



ECOTHEOLOGY AND MINING SEMINAR

Spirituality, Resistance and Options for Defending our Land

November 5 - 7, 2017 - MARIANA - MG – BRAZIL

Our deep thanks for the translation to Paul Holland(CAFOD)



Introduction

The Seminar on Ecotheology and Mining was held in Mariana, MG, Brazil from 5 to 7 November, 2017. It focused on *spirituality and resistance in defending land*. It was attended by pastoral ministers, militants and activists working in mining areas, indigenous peoples and Quilombolas, [Afro-Brazilian descendents], who had been directly affected by mining also attended the seminar, as did various civil society organizations, theologians and academics. The aim was to reflect, pray and develop their ability to resist, and put forward alternatives to the existing model of socio-environmental devastation caused by the expansion of an economy based on mining. The seminar opened in the city of Paracatu de Baixo, Mariana, MG on the anniversary of the environmental tragedy and crime committed by Vale and BHP (Samarco), in which 19 people were killed (plus a miscarriage caused by the disaster) and which inflicted irreversible socio-environmental damage on the region. For further information about this environmental crime, [“The mud of destruction”](#)

As Djukuman Krenak said: “Today is a sad day, for me and my people.” “For me and my people,” he repeated! These two years have been a time of unending struggle for the families who were victims of this disaster.

The churches and mining network (www.iglesiasymineria.org) was born in 2013 to help in the fight for and defence of communities affected and haunted by the impact of the mining industry in Brazil and all of Latin America. The whole seminar was conducted in an atmosphere of welcome, prayer, reflection and fellow-feeling where people listened, rediscovered, exchanged experiences and looked for ways to increase the effectiveness of the churches and mining network and the spirit fuelling people’s struggles and defence of their land.

WORKSHOP 1 – Mining - Disputes and Resistance on the Ground

Speakers: Patrícia Generoso (Conceição do Mato Dentro -MG), Bro. Gilberto Teixeira (Belizário-MG), Djukuman Krenak (MG), Domingos Andrade (CIMI - MG)

Djukuman Krenak – MG – Victim of the Rio Doce disaster, a member of the Krenak people.

Krenak means Head-Earth. We place our head on the ground to respect Mother Earth. The Krenak live on the banks of the Rio Doce, [in Portuguese this means sweet river]. It is sweet no longer. It was affected by the Vale, Samarco crime. Djukuman explained that Vale was responsible for the disaster in the region. Vale has been affecting the Krenak people's lives since the building of the railway. The Krenaks' struggle is not new. There have been meetings and pleas for help but they have never been heard and still no one listens to them. The numerous ignored calls for help culminated in the great disaster two years ago that devastated the entire river basin together with the history and culture of the local people. The upbringing and communal life of the Krenaks revolved round the Rio Doce and its banks where they conducted their religious life. The Krenak religion depends of the river (WATU). It has now come to a halt because the Rio Doce is no more.

Asked how the people managed to survive after the disaster, Djukuman spoke of the fight against Vale. A foundation called RENOVA was given the role of managing the recovery from the damage done by the disaster. The Krenaks refuse to accept RENOVA as Vale's intermediary. They are demanding direct dialogue with the company responsible: not third parties. The Krenaks can no longer approach the river because it is polluted and they get by with a water tank. Djukuman drew attention to the need to promote people's spirit. Vale is trying to kill off people's spirit and is sowing seeds of dissention to divide people in order to undermine their struggle; killing their soul. Even with all these problems, the people continue to fight and grow in strength. It is the people who are the owners of Minas Gerais Province, not a company. Djukuman insisted on the need for mutual support, because a people cannot fight alone.

Now is the time to show that mining cannot continue. If traditional ways of mining existed, the indigenous people would use them. Mining is an activity that wounds the heart of the Earth. That is why there is no traditional mining. Mining hurts the Earth. The Krenaks are fighting to have Sete Saloes allocated as theirs. This is an area where there is pure water, where the people can renew itself. It is one year since the FUNAI [national foundation for indigenous peoples] was instructed to allocate this land.

Djukuman asked us all to stand and fight together, because the Krenak will not bow their heads.



Brother GILBERTO TEIXEIRA –HE HAS LIVED IN BELIZARIO FOR 8 YEARS

Belizario is a district in the county of Muriaé, in the Serra do Paraiba do Sul with a population of about 2,500. Brigadeiro Park was created as a result of the grassroots efforts of the region's inhabitants and is an important reserve of the Atlantic Forest, with extraordinary biodiversity. The region is a real nature reserve, where over 2,000 water springs have already been recorded. Bro. Gilberto has been working for 8 years to awaken and foster love for the place where the people live, encouraging family-based farming focusing on coffee and milk. Everyone has a plot of land to work. The area, which is rich in water, also contains the second largest reserve of bauxite in Brazil. Votorantim (CBA) has been mining bauxite for almost 30 years.



Bro. Gilberto spoke about the importance of the Franciscan spirit that awakened in him his love for Mother Earth, motivating him to work and fight to defend our common home. Bro. Gilberto had received death threats because of his work defending the Earth and the insanity of mining in the region. He is now under the protection of the State human rights bureau. The support he received from the diocese and bishop of Leopoldina as well as over 70 organizations was vital in standing up to the threats with other denominations operating in the area.

Since February, mining in the region has reduced, as a result of publicity and mobilizing organizations. An important result of mobilizing the people was that it was discovered that the mining company had a seat on the Brigadeiro Park Council but due popular opposition it is currently unfilled. The 25th Regional Forum on Environmental Education was held in nearby Miradouro and for the first time it was held without the financial sponsorship of the mining companies.



Patrícia Generoso (Conceição do Mato Dentro - MG)

The community of Conceição do Mato Dentro, MG, is located on the banks the Rio Santo Antônio, a tributary of the Rio Doce and has been conducting a tireless 10 years struggle against mining. In 2006, the Borba Gato agricultural company, part of tycoon Eike Batista's MMX empire, started mining in the region. The company approached the inhabitants with agricultural plans that were, in reality, a front for mining interests. During initial prospecting, it was already leaving its mark in the form of open-cast test pits causing reductions in the local water supply for the rural community. To carry out the project comprising mining, a slurry pipeline and port facilities, the company tried to bribe the community offering benefits, restoring church buildings, buying properties etc. This caused the church not to speak out against the impact of mining. The fight and resistance developed in the countryside, while the urban population failed to understand the damage that mining was causing to the local area.

Among the combat and resistance strategies, Patricia said that when the community discovered the real purpose of Borba Gato, they began to oppose it. What they did was to organize sit-ins in CODEMA and other Councils. In 2013 173 people were rescued from one of the companies (100 Haitian women and 73 local residents), they had been workers in slavery conditions. The July 2015 meeting in the Vatican with communities and people affected by mining, and the audience with Pope Francis, raised the profile and strength of the movement. Five people from CDM received death threats from the mining companies and are now included in the list of those receiving protection. Other international events, such as attending the Anglo-American AGM to criticize the company, were important strategies in the process of resistance.

Domingos de Andrade (CIMI Leste)

The defence of indigenous peoples and their land as an inalienable right is a constant theme of CIMI (missionary council for native people). Water and the Earth are sacred and deeply rooted in their view of the world. For capitalism they are merely resources to be exploited and this has a direct effect on the land. Domingos outlined the law, especially of the Brazilian constitution, that guarantees the rights of indigenous peoples. He also showed the manoeuvring of the capitalists with legal and political backing to invade areas that ought to be untouchable.

Indigenous people's rights are being systematically attacked by the authorities of the Republic.

Indigenous communities have been organizing themselves and also fighting tirelessly to guarantee their rights in the face of overwhelming interest in mining their land.



Under the present government, obstacles to dialogue and attacks on hard-won indigenous rights have increased, for example Bill PL16/10 regulating mining on indigenous land and the support for agribusiness and commercial interests. The dismantling of FUNAI [the national foundation for indigenous peoples], is part of moves that will endanger indigenous peoples' way of life and demonstrates that the state is only there to serve the interests of big business.

Main points of the discussion:

- The need to reflect further on experience of resistance and the spirituality sustaining and feeding organizations' and social movements' struggle. Resistance is a slow, silent but effective process. It is the spiritual sustenance that will give confidence and strength to resist. The voices of resistance need to find ways of involving others.
- There is a trend to back-track on public policy and human rights, and a growth in religious fundamentalism.
- The influence of the powerful knows no bounds when it comes to making more money and it looks for deceitful ways to influence minds and communities. When minds are "colonized" it is hard to talk with the community, especially the urban population.
- The support of the Church is most important and often decisive. However, in some places, the local church is still talking to mining companies and agribusiness, and will not let priests or coordinators speak against mining. In one diocese, the CPT [pastoral land organization] was closed down.
- Native and traditional people's spirit of resistance to long-standing threats must be recognized. They keep going, without selling out, because their love for the land runs in their veins. This love is what feeds their will to fight and resist.
- Experiences and strategies for dealing with the situation need to be shared, especially in interreligious contexts, as a way of communicating with society.
- The impact of mining on the lives of the women – the growth in violence and their contribution to resistance.
- Our society is highly complex; it has many ways of misleading people. We need to invest in alternative media that help develop consciousness and dialogue outside the confines of the Church. We need to examine the situation critically and communicate information as a way of empowering people.
- We need to revive the tradition of those who gave their lives for the dignity of the peoples of Latin America and stood alongside the victims. We need a spirituality that reinforces resistance.
- We need to be clear on what our strategies and those of the opposition are, and their hypocritical use of the law against those devoted to the land, people are being deprived of their very being and rights. Building resistance in the present situation is an art.
- The strength to resist and fight come from spirituality, the strength of the powerless is the light for the world, we need to be united, the giants have feet of clay and we can win. Women and young people must be involved.
- Our strategy lies in training, come to our seminars and training centres.

- Our Spirit is the key. Capitalism wants none of this. How can the spirit of the church lead the struggle against the mining? We need to nurture the spirit of the church.
- The mining companies are devilish.

Marino' story, resident of Paracatu and victim of the disaster

After the dam burst, families were divided, because of their different views on mining. The accident happened on a Thursday, on Monday the residents of Paracatu were evacuated because they were in an endangered area. Families were rescued by helicopter because the mud had blocked access to homes.

All the workers were affected, those whose houses were not swamped by mud, had their land destroyed, preventing them raising cattle and growing crops, the basis of the local economy. Marino stayed in the area even after notification to leave. He could not accept the idea of leaving his "little piece of land". It took Samarco a fortnight to give him another place to go. Even after this whole ordeal, Marino was not recognized as being affected by the disaster, it took six months for this to happen. There are accounts of it taking a year for this recognition. People were not a priority for Samarco, Vale. Vale fragmented the community of Paracatu. All its traditions, celebrations and festivals they used to hold together were wiped out thus destroying the ties built up in the evening over years in Paracatu on the steps of the church and in their homes.



During the process of resettling victims, Samarco only gave a vote to those who owned property in Paracatu. They excluded all those who had emotional ties to the community. Marino added that at a meeting in Mariana, it managed to influence Councillors in order to ensure the vote was manipulated in its own interests.

One of the biggest challenges is to keep the community together because Samarco maintains a powerful group to defend mining interests on the quiet.

Marino was asked what the government position was, ie the federal and state authorities and the judiciary? The government was the main culprit in the tragedies. The government was helping kill, even killing the history of the people. The judiciary was still an obstacle in getting the backing needed for the fight.

The Prefect of Mariana, MG, supports Samarco. He wants to protect his tax income and reinstate mining operations, ignoring those affected. The victims are often blamed for the problems resulting from the failure of the dam.

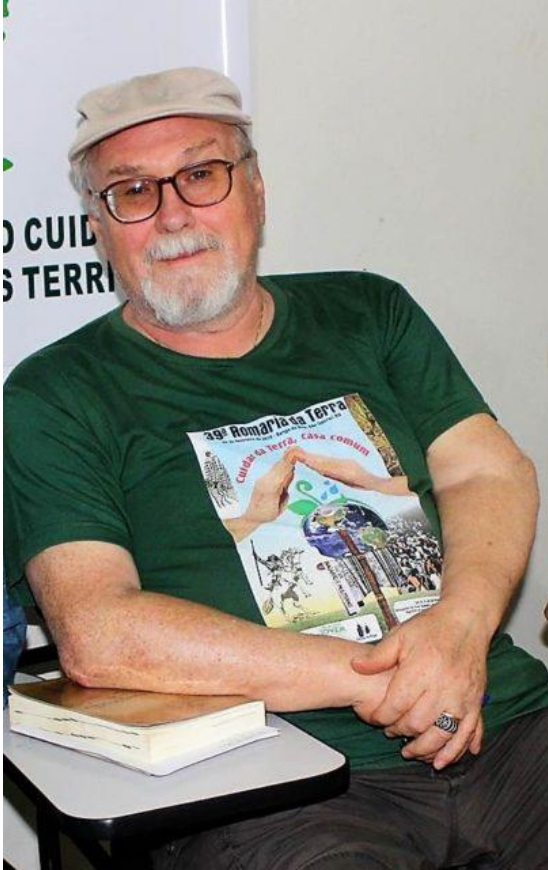
RENOVA. - In the eyes of those affected by the disaster, RENOVA is perpetuating the crime. The foundation refuses to acknowledge the people's situation and operates in cahoots with Samarco. Samarco is using it to take responsibility for problems and offer cheap, superficial solutions. Reforestation is one of Samarco's strategies for compensating for this environmental crime, however Samarco is regularly using victims' land for this and failing to provide legal documents to compensate for the land.

MAB AND THE CHURCH. - The church has joined in helping the victims; many priests have supported of this cause. In Paracatu around ten people died as result of problems caused by this crime. Cases of depression and urban isolation have risen. Lives have been destroyed by this crime for which the company takes no responsibility. Marino closed by thanking all those who had supported the people's struggle against mining and the fight for their rights.

WORKSHOP 2: MINING AND THEOLOGIES IN CONFLICT WHAT IS OUR THEOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF LAUDATO SI'?

Speakers: Sandro Galazzi (CEBI), Sr. Tea Frigério, Bro. Gilvander Moreira

Sandro Gallazi (CEBI) Work: Send Your Spirit and there will be Creation.



What does the Spirit tell us about our lives? How can we speak about God from the perspective of the victims of this disaster? We are still focusing only on a theology of salvation. We forget the words of Jesus – “He who wants to save his life, will lose it” (Mk 8, 35). So, we ask ourselves: Is Jesus Christ only at God’s side or is He walking alongside us in our daily lives?

God came into this world in the person of Jesus Christ, He came to earth and chose the side of those who speak out. “I have heard my people’s cry”. Who are God’s people? God’s people are those who cry out, not those who cause them to cry out. He is the God of the oppressed not the oppressor. They are “my people”. Much is taught about salvation theology and we often forget about Incarnation theology. Jesus of Nazareth, who died on the cross, is the true God, the one who is still incarnate in those who suffer persecution and violence.

Incarnation should not be seen as just something of the moment. It is about a God who walks with us and stands together with His people.

God conquered death. In the first chapter of Genesis, the verb “to live” appears more than 20 times. God’s work is the work of life. Creation is creation of life, victory over death. That is God’s image in history, continuing the struggle, dominating and controlling death so that life may triumph. We need to give God His place and not

keep Him away from us.

God’s place is amongst the poor, just as Jesus came to us. As in Nazareth, God is present in Paracatu de Baixo, Bento Rodrigues and wherever the forces of death are present. The forces of death today are not atheists, they are devilish – they try to steal the minds of the poor and change their way of thinking to make the poor also see with the eyes of the powerful.

In the Temptations of Jesus, we can see this hidden presence – “if you are the Son of God, show me”. Temptation is present in our midst in a provocative, subtle and inciting way. This is the way the devil today, he incites our poor, our persecuted brothers, to act against their own people using false promises or buying them for a pittance or with facile solutions. This is the presence of the devil in the forces of death - the prospectors and mining companies amongst others that are causing such destruction to our common home.

We must not think of ecotheology as just another branch of theology. Ecotheology is the only theology, one based on the home. Even now, existing theologies are those of the home, even those from homes of oppression, they are part of the Great Home.

Land is the life of those living in it, the meeting point of home and nature. If our house were Jesus’ house, all would be equal, with the table at the centre where bread is broken. Our table should not be the altar; otherwise Jesus would become just the altar server, not the celebrant.

What is our ecotheology? From this discovery we can say with whom we identify. The image of God is the image of the Son. If you want to know God’s image, look at His Son, Jesus. His actions are God’s image. “He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things”. “Don’t be afraid”. “I am with you”, God is with us. God is in us but He is greater than us. (We are God, but God is greater than us).

In the second parable of Genesis on creation, Yahweh breathes the dust of the earth (earth and blood) and gives life to the human being, who is placed in the Garden of life. According to the translation from the Hebrew, they are put in

the Garden to “serve and obey”. Later the Greeks translated it as “to look after and cultivate”. We need to serve and obey the earth. The only chance for life is to go back to that fertile womb. The verse, “you are dust and to dust you will return”, is often interpreted as a punishment, in Hebrew culture, it is man’s return to the womb, rebirth, returning to the earth.

Which side is God on? And to which side He is calling us? In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus was in his last location on earth, and where was that? The house of the poor, the place we should never have left. Who is going to tell us who God is, it will be the least of the earth. It is they who apply true ecotheology. They speak to us truly about God.

Bro. Gilvander Moreira (CPT)

The injustice facing us is very serious. This was stressed in the Church and Mining group’s paper, because it appears that the Church has been mining’s accomplice. Mining violates and attacks our people. Only by building networks will we have the strength to fight.

From a learning perspective, what do we need to do and how? These were questions on which he defended his doctoral thesis at UFMG. We are living amidst conflicting theologies. Our theology must come from those harmed by mining. Mining is idolatry; there is something satanic, devilish about it. No one can really follow Jesus and His gospel if they are the accomplices of the mining bosses. They are opposite poles and cannot operate side by side. “Any incorporation of land destroys dreams”.

Life is wonderful but it needs to make its mark on history. It is not a case of omission but complicity. People failing to do what they should are the accomplices of the oppressors. From a teaching perspective, we only will be aligned with God if we throw ourselves heart and soul into the fight. Philanthropy, community activities and other social support policies only serve to paint capitalism in a good light.

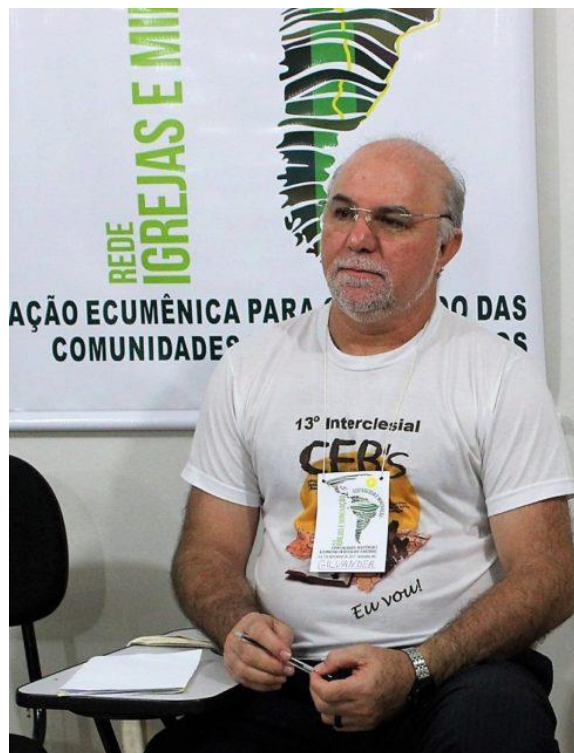
We must always choose our words carefully; we cannot blindly accept the language of the mining companies and the capitalist system. We need to deconstruct the oppressive practices and language of the mining companies and its acolytes.

- Not just conflict, but violence
- Not just affected, but massacred, violated.
- Doing nothing means being complicit
- “The rivers are drying up”. No! They are being drained.
- Not “the martyrs died” No: they were killed.
- It was not “the crime of Mariana”, nor the “crime of Bento Rodrigues”, it was not an accident, but it was the heinous crime/tragedy of Vale plus the State (three powers plus the power of the media), the biggest crime in history.
- The State was complicit. For example – politicians who said: “I know nothing about water and mining”...
- Why was no one arrested when 19 people were killed?

Speech on its own does not create freedom. We have to live alongside those who suffer injustice. We will only have divine authority if we live with those suffering at the hands of the oppressor. We, in the Church, are also slaves to ideas, awareness-raising but for real changes to happen, action is needed. The more united we are, the further we banish fear and the greater our courage for the fight.

“Truth will make us free” is the slogan and practice of those suffering violence but who, by acting together can face up to the mining companies.

Key words – indignation, passion and love. The combination of these three words is true theology’s apex. The mud; those affected are crying out. The former Rio Doce has become a metaphor, this heinous crime; this tragedy is taking place in every state. Many churches are saying nothing, thus being the mining companies’ accomplices.



Mining is the sword stabbing Mother Earth. Many religious celebrations have become ways of dulling the impact felt by people and not supporting them in what they are going through. We have no right to ask for pardon, so as not to run the risk of soothing our conscience.



Sr. Tea Friguério (SEBI-CEBs)

It is not just theologians who can develop theology, we can develop it too. When we reflect on things from our own perspective, we are building theology. There are two theologies, one that perpetuates and supports life and one that supports the dominant power. When President Temer met the archbishop of Belém, he was given a picture of Nazareth but made no reaction. It further demonstrated the silence about injustice. Our Church's actions are supporting and encouraging an oppressive model. We need to choose a path that is truly Christian, a search for salvation through the earth, our mother.

How can we talk about spirituality in the context of mud and this violence, the Earth, the River and people constantly under attack? What is the 'promised land'? We need to beware of the theology of prosperity that claims the land is promised to the mining companies. How can we take up our biblical themes again and read them against the background of people's real lives, if we have to support the system and legitimize it?

"My soul is choked with mud" (Marino), my life was destroyed by mud, Sr. Tea said, referring to Marino's talk in Paracatu de Baixo. We are making the concept of Mother Earth masculine. In saying making masculine, we are not referring directly to Man but to the concept that the Earth can be bought and sold. Mother Earth is something that can be auctioned off (as we are so used to seeing in this government's land

auctions). Mother Earth has its own being. The river has its being, we are our own being. Vale wants to destroy our being, our mother's being (Earth). When I said becoming masculine it was to show that it has become mother land, that has to be occupied, subjugated and dominated. We need to fall in love with our Mother Earth and the life that she offers us. We need to adore her and fall in love every day.

We need not fear penetrating darkness, not even our own darkness or being afraid of life's darkness, the darkness of the world. We cannot keep silent, because that is what those in power want. We need the courage to penetrate this darkness and cry out to show our indignation. Mercy and pardon must never silence us; they should strengthen us in speaking out against the violence we have suffered. "I feel called, roused to live the spirit of solidarity" (Patricia, Conceição do Mato Dentro). The Divine calls for life, it makes to look at life and condemn attacks on it. It brings us together to shout together for and with those suffering injustices.

Developing theology is developing eco-feminism. It is standing up, fighting against the daily massacre women experience, imposed by the patriarchal system. We need to find life in conjunction with all divine expressions. Humans are one being among others, we cannot have an "all-powerful God," a God who is the all-powerful father in the house. Our house must be a place of equality and dialogue.

Feedback from the break-out groups

Three key words: Positioning, deconstruction, community

- **Positioning** – reflecting, acting and standing on solid foundations. It takes courage to conquer fear, adopt an attitude, a position. Whose side we are going to take?
- **Deconstruction** – we need to deconstruct pre-existing models that do not fulfil the interests and aims we are defending. This model must be deconstructed to ensure our defence has cohesion.
- **Community** – as in creation, everything is interlinked, we also need to live in this community.
- **Ecotheology** – born of the struggle of the oppressed. We need to continue to invest in people reading of the Word of God, to deconstruct oppressive models, however mysterious, that cause us to forget reality.

- Ecotheology – theory and practice is always interlinked, we must always struggle to keep the balance.
- We must always to make room for reflection in order to sustain the fight. We need to fight and reflection is the fuel.
- We need active indignation. To be always with the poor and those fighting back. We need to extrapolate salvation theology to be able to experience incarnation theology.
- Eco-feminism goes even further, crossing barriers, viewing the house as the home of food and not patriarchy, as in the present model. We need to be careful about hierarchy in the home.
- We need to keep faith with our being.

Djukuman – What is the Church going to do to rescue the essence it has lost in eyes of society and Christians? The Church has lost its tongue, its essence. How can it retrieve it?

The Church = human beings who experience reality, Djukuman pointed to the commercialization of the Church. It was losing its very Christian essence.

- Dialogue, the fact of being together was a way of retrieving this essence.
- The theology of the day-to-day – (essence of joy)
- Ecotheology is inclusive – based on faith and community
- Rediscovering beauty, enchantment with indignation
- Fostering dialogue and uniting different theologies
- Liberation theology
- Ecotheology
- Theology of hope
- One element is the capacity to conceive a different way of existing in the world, of seeing and conceiving it, getting away from the exotic and giving the body materiality.
- Women as represented by Mother Earth. The patriarchy as a way of dominating women and the Earth.

Bishop Sebastian - the institution of the Church in Brazil wants to understand the impact of mining better to be able to take a considered position on the subject.

He emphasized that we needed to remember Christ incarnate always but not forget the risen Christ – this dichotomy is the story of our salvation. Was it enough to know how to experience this salvation only after our death, or did it starts in this world?



WORDS OF SHAMAN MIGUEL YANOMAMI, at the close of spiritual section. November 6, 2017.

(...) Xapuri was angry as he saw the devastation of the Earth (due to mining). The disaster that occurred should be taken as warning of his displeasure.

He (Xapuri) wants to teach us. Omama (our creator) spoke to me, his son, regarding to the earth's heart, that

it was wounded, cut by the machines ripping up the soil.

As the consequence of this devastation, there will be fires and other disasters, Omama gives us his wise words. Omama spoke and in olden times his image was seen, to open and teach us about how to live properly, raise children, take care of them, sow the fields and reap the fruits from the forest (potatoes, cassava, yams, taioba).

Children are still being born, there may be pregnant women here, and we take care of them, providing food for them. Omama, in the beginning of time, gave us the earth, forests, the animals to hunt, pairs of quixadas, brown howler monkeys, macaques, jaguars and giant tortoises, for us to eat and be satisfied.

Among us there those who respect the earth, others do not have the same respect. The earth suffers and moans but not everyone listen. Omama tells us our children will suffer and go hungry.

In the beginning Omama had no water to drink, there was no water, but he left the earth in which food grows (...). He left brother Igarape, from whom we can draw water, but our behaviour can also ruin it. Some do not have enlightened minds.

Omama does not like those who ruin the waters or take away minerals from deep in the earth. This I tell you because I have seen it. There are people who think differently but we are here together to help each other.

When I was a child, prospectors killed my uncle. You here could paint your faces to show your friendship; Omama likes seeing people painted red.

I don't want to become white but I want to join in the fight for our land; that is why I am here.

SPIRITUALITY– SHAMANIC CEREMONY

For this ceremony, yokoana is used. This is a powder produced from the tree of wisdom, the shaman sniffs it through a straw.

Omama was the first Yanomami on the Earth. He arose, grew, sowed the earth and used all knowledge. He can see the world like radar. He sees where there is sadness, happiness, heat or rain. Earth's great soul is represented in dance in the world to stop us forgetting our original song. For the Yanomami, Omama, the king of the forest, came to visit and meet us, to look on us. The soul of the Earth and the forest; our soul. We are grateful, therefore to the Creator, who has been generous to us. Wise, intelligent, he created everything that exists for us to live well, in good health, in the bosom of our mother earth. We plant seed to have food for ourselves and our children. The wisdom of the Yanomami is infinite. We will continue to teach our children and our grandchildren. Your God is alive. Our God, Omama, is alive and this is very important to us. We will protect the earth with great care, because it is the source of our wealth. This was the song he sang.

WORKSHOP 3

THE THEOLOGY OF CREATION AND LIFE

Speakers: Davi Kopenawa Yanomami (shaman), Miguel Yanomami (shaman), Afonso Murad (Ecotheology Study Group)



Bro. Afonso Murad – Theologian

Theology - thinking about God from God's perspective. Ecotheology – thinking about God from the perspective of our home; where we live, animate or inanimate beings. This is our common home. Ecotheology thinks and reflects on what we believe, why we believe (faith) in the context of our common home. Like all theologies, it has its own jargon. It is everyday theology, pastoral theology and academic theology. Good theology links all three theologies. What turns thought into theology is passing through the “still” of the Word of God experienced in Church communities. Ecotheology is this understanding of reality through God's light and what makes us a community, including our actions and worship. It is then, a daughter of Liberation Theology. What did we inherit from Liberation Theology - sensitivity and indignation about the cries of the poor? It is these cries that fill us with indignation and encourage us to act. The poor have to be seen as

protagonists in these actions. It involves the social, political and economic aspects. The question is: why there is poverty and how can we overcome it? We need to look for other ways to view the situation. Faith in the community based on reading the Bible in the community achieved through awareness-raising and organization. Ecotheology also views the earth as being impoverished, as well as being poor. As thinking evolves, ecotheology removes human beings from the centre and places them with other creatures at the centre. It is the end of anthropocentrism. It adds enchantment and beauty to indignation. Ecotheology understands that social science is inadequate for understanding today's society.

Ecotheology also borrows from other visions, such as eco-feminism, indigenous peoples, not just restricting itself to sociological literature. Individual vision needs to be in parallel with collective, institutional, political and economic practices. We need to give it greater visibility so that groups may be aware of it.

DAVI KOPENAWA YANOMAMI (RR) The author of "The falling sky"

"I am touched and very happy because for the first time the Church has invited me to attend a meeting. I am here to listen and learn".

I will try to speak in Portuguese, a very difficult language for us Yanomami . I am touched and very happy because for the first time the Church has invited me to attend a meeting. I am pleased to be with you. For me it is very important to join in this fight for and defence of our land. We are finding new ways of walking and talking together. With you, I have learned more about the "theory" of God and Omama. I learned my wisdom from childhood, from my mother, mother earth, my father, father forest. In our culture, we don't need to use petrol, oil or energy. We use sustainable ecological light. This goes on from generation to generation. The darkness was also created for us to rest, sleep, dream and learn. Water is fundamental. The earth, forest, and everything that exists in "Theory" is fundamental - rain, water, sea, river, lake, hills and valleys. Our home is enormous and is there for all of us, for all peoples and families. Fish, birds, rain; our home was created for all. We need use it well, without destroying it, without felling and burning to clear the forest. Even the bees need to live. They are the workers without axes. They make honey and medicine for us.



The trees, large and small, are the lungs of the earth, just as we too have lungs. The heart of the earth also exists. We look after it but the capitalists destroy it. They operate outside the law and refuse to respect what belongs to us. Mining pollutes the rivers, kills the fish and poisons them with mercury. This is why we are here: to defend our environment. This word I cannot quite understand: Why the environment? There are good white people and bad. It is white people from the other side of the world who are destroying things and getting rich. The whites are fixated on the market - the market for land, water etc. God never spoke about selling water, or felling trees and selling timber to the USA, Europe and Japan. No one was born knowing everything, we are always learning. I learn with you and you learn with me. The Yanomami's land is threatened by prospectors. White people like to measure land as they measure their children. God didn't speak about marking out and dividing up land. God has already separated continents with borders: the sea is God's natural border and He didn't need money to built roads.

Pedro Alvares Cabral arrived in our land, divided it up and made a piggery for the native people. This is how whites think about the natives. They invaded our forests and divided them up. "The Indians produce nothing, they are lazy. There are only a few natives for such a lot of land". This is how whites think. However, we are the ones who know how to look after our forest. Now we can look at each other in the eye. In the past, our ancestors did not know how to fight. Now we are learning how to defend our rights the whites are threatening. We brought with us a map that shows the land we lost. We were divided into nineteen "islands" in Brazil and Venezuela and we are fighting get our land back. We do not want mining on Yanomami land. Our land has already been carved up and everyone is aware of it. They want to start mining on our land. The mining machines come in like an armadillo, and we want nothing to do with them. We want the Brazilian

authorities to respect our people. We do not want the PEC [Bill] 215 or dams. How will fish swim up and down the river? The river will rise and kill many trees. This is what I wanted to tell you, what I have to say; here in this house.

I never thought I would be able come here and meet you. We are all together, together with the Quilombolas, our long-time relatives, with the people living on the riverbank, farmers and indigenous peoples. We are making plans to fight to defend our Mother. We need to continue along this road. In a few years from now, Brazil will be like a football pitch, as dry as a bone. Our Xapiri “bible” tells us that we will die burned or drowned. Mark my words: if the tycoons do not respect nature, the dam will burst again and the mud will return.

Today I am asking for help. Help from the Church and from everyone here to defend our environment. You can write a letter to highlight the government’s mistakes and demonstrate the problems to them. The government is wanting to intervene in our little piece of land again. The Church must write to the government, to the Brazilian authorities, saying they must respect native people and let them live in peace. God, the white man’s creator, creator of everything that exists on earth, as He is known as the creator of the indigenous peoples, the one to whom they turn to in times of difficulty. I do believe that God, Our Father exists, but I also believe in Our Father Omama.



MIGUEL YANOMAMI (shaman)

My name is Miguel, I am a Yanomami and we know, understand and see, we inhabit the forest. We know about food, we fish and prepare the soil to farm. The people here are different but also do good. We, the Yanomami, are one people but include various peoples, we speak different languages. Some are savage, others are friendly. Some know how to defend the forest, others not. Some quarrel out of envy. So we are not all the same. When I was young I lived among white people. I worked on an estate; I cleared the forest and killed chickens.

After this, I went back to my land and thought about my father and wondered “who is going to help and feed him?” So I went back home and chose a positive, clear path. Some people wondered why I went back home. Davi told me that if I had taken another path he would be concerned and sad. Choosing to return home made him happy. I met my wife and followed Davi’s path. Davi has been thinking about our children’s future. So I joined him on this path and followed in his steps, keeping close to him. Davi helps us and helps our allies. When I was invited to this meeting I was afraid of flying, as the plane went wobbling through the clouds. And then I met all of you and felt you were filled with good spirits. I was happy to learn that. Long ago I was in my mother’s womb. I was born and grew up, and my parents told me about the white people opening the new road. I asked about the story of this road. When we met the whites, they treated us badly. They came with their huge machines and destroyed the forest, they hurt our ancestors. They took trees from the forest and caused our ancestors such suffering. They took and maltreated our women. They brought a terrible epidemic that killed many of us. They did not warn us we needed to isolate people. Three communities were wiped out. This made me think that if I did not fight, my people would die too. So, if I had taken the wrong path, I would not be able to protect their lives. I saw the photos of my uncles in the museum in Inhotim, MG, and I thought about our history.

I was happy to receive Fr. Dario’s invitation to this meeting. And I would like to add that I am going to help fight to defend our land, our common home.

FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKSHOP

Is the shamanic dance done individually or in a group? What is its meaning?

- Xapari sings directly to the shaman. Xapari is in another space and can only see those who are initiated, those who sniff the *yâkoana*. During the shamanic session, the shaman asks land’s permission to cultivate it and use it for his sustenance. It is also when Xapari comes to heal and remove harm from his people.
- We need to foster dialogue between indigenous peoples and the Church to protect our common home together.

- Yâkoana is our Bible: both are instruments of revelation for people. How can we open our eyes to discover or rediscover their essence?
- One great challenge is to overcome individualistic thoughts and mentalities to speak the same language. If we are to grow strong, we must focus on developing and strengthening spirituality as means of resistance.
- We need to remember that indigenous peoples can teach us how we are interconnected in this home and how to use it for our survival. The land is there to provide our means of survival and let us eat well but without hurting it.
- We cannot contemplate disunity. We can use the example of a tree that grew, putting out different branches. Later other flowers were grafted on to it producing different colours and flowers. Ecotheology is a further branch that has its different flavour and taste but is connected to the same tree of ecotheology. It brings forth a new aspect out of which is born a new epistemology that it goes on producing new connections and new actions. The big challenge for the ecotheology is to combine work from different sources.
- How can we apply ideas and spiritualities in practice to build a single ecotheology? We need to find a way of integrating and strengthening one another every day.



WORKSHOP 4

PASTORAL DIMENSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES - WHAT DOES THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES?

Speakers: Ruben Siqueira (CPT), Fr. Corrado Dalmonego.

Fr. Corrado, Consolata Missinary – Catrimani mission (RR) to the Yanomami

We will cover four points in this talk:

- ✓ Challenged by reality
- ✓ The place of mission\theology\pastoral ministry in the debate.
- ✓ Listening to the cries
- ✓ Improving mission\theology\pastoral ministry

I will try to draw some lessons from my ten years' experience at the Catrimani mission.

- 1- **Challenged by reality:** the world belongs to future generations, nature cannot be thought of as something separate from us. We need to mine the wealth that different religions can give us, integration, in-built ecology and full human development.
- 2- **The place of mission in the debate** – the situation we refer to is not just one of threats and disasters, it is also in these people and communities that we can find our strength. We need to think about missionary work, theology as a place for dialogue, coming together. We need to learn to put build



alternative ways of living. We need to see missionary work and theology as ways of coming together and talking. We are always called to dialogue and prophecy; it is inconceivable to think of them as separate from missionary work. They are conjoined. We believe that dialogue can happen. Pope Francis quoted the Patriarch Bartholomew who said that to achieve conscious transformation we needed to progress:

1. From consumption to sacrifice
2. From greed to generosity
3. From waste to sharing

Bevans and Schroder (in “Prophetic Dialogue”), pointed out that dialogue and prophecy are the two central components of mission. They never can be separated, even though, in some situations, one is stressed more than the other. Without dialogue there can be no evangelization\proclamation\Good News. It will just become fundamentalism or colonialism. The Holy Spirit is the agent that inspires mission. It is He to whom the Apostles, missionaries (as we can see from the Acts of the Apostles) listen.

- 3- **Listening to the cries** – Where these cries come from? We only need to look to mission history, in this case, the Catrimani mission.
 - In 1950, the Consolata Missionaries arrived in the Rio Branco area and began to look for the “indigenous forest people”.
 - In 1965 a mission was opened against the background of Vatican II and the call for a “new evangelization”, going beyond pastoral visits and giving people the Sacraments. Nobody then spoke openly about dialogue but rather respect and prudence, waiting for the fullness of time, and preparation.
 - Missionaries showed they were interested in the life, language and culture of the forest’s inhabitants.
 - Long-term planning had to be left aside to cope with external emergencies such as the opening of the Perimetral Norte BR210 road and epidemics of measles, flu and pneumonia.

A second important element was listening to Yanomami elders and what they had to say about the missionaries. Davi, in his book, tells us: “The words of ecology are the words of Omama. In the forest, ecology means trees, fish, wind, sun and everything that exists without fences, free”.

Where do we stand in relation to indigenous people and nature? How can we free ourselves from greed? In his book “The falling sky”, Davi wants white people to listen to Xapuri.

- 4- **Mission, theology and our pastoral work** – We must not just look for alternatives to generating wealth. There are certain attitudes and values we need to work on. The relationship with nature. It is not just a clash of economies but of visions of the world, the visions of the exploiter and the exploited. We must keep searching for the inner being we ignore. Indigenous peoples have helped us recover our spiritual dimension. This spirituality is also a tool in the fight to add to our other tools. Reciprocity, leadership, celebrating Mass. We must realise that leadership means what people follow, what witnesses and has charisma for followers. The mass is a celebration.
- Besides the dialogue of daily life, there needs to be a dialogue of action to promote justice and peace. There has to be spiritual dialogue, sharing the experience of prayer and contemplation. Such an encounter enriches participants who are willing to recognize the beauty of others' experience, as well the fragility of their own, and they need to place themselves under that light that no one can claim to own or dominate.

RUBEM SIQUEIRA (CPT)

Synthesis of what we heard and reflected upon on over these three days, an analysis of ecotheology and spirituality as means of resistance.

- ✓ Ecotheology - This theology's place is alongside those affected, those suffering daily torment from the mining companies, from the "Vales" in each situation. Its place is in real life; it is outside the system; it challenges other theologies that benefit from the capitalist system.
- ✓ This is a feminist ecotheology; through feminist theology that puts the home at its centre, not the altar; home is the focus of service, the mother and care. It challenges patriarchy and hierarchy. We hope to use Laudato Si' more.
- ✓ It is biblical, taking the viewpoint of the home of the poor.
- ✓ It is a spiritual theology: a spirituality that encourages renewing enchantment with God and His works; it is bio-centric and anthropocentric. It is one of contemplation of passion for the poor; it is based on Jesus and his martyrdom, rescuing the image of the Son, the incarnate Jesus of Nazareth. It is a liberation theology of the land and its people. Only a prophetic theology can speak for essence and against imposed values that are not part of this essence. It is liberation theology and the only theology possible. It is emancipation teaching for life and is anti-capitalist. It is a difficult prophetic dimension inside the Church, where a spirit of service is absent and hierarchy suffocates.
- ✓ It is a theology of Jesus, it recovers part of the Trinity, the incarnate Jesus of Nazareth.
- ✓ It is a theology based on suffering, not just of the poor but also the land, a land being tormented. Prophecy is wholly present in this theology, in the sense of an invitation to recover our essence.
- ✓ The place of this theology and of the church is not the wall. It is the only possible theology according to Sandro Gallazi. As theology, it implies thinking, acting and celebrating, calling us to a consistent liturgy and morality.
- ✓ Living properly (bem viver) as goal and lifestyle; it is also a theology of sobriety in the sense of living as we should, in harmony.
- ✓ It is knowing how to dialogue with other peoples and cultures while keeping our own identity, it is an open process, living properly as goal and lifestyle, building a theology of sobriety and simplicity in life.
- ✓ A theology that implies seeing, knowing, reflecting and celebrating, in dialogue with social sciences. For example: discovering "Flying Rivers" or the earth as Gaia.
- ✓ We must fight constantly to improve people's living conditions and be alive to every movement.
- ✓ What is the acceptable level of mining? Is there a traditional way of mining?



- ✓ We need to educate people. Belizario's experience is valuable because it encourages his people to love their home; to enjoy and see the beauty around them.
- ✓ In Minas Gerais, water is a continuous challenge. It is an inheritance that is constantly being harmed and stolen. Water and mining in the same place are incompatible. Choosing mining has been robbing people of water for years.
- ✓ If the government creates and allocates reservations for people, why do subsoil rights not belong to them?
- ✓ The media are one of the biggest challenges. We are now in a kind of war. This monster can be our ally but also a powerful instrument for spreading lies and attacking our organizations and fight.
- ✓ The debate about mining must involve the churches as well. We need to get the hierarchy involved. The diocese of Leopoldina, for example, supported the community of Belizário in its fight.
- ✓ We need to defend the rights acquired under the 1998 Federal Constitution. We have not yet united to protect these rights.
- ✓ We need to explore other spiritualities. We need to advance with these spiritualities to resist together, as the title of our gathering suggests. Spiritualities, resistance and alternatives in defending our land.
- ✓ Another point to consider is developing alternatives to mining so that people are not hostages to or dependent on mining for employment.
- ✓ We need to progress along this open road.

PUBLIC EVENT AND DISCUSSION

Thomas Bauer's photographic exhibition (CPT)

Discussion: Thomas Bauer, Davi Kopenawa, Marinalva and Zezinho (victims from Bento Rodrigues), Fr. Geraldo Martins, pastoral coordinator of Mariana Archdiocese, Bishop Sebastião, Bishop of Viana, MA, Moema, Churches and Mining.



A discussion about the situation of the victims of mining held on the Tuesday (7th) in Mariana, closed the "Ecotheology and Mining: Spirituality, Resistance and Options in defence of our land" seminar. Victims from Bento Rodrigues, representatives of the Krenak and Yanomami peoples, Quilombolas, Bishop Sebastião Lima Duarte from Viana (MA), the archdiocesan pastoral coordinator, Father Geraldo Martins, and local leaders all attended.

According to Moema Miranda, one of the seminar's organizers, this is a crucial moment. "We joined the meeting of the communities affected by mining, which, with the support of

the Church, are fighting back. The "Churches and Mining" seminar tried to demonstrate the link with the people's fight, by introducing the spiritualities in the struggle at the moment. For us to be here, with the people from Mariana, Bento, those affected directly, is inspiring, motivating. The solidarity and strength of a people united is greater than the pain and injustice", she said.

What the victims of mining had to say, a mixture of pain, unity and shared memory let everyone attending experience it themselves. José do Nascimento (Zezinho Bento) spoke about the importance of helping people and recalled the moment of the tragedy. "I used to live at the back of the church of São Bento. If this tragedy had happened after 1800 many people would have died. I speak with sadness, four people died from Bento, others were employees of the company or were visiting the community. I speak to you with pain in my heart, because as I drove my van out of the square, I could see the mud coming behind us. I knew so many people were dying but God helped us reach higher ground, our unity helped us. Now this unity is reduced, because we are separated but we continue to live in everyone's heart".

The Yanomami representative, Davi Kopenawa Yanomami, explained the problems his people are facing in Roraima. “I am an Indian from Roraima, the top of Brazil. The same thing happened in the land of the Yanomami as happened here. 40 thousand miners invaded Roraima, Yanomami land. Our river, that crosses the reservation, was destroyed. 40 thousand miners entered the small igarapés [Amazonian water courses]. They killed the fish and crabs, and our communities were infected as well. My people are suffering, drinking dirty water. It is not just here that this happened, it is happening all over Brazil”, said David.

The Archdiocesan pastoral coordinator, Fr. Geraldo Martins, stressed that there were three strands in the situation of those affected which need to be made clear. “What we have here is a lack of political will; we can see the political options before, during and after. They want to support those affected and the mining companies. There is a second, human rights thread. The public prosecutor has been running a major operation in Mariana without reference to those affected. The entire emergency was run by the public prosecutor. The involvement of the Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragem (MAB) [the victims of the dam movement] and the archdiocese in these discussions was vital. But there still much to do in human rights because the damage was so extensive. And we have a third thread, nature. We have still not been able to quantify what was destroyed” Fr. Geraldo explained.

ECOTHEOLOGY AND MINING

The theologian Afonso Murad explained that ecotheology was born and developed over the last 50 years and it has helped society and the Church itself to talk about ecological conversion. “We say that theology is Christians’ reflection on or out of their faith. So, theology equals doing good but it can be linked to other human topics such as justice, solidarity, land. This theology helps society and the church to conduct a process of ecological conversion. Pope Francis mentioned this conversion in his encyclical *Laudato Si’*”, Murad added.



DECISION MAKING AND NEXT STEPS FOR THE CHURCHES AND MINING NETWORK

NETWORKING

- Maintaining close relations with the Brazilian National Bishops’ Conference Mining working group/Social Ministry
- Look for allies in various technical areas and other experts that can contribute to the discussion.

BASIC: going into the areas involved

- Supporting endangered communities
- Working with and supporting the National People’s Defence Committee Against Mining.

MAPPING

- Mapping partners who are resisting, can serve as reference points and be supported.

REFLECTION AND SPIRITUALITY

- Building an ecotheology reflection team linked to REPAM.
- *Laudato Si’* should permeate everything: mapping allies, dioceses facing threats and other experiences unrelated to mining.
- Gatherings to exchange material, experiences and spirituality

- Training retreats on mining.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Raising the profile of the Churches and Mining Network, for example through the Rede IyM website.
- Consolidating our social networks presence, mainly for Portuguese.
- Extending communications - internal communication strategy and producing material.

ECUMENISM

- Supporting and including Protestant churches
- Making the network more ecumenical

COORDINATION – NEXT MEETING

- Defining the network's points of contact in Brazil
- Next meeting on organizing the network – focusing on mining and ecotheology. Bringing along data and informative reports? How is the map of mining in Brazil progressing? Reflecting further on the mining code;
- Regional Churches and Mining meetings, biome etc.
- The next meeting needs to identify lines of action, strategies, develop ecotheological reflection, examine mining and the mining and legal situation in Brazil and deciding on action. The next focus could be Water - mining companies are scuttling about after environmental permits.
- Tentatively in May 2018 in Belo Horizonte, at the agroecology meeting.
- Suggestion to attend the inter-church meeting in Londrina, PR, on 23 January, 2018.

TEAM : Fr. Dario Bossi (Comboni Missionaries), Moema Miranda (Sinfrajupe), Thiago Valentin (CPT), Sr. Zelia Maria (CIMI-PA), Rodrigo Peret (Sinfrajupe), Djukuman Krenak, Bro. Gilvander Moreira.

***“This table teaches us that
All the good that we achieve
We need to share
Cures and medicine,
Bread and wine, and security
Joy, faith and love”.***

Our time together around the table has been in an atmosphere where all are equal and hierarchy and patriarchy were forgotten. As brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Mother, we discussed and reflected on spirituality, resistance and alternatives in defending land. We need to climb over the wall and, incisively and clearly, take the side of those affected by mining in our country. Our theology and ecotheology are the only viable alternative for living in harmony - a theology that speaks from the home, our common home, where everyone has the right to defend and protected their interests. We need to join our voices to those of all the oppressed in defence of our land, home and Mother.” (Anacleto Pires, Quilombola from Santa Rosa dos Pretos – MA).