater impact and transformative power through a pedagogy in which we all learn together, build collaborative relationships, and decolonise education for socio-environmental justice.

Ecology

Under this axis, an ecotheological approach was taken to analyse the current exploitation of natural resources. This reflection begins with the need to listen to the groaning of creation, as expressed by Saint Paul in Romans 8:21, reminding us that we are part of creation and not owners of the earth.

Today, we ask forgiveness for the abuse we inflict upon creation and for our lack of responsibility as its stewards. We hear this groaning in the hunger caused by the food crisis in El Salvador, in the fires consuming the sugarcane fields of Morelos, Mexico, in the pollution of Lake Atitlán, and in the struggles of the Indigenous peoples of Guatemala for the protection of water, land, and air.

From the new biblical hermeneutics presented in this reflection, we see ourselves as guardians of the earth, as tillers and caretakers of the land (Genesis 1–2). We also affirm, from the Gospels, that dignified labour provides our daily bread (Luke 5).

From this experience, we invite all faith communities in the Anglican Communion of Latin America to:

1. Recognise that human beings are not in conflict with the earth; we are part of the web of life.
2. Commit to caring for lakes, rivers, and seas, and refraining from exploiting flora and fauna.
3. Walk pastorally and actively to accompany our brothers and sisters in situations of vulnerability.

Social Justice

Definition

The different themes addressed demonstrate the breadth of this axis. The demand for social justice presupposes the existence of structural inequalities that place large sectors of the population in vulnerable situations, affecting their access to quality food, land ownership, education, and a life free from violence.

At the same time, these reflections highlight an existing commitment and a desire to open up institutional and ecclesial spaces that guarantee the effective fulfilment of the rights of individuals, communities, and the Earth — grounded in a faith deeply committed to justice and peace.

Our Church is already engaged in various ministries of accompaniment and social assistance that constitute a concrete expression of the heart of the Gospel. However, this commitment is called to go a step further. The first step involves fostering direct involvement in addressing the identified problems through concrete actions aimed at ensuring the effective exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities, women, and other vulnerable populations.

This approach — which must sensitise and call us to shared work — also requires the development of training processes that provide methodological, conceptual, legal, and liturgical tools to address these challenges holistically.

The commitment of our faith communities does not arise only from compliance with international human rights standards, which have been ratified by all our countries, but from a deep listening to the Gospel that calls us to be servants of justice through concrete actions to heal the wounds we have identified.

This work is not carried out from a messianic perspective — as if the Church possessed the truth and came to assist those who do not — but through a shared journey with those affected by these realities, building collective processes capable of embodying the promise Jesus offers in John 10:10b: *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."*

Calls to Action for the Church

1. Recognise and value the ancestral wisdom of the Indigenous peoples of Abya Yala.
2. Promote decolonial, liberating, hope-filled, and transformative education.
3. Practise active listening to the diverse voices of creation.
4. Recognise that socio-environmental justice can only be achieved when we walk alongside those who suffer injustice.

Signed by the participants:

Mexico: Revd Belina Carranza and Revd Erika Fierro

Guatemala: Veralilia Cuc, Armando Tzul, Brayan Alvarado, and Revd Neli Miranda

El Salvador: Revd Irma Guerra, Edrian Ernesto Valle, and Revd Alba Berganza

Costa Rica: Revd Michel Monterroza and Cristian Castro Hidalgo

Brazil: Tiago Carvalho, Gustavo Alvarenga, and Revd Dr Rodrigo Espiúca