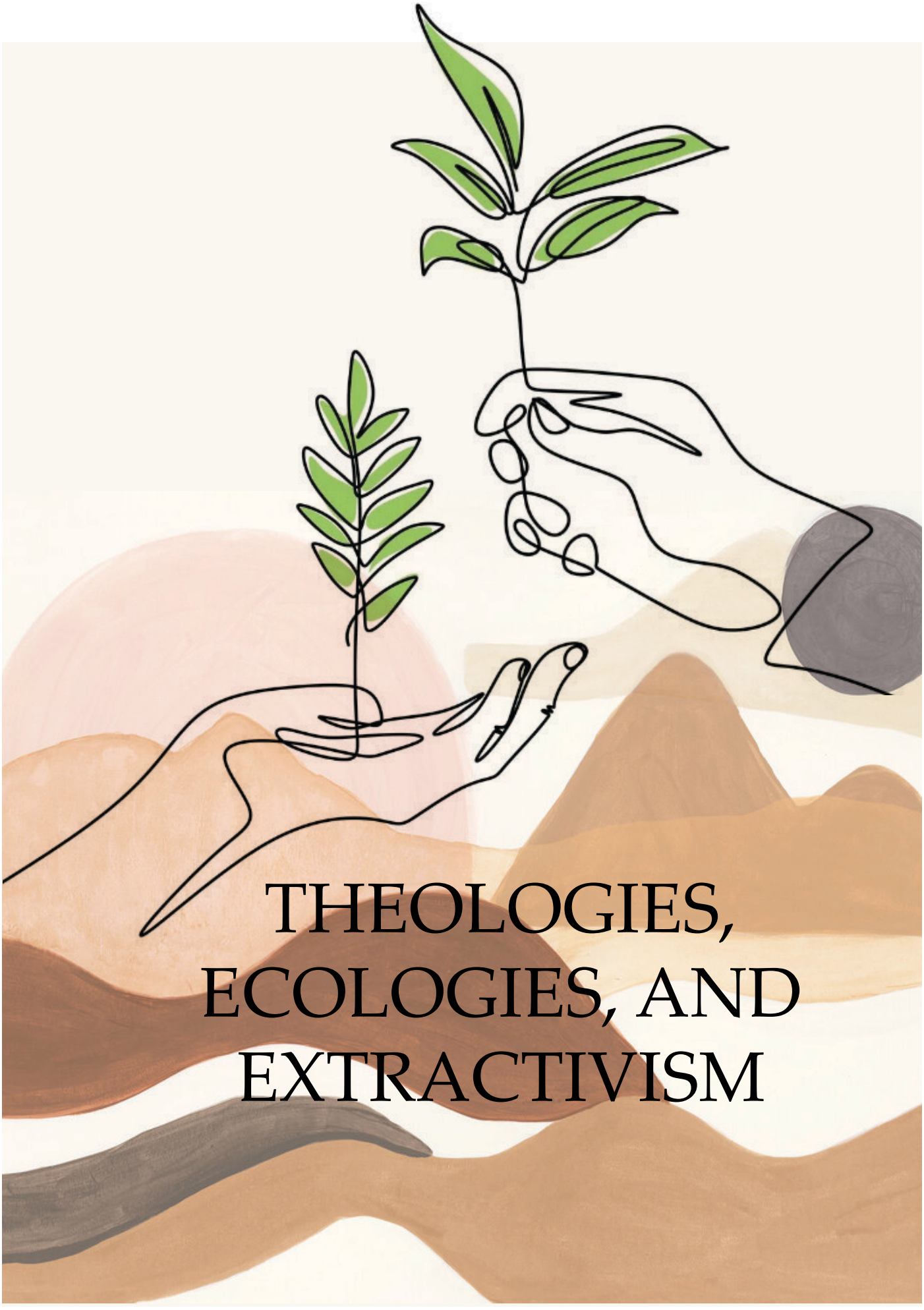


THEOLOGIES, ECOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVISM

THEOLOGIES, ECOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVISM

ISBN 978-958-625-858-6

Churches and Mining Network, DKA, CEBITEPAL

Working Group on Theologies, Ecologies, and Extractivisms
Dr. Anneliese Herzig MSsR, coordinator Gold and Church Project, DKA
Moema Miranda, coordinator Ecospirituality Community, C&M
Guilherme Cavalli, coordinator, Mining Divestment Campaign
Asunta Montoya, Mining Divestment Campaign team
Daniela Andrade, communication, Mining Divestment Campaign
Jesús Alberto Franco C.Ss.R, ecospirituality community
Rosa del Valle Aráoz, eco-spirituality community

Editorial coordination
Pedro Sánchez
Asunta Montoya
Guilherme Cavalli
Óscar Elizalde

Authors
Daniela Canavina, Bruno Duffé, Tania Ávila, Birgit Weiler, Basiluis J. Bert Groen, Gloria Ulloa, Afonso Murad, Violeta Rocha, Hunter Farrel, Birgit Weiler, Daniel Córdova, Gunther Prüller-Jagenteufel

Illustration, design and layout:Sayonara Flores
Proofreading David Morales
English translation: Pedro Andrés S.M.

Print: DGP Editores S.A.S
Bógota - Colombia
2022

IGLESIAS Y MINERÍA

CELAM
CONSEJO EPISCOPAL
LATINOAMERICANO Y CARIBEÑO

Dreikönigsaktion
Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar

CEBITEPAL
CENTRO BIBLICO TEOLOGICO PASTORAL PARA AMERICA LATINA Y EL CARIBE

Index

PRESENTATION

"It is late, but it is our time.
It is late, but it is all the time we have at
hand to make the future..."
(Dom Pedro Casaldáliga)

In the encyclical letter Laudato Si', on Care for the Common Home, Pope Francis calls attention to the environmental sin that many of us are still unaware of: "That human beings (...) degrade the integrity of the Earth and contribute to climate change, stripping the Earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; that human beings pollute the waters, the soil, the air. These are all sins because "a crime against nature is a crime against ourselves and a sin against God" (LS 08).

It is easy to see that these sins or crimes are committed daily, especially the extractive activities in territories of the Global South. On the one hand, they are provoking violent destruction to accumulate profits and maintain an unjust and obscene level of consumption. On the other hand, devastating peoples and territories, condemning them to multiple devastations, resulted from the Anthropocene crisis. "Whose side are we

on?" questions the Document of the Amazon Synod (DfS 70).

The Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), in its Pastoral Letter on Integral Ecology: "Missionary Disciples Guardians of the Common Home: Discernment in the light of the Encyclical Laudato Si"; about the impacts of extractive activities, especially mining, on the Common Home, in a context marked by "practices of corruption, of causing discord in the populations neighboring the extractive projects, of intimidation and even of serious violations of Human Rights," it caught our attention to see "alliances" proposed by extractive companies to sectors of the churches to co-opt them (53). "There is a clear movement of transnational companies in the mining sector directing to the leadership of several churches, a process that intensified since 2013," the letter explains.

"We observe that, in Latin America and the Caribbean, this same logic has generated an extractivist pattern of production, oriented to the exploitation of nature's goods under three basic characteristics: as non-exhaustible sources (unlimited production), occupation of large geographical areas (extensive production), and high productivity (intensive production). Moreover, the tendency is to exploit the greatest amount of material in the shortest possible time, causing great impacts on ecosystems and affecting the lives of the inhabitants of the territories (...) Therefore, we assume the challenge of reflecting and responding with the communities from the perspective of theologies and spiritualities to the impacts of the extractive industry on the Common Home" (CpC 30).

Urged by the cries of the communities affected by the mining and groans of Mother Nature, in communion with the call of Pope Francis and CELAM, the Katholische Jungschar Cooperation Agency (DKA), and the Churches and Mining Network (C&M) encourage an ecumenical space to exchange reflections on Theologies, Ecologies, and Extractivism. Together with the communities, we assume this challenge to respond communally and from the perspective of theologies and spiritualities to the impacts of the extractive industry on the Common Home.

In this ecumenical space for reflection, we have the participation of theologians from Latin America, Europe, and the USA. They were willing to listen, dialogue, learn and share their knowledge and experiences. The collective reflections also helped to theologically support the Mining Divestment Campaign, encouraged by C&M and the Gold and Church Project, promoted by DKA.

Methodologically, this Reflection Group was organized into three Thematic Axes: Theological ethical perspective: in which we sought to illuminate the practices of the extractivist political and economic

model that has been established, in modernity, as dogma for growth. This model is based on the utilitarian financialization of nature to safeguard speculative capital by controlling Mother Earth and the future.

What steps do we take towards an ethical-theological perspective that illuminates the decisions of religious organizations on issues such as, for example, financial investments in the extractive industry that seeks substantial economic benefits: extractivist bonanzas based on the dogma of unlimited growth?

How can we understand these practices and the "collaboration for evil," also according to the concept of ecological sin? How can we act in the face of the strategies of some business sectors that approach churches seeking support for their extractive projects with a discourse of progress, development, and a supposed "inclusive capitalism"?

Regarding the financial question, from a theological perspective, should the churches and religious organizations assume losses or reduce profitability in favor of the common good? How to evaluate the current economic model of inequity that has the dominant logic of extraction as one of its pillars?

Liturgical theology: open dialogues, on the Liturgy and the evangelical preferential option for the poor: how to understand the use of gold, silver, and diamonds in our persons and particularly in our Churches? How do we advance in putting into practice moral values such as sobriety, charity, fraternity, and other values that lead to integral human development (FT 112)?

From a historical and theological approach, how is the relationship between the "sacredness of liturgical rites" and the necessary use of gold created and sustained? Is there a possibility of rethinking or reinterpreting the use of gold and silver in liturgical objects such as chalices and patens? How can the attributes of 'precious,' 'worthy,' 'pure' be redefined in the Liturgy, withdrawing from gold and silver and valuing other symbols?

What would be the good and correct alternatives to follow the rites with dignity without promoting extractive economies that violate the entrails of Mother Earth? How to promote the reflections of liturgical change in the logic of the permanent inculturation of the Liturgy? Should not our Liturgy be "inculturated" in dialogue with the progressive perception of the colonial sin of extractivism and the support it still receives from our churches?

Postcolonial Theology: reflected on the overexploitation of nature, with the consequent territorial devastation by mining and multinational corporations. We have made progress in updating and proposing a "modern" version of colonialism: we assume that to share a principle of "post extractivist hope,"

we must decolonize our thinking, the imaginary, and the powers/knowledge we currently have.

How can theologies help us in this path of proposing understandings of a dignified life, overcoming extractivism, and the "curse of abundance" with its sacrificial dynamics proposed to Latin and Central America?

What theoretical-practical reflections are possible for theologies so that the Churches and Institutions of Faith do not continue to persecute/disqualify the indigenous cosmovision and that of the Earth's peoples that help us rethink our relationship with nature?

What are the theological changes necessary to correct anthropocentric/androcentric views and colonial or Europeanizing practices?

The financialization of nature and the markets of the future continue to take out again the Abya Yala, updating the idea of progress and development based on the Domination of Nature. How can we illuminate, from a Decolonial Theology, the investment practices carried out by the Churches and financial speculation that reduce Mother Earth to shares traded on stock exchanges? What alternatives and horizons can we present in this space-time (Pacha) to illuminate the necessary changes for this transformation process that we live in the churches and society? How do we reinterpret the concept of 'value' from the perspective of Good Living and decolonization? What is the 'value' of money and investments in this new scale of relationships? What consequences does it have in our just and necessary administration of goods?

Several of these questions were addressed in the lectures and dialogues we share in this publication. However, we still have more questions than answers. Therefore, we believe that in our effort to respond to these and other concerns, we join many people and institutions with whom we share concerns, quests, and objectives. In this collective effort, we encourage you to participate and join us, continue the debate, share knowledge, question the proposals, and build together new lights that illuminate and guide our eco-spiritual journey next to the communities that resist extractivist projects in Latin America and other parts of the world.

Latin American Episcopal Counsil CELAM
Churches and Mining Network

The earth as a gift from God

The earth, the territory: essence of life.

Hna. Daniela Cannavina, HCMR

As a representative of the Religious Life of Latin America and the Caribbean, I am grateful for the invitation received to accompany the space of reflection on Theologies, Ecologies, and Extractivism.

I begin with the words of a member of the Cuna Tule people:

"Mother earth loves us more than our mothers because my mother had me in her womb and then very early on she left for the abode of the creators when my life was just blossoming; but mother earth is always present at all times: before conception, in our mothers' wombs, when we arrive in this earth space, and she will continue to accompany us when we undertake the journey back to the abode of our creators, to our great home." (Sacredness and Territoriality, 43)

This mother's vision makes the territory take on the value of sacredness, of sustaining the

future and the foundation of origin, in which lies the essence of life.

This is already reflected in paragraph 146 of Laudato Si' when Pope Francis invites us to pay special attention to the aboriginal communities with their cultural traditions, who are the main interlocutors, especially when advancing large projects that affect their spaces.

For them, the land is not an economic good but a gift from God and the ancestors who rest on it, a sacred space with which they need to interact to sustain their identity and values. When they remain in their territories, they are precisely the ones who take the best care of them. However, in various parts of the world, they are under pressure to abandon their lands to free them for extractive and agricultural projects that pay no attention to the degradation of nature and culture.

In the face of this reading, several lessons emerge:

> The earth is a gift
> The earth is not an economic good
> We will all rest in the earth-placenta (as the Salesian Eduardo Meana beautifully calls it).

They (the indigenous communities) are the ones who take care of it best because the feeling they feel when their land is taken from them is the same feeling a mother feels when her child is taken from her.

The earth does not belong to us; we belong to it. We are earth; we cannot live without the earth, even if it can continue its trajectory without us. We have not woven the web of life; we are only a strand of it. And if one strand is cut, humanity loses its foothold. Therefore, the Earth-Humanity mutuality must be lived as a conscious inclusion to mobilize us internally to care for and respect it.

If the earth is degraded, the human being is degraded. Let us not forget that the cry of the earth and the impoverished are identified; they beat with the same heart (LS 49). In short: "Everything that affects the earth affects the children of the earth" (as the Indian Chief of the Suwamish tribe - northwest USA - wrote more than 130 years ago).

The appropriation of land for extractivist practices - which date back to colonial times - lacerates the pores of life of our soils. These practices find synonymous words that are framed in the same picture: plunder, dispossession, theft of natural resources for the benefit of a few, dividing the "don-land" in a territorial space for capitalist elites and, consequently, leaving some crumbs that, possibly, will be left to fall from the table of the so-called lords. This is the face of the tragedy, of which we cannot be accomplices.

If these practices exist, there are victims of violence, intimidated by acts of pressure:

* Manifest pressure on many of our people to abandon their lands and leave them free for the profit of those who believe themselves to be the owners.
* Destructive pressure on the ecological balance.
* Violent pressure against anyone who rebels and is not part of this model and scenario.
* The pressure of life until death has its say, if necessary (although it will certainly not be the last word).

Today, more than ever, we are invited to collectively make contributions that contribute to strengthening respect and care for life in the community, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, far from these "pressure" scenarios.

Today, more than ever, we are invited to a new relationship with creation, with nature. The world is our home, our Oikos, and for it to continue to be so, it is urgent to rediscover its meaning and intelligibility rather than to ensure its mastery or use.

We do not decipher ourselves only from ourselves, others, or even God. We also interpret ourselves from created reality, from the cosmos. We have to relearn to look at water, air, earth, and fire. The world is still our birthplace, and while we are on our way, let us thank the earth, which cradles and shelters us as mother and teacher; which carries wrinkles on its face, mountainous beauty, life from its rivers, and blood in its veins, all because they carry our biography imprinted on them.

But how do we come to break with it and lose our rootedness? The task of restoring to us the sense of a theological universe is pressing. Creation speaks to us of a God concerned with the creation and the world (in words of the theologian Adolphe Gesché), but it also speaks to us of this created world, of the cosmos. How can this world not be essential for us if it is essential for God? We have our good and cannot be dispossessed of it in this reality. We all need a place to say to each other, to identify ourselves, to be at home, to dwell. And where your house is, there is your glory (as Geshé also prays): "Father, our Father in heaven... (which is like saying to him) Father, you who have a place, keep us in ours". It is a question, in short, of restoring the place of belonging, the house.

This world, this earth, has nothing to teach us? Even if it were no more than this: to teach us that we are not alone and that we desperately need a place and a space outside which we would feel disinherited, amputated?

Eduardo Gudynas (researcher at the Latin American Center for Social Ecology) brings us the concept of "ecological amputation" concerning open-pit mega-mining. This sounds harsh to our ears, but even more so when we know that the consequences and damages are irreversible, given that the destructive environmental impact is not only on the biological framework

but also on its material base: total loss of environmental heritage. Aggressions sustained with the use of force, with the criminalization of the defenders of life, and with military interventions on more than one occasion.

How to reconcile ecological amputation with the proposal of ecological citizenship? The Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) in the Pastoral Letter "Missionary Disciples, Custodians of the Common Home," offers a reading that confirms the permissiveness of the communities to the abuses of the extractivist companies and the passivity of the states. Also to certain deterministic attitudes, which nurture imaginaries of conformism and little decision to defend the commons. A close example with two possible responses: when faced with the danger of contamination or damage from an extractivist initiative, some people just say, "we have to die of something," and others, "at least we have work."
Faced with the voice raised by CELAM and the expression "ecological amputation" of Eduardo Gudynas, we reflect that:

The metaphor of amputating a finger in the context of an organism would seem to be nothing if, by selling that phalanx, you receive good money in exchange, which will undoubtedly be in favor of the rest of the organism that was left intact. But, in the end, the finger will be lost, and the environmental impact assessments could hardly discuss whether it will splash much or little blood or whether the bandage has been favorable. Economic reasoning will argue that the money received from selling the finger will be so juicy that the national body will be able to buy an artificial prosthesis, which would leave the hand even better off. (Gudynas)

We are undoubtedly increasingly aware of this problem, but we are not sufficiently "concerned" with it in practical reality. In our daily lives, we prioritize other values because - deep down - we continue to believe that the economy and ecology are two separate spheres and not a common Oikos, stewardship of our home, which is this earth that we tread barefoot because it is sacred and nourishing.

Latin American Religious Life wants to embrace a Samaritan economy, far from alliances that invite us to open our mouths to receive those crumbs of which we spoke a moment ago, kneaded with the flour of corruption and the water of the violation of human rights. Today, our responses must be part of a long search for alternatives for life forged in the heat of the struggles (that have left so much blood spilled) to defend, raise our voices, and insist on time and at the wrong time. With RED IGLESIAS y MINERÍAS, CLAR proposes spaces for dialogue and reflection that encourage us to be coherent with the defense of life and rights and nature itself. We cannot accept a system of exclusion. Instead, we must strive for ecological justice that embraces social justice. One does not exist without the other, as Pope Francis expresses it well: "We cannot fail to recognize that an authentic ecological approach always

becomes a social approach, which must integrate justice into discussions about the environment, to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the impoverished.
Very soon, in the post-Easter liturgy, the word of God will remind us of a question in the face of Jesus's Ascension: Why are you looking to heaven? "This interest in heaven does not make us forget the earth; on the contrary, heaven depends on what we have done on earth and with the earth. Such a Church [and such an RL] committed to the despoiled of this world causes, gives credibility to what faith proclaims and hope promises". (Leonardo Boff)

I conclude in the key of hope, together with Pope Francis: "However, all is not lost, because human beings, capable of degrading ourselves to the extreme, can also overcome, opt again for good, and regenerate ourselves, beyond all the mental and social conditioning that is imposed on us." (LS 205)

Caring for the common home is not a fad or an option that may or may not be embraced. On the contrary, it is an indispensable part of our condition as believers.

Daniela Canavina: Religious of the Capuchin Sisters of Mother Rubatto. Secretary-General of CLAR, the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Religious. She actively participated in the whole process of the Synod for the Amazon.

Mons. BRUNO-MARIE DUFFÉ

FOR A «THEOLOGY OF THE EARTH»

FOR THE REFLECTION GROUP,
«THEOLOGIES, ECOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVISM.»

April 13, 2021

Introduction

To humbly contribute to this opening session of the Reflection Group «Theologies, Ecologies, and Extractivisms,» I would like to propose four points of attention that could also be a path on this theme's theological and ethical dimension. My question can be presented as follows: why and in what way is our relationship with the earth so determinant for the future of our humanity and the future of the life of all living beings on our planet?

. I could present the first point of attention in the form of a compass with four cardinal points, with which we can propose a Theology of the Earth.

I invite the reader to draw this compass with me:

North
THE EARTH: WE HAVE RECEIVED IT
«The earth received:» minimal definition of Creation: «Source of life coming from the hand of God»
(Cf Genesis 1 & 2).

West
THE LAND: OUR MEMORY
«Memory of life and community,» Memory of our fundamental events. Of our knowledge and our wisdom
Cf. Decalogue: covenant and liberation

Awareness
Conversion
Action

East
THE LAND OF PROMISE
«PROMISED LAND»
Hope of the poor and of our common future. Land of welcome and joy. Shared land
(cf. Exodus; Prophets and Revelation).

South
THE EARTH TODAY BETWEEN SUFFERING AND SOLIDARITY
Reduced («instrumentalized») Earth

2. Second point of attention

It can be presented with four essential verbs to define an ethics of action regarding the problems of the Earth «In the light of Integral Ecology.»

RECEIVE: To receive the earth means to look at the earth as a gift entrusted to the human community. The land itself is given as a mother who waits, carries, and gives life; indigenous cultures have understood this. It founds and establishes an «essential» relationship between earth, life, humanity, and the future. The earth cannot belong to a person or a group for only their interests without considering the common good of the human community. It could be said that the earth is «the common good» by itself (with the natural elements: air, water...). It is decisive the reference to the first Christian community, when those who have properties sell and give the price to the community according to the needs of each one. (Acts 2, 42)

PROTECT: Protect and not only produce! Never produce without protecting. To protect should be interpreted as looking carefully, respecting the rhythms of nature, and not accepting the depletion of resources for immediate benefit without thinking about the future. Protecting does not mean to "do nothing" but to do (cultivate and produce) with limits to allow the renewal of possibilities. Biodiversity - which is the primordial condition of life, where all beings exist in a fragile but determining complementarity - seems, more and more, like the school of understanding the future of life. And it can be said that when this complementarity is not considered (with the reciprocity that seems to be linked to it, in social ethics), we move forward in the darkness of individualism and individual or collective selfishness («the closed world,» as Pope Francis says in his encyclical «Fratelli tutti»).

TRANSMIT: Transmission is the human mission from one generation to another. Transmission is the most relevant form of mission. It is not simply the transmission of knowledge or techniques but of meaning and values, faith and hope. Regarding the land, the transmission affects the stay and the richness of the living, the responsible management of the rivers, the way of producing corn, fruits, and the beauty of flowers (which we need so much), the abilities and talents. Therefore, transmitting appears as the highest expression of human responsibility. It is also the way for each generation to participate in the mystery of life. On the contrary, not helping to think about the generations that are coming to enjoy today, in an individualistic way -without precaution or foresight- indicates that we are on a path of death. Excessive consumption without conscience is a morbid behavior. Jesus said to the rich man: «you lack one thing: sell your possessions, give the money to the poor and come with me. The rich man went away sad because he had many goods.»

SHARE: It is the joy of living a fully human experience. To share is to consider others and their needs, aspirations, and desires. With the contemporary crises, we understood that the central challenge of our time is: share or die. Inequalities have been amplified by an unfair development that gives to those who already have and leaves aside those who do not. The perversity - or mortal sin - is to consider a man for what he has and not for what he is. Sharing is the way to greater wealth because it calls each one to participate in the community. To die is to believe that appropriation is freedom. We are free and happy when we share. As a mother and teacher, the earth participates in the happiness of shared life. It is also a way of interpreting the reference to the promised land, which is the land of honey and milk for all.

3. Third point of attention
To think of land as «Common Good» and denounce the violence of private land appropriation to announce a Shared Land.

What comes from the earth cannot belong to one person alone. Because the earth offers and gives. It offers what it carries in itself: it does not sell itself; it does not prostitute itself.
Having said that, I do not want to forget human work, the activity of men and women. I do not forget the economy -the care and organization of the common home- but I say that everything that comes from the earth belongs to the human community: the water from the springs, like the minerals. As life belongs to life, no one can trade with the elements; no one can sell or buy the human body (this last argument is a central point of law, of human rights).

Therefore, a moral theology of the «common good» is needed.
• The «common good » as the «good of the community » (which protects and grows each member of the community and the relationship itself within the community - people or nation.
• The «common good» as «shared goods» to allow everyone to develop their charisms, skills, and abilities without concern or discrimination (we need the talent of everyone).
• The «common good» as «communion, » a dynamic of hope and mutual trust, with the grace of God.

4. The Ecological Conversion that we have to live and act, calls us to look at the earth and our brothers and sisters with the intention of peace and forgiveness.

Last point of this modest introduction to «a theology of the earth,» with the three references to Laudato Si, Dear Amazonia and Fratelli tutti, major contributions of the Church's social thought in our time:
«Conversion» does not mean doing nothing more with the land or turning it into a museum! To protect does not mean to die, leaving the land and our brothers and sisters without a cure.

Conversion means: to look differently,

with peace; to welcome the otherness of the earth-mother; to put an end to the "still more" that exhausts the earth and the life of all.

So conversion is to resist the power of possessing, the power of the machine and our instruments, the power of money and private property.

Conversion is to take care of the land and the living -all of us- in the biodiversity destroyed by irresponsible extractivism.

«To the companies, national or international, that destroy the Amazon and do not respect the right of indigenous peoples, to their territory and its demarcation, to self-determination and prior consent, we must give them the names that correspond to them: injustice and crime.» (Dear Amazonia, n°14, Pope Francis, 2020)

Conversion is spiritual combat against hopelessness. Of course, everyone wants to possess, to appropriate the land and increase their interests, to control others, and - finally - to reduce and kill the fragile beings who do not seem more productive or who are too weak. To change the look is to love those who suffer from the technocratic logic that cannot see anything else but production and financial interest.

Conversion is to receive messages from the earth (heat and rains...) - particularly in this pandemic context when we have forgotten the complementarity of beings - including viruses that no longer know where to live and attack humans.

Conversion is finally to reconcile with the earth and other beings, considering this «biodiversity,» which is the modern name of Creation... Finally, to ask for forgiveness and live a fraternity, in memory of all the victims of blind development.

«This provokes the urgency of resolving everything that violates fundamental human rights. Politicians are called to «care for fragility, for the fragility of peoples and individuals. Caring for fragility means strength and tenderness, struggle and fruitfulness, amid a functionalist and privatist model that leads inevitably to the «throwaway culture» [...] It means taking charge of the present in its most marginal and distressing situation and being capable of endowing it with dignity.» (Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg November 25, 2014). Thus an intense activity is certainly generated, because «we must do whatever it takes to safeguard the condition and dignity of the human person» (Address to the ruling class and the Diplomatic Corps, Bangui - Central African Republic, November 29, 2015).» (Fratelli tutti, n°188, Pope Francis, 2020)

To continue on the road

Remembering the «land received» and the «promised land» gives dynamism to theological reflection, as it is at the heart of our faith. This movement of faith and intelligence allows us to think, at the same time, how it is possible to offer a strong and free -but always humble- testimony of our love and hope and to contribute to the elaboration of this «other paradigm» to think and realize a truly «human and

integral development,» to which Pope Francis calls in his Encyclical «Laudato si.»

«It cannot be thought possible to sustain another cultural paradigm and use the technique as a mere instrument because today the technocratic paradigm has become so dominant that it is very complicated to do without its resources, and even more difficult to use them without being dominated by its logic… The capacity for decision, the most genuine freedom, and the space for the alternative creativity of individuals are reduced.» (Laudato si, n° 108, Francis, 2015).

«However, it is possible to broaden our gaze again, and human freedom is capable of limiting technology, orienting it, and placing it at the service of another type of progress that is healthier, more humane, more social, more integral.» (Laudato si, n. 112).

The reference to the «promised land» seems more and more determinant in the current context of the ecological, health, economic and social crises, which are connected and amplified, one to the other. The «promised land» may look like a «utopia» - that is, the place that does not exist (not yet) - but it is the land that we have in ourselves, as a «vocation» and an «aspiration» that asks to be expressed and offered. It is why it is essential to listen to those who suffer, struggle, and hope («against all hope»). In their being and spirit, they have one earth that suffers «the pains of childbirth,» as St. Paul says about Creation. Each time we allow this hope to express itself, we take a step towards the «promised land.» The conditions of this «progress» - which seems to be a «liberation» - are the Word (received and given), the Promise (shared among us), and Forgiveness (which allows us to escape from the consequences of injustice and violence... of death. They are the three: the «promised land to come.»

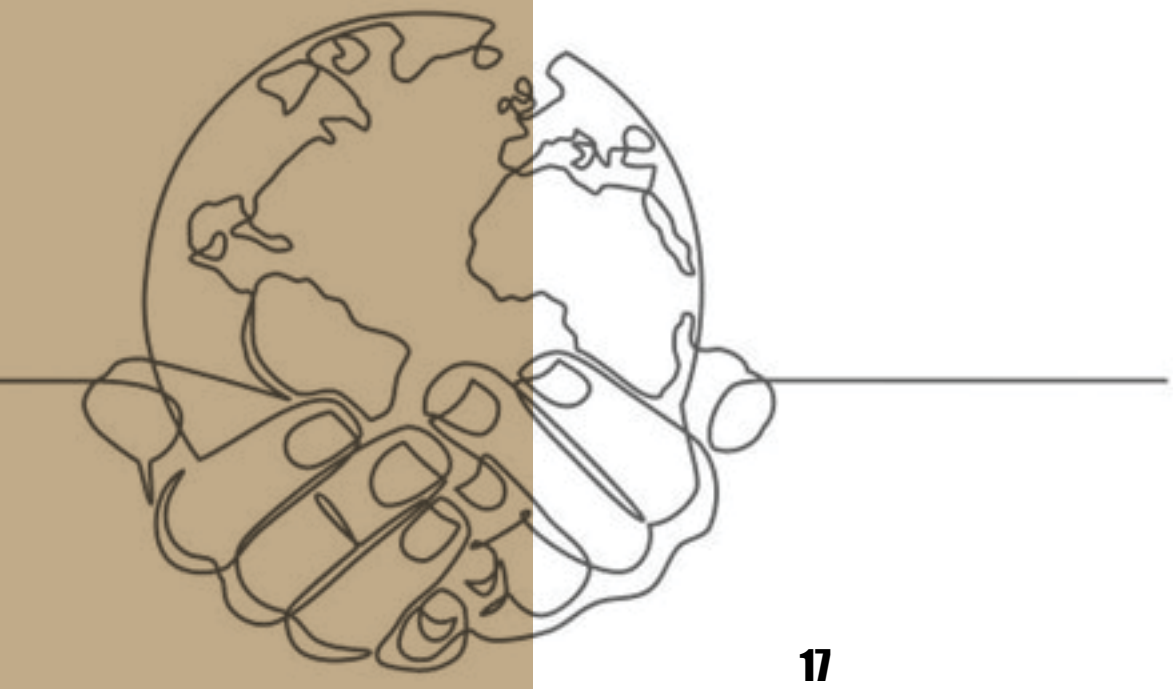
"I have seen a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth have passed away, and the sea also. I have seen the holy city and the new Jerusalem, coming from God out of heaven, as a beautiful bride, arrayed for her husband. And I hear a voice from the throne: "You see the city? Here God dwells with humans. God will make His mansion with them; they will be His people, and He will be the God for them; His name will be God-with-them. God will wipe the tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more mourning. The world of the past shall be no more. "
(Revelation, 21, 1-4)

Bruno Duffee: French priest. Secretary of the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development of the Vatican.

Chris Ferguson

Christian churches propose to change this system of death

I want to thank the Churches and Mining Network and the Gold and Church Project for the invitation to participate today in this ecumenical and prophetic initiative, also the Reflection Group and the Mining Divestment Campaign. The Reflection Group is called upon to provide theological and ethical support.



Participating today is also an enormous blessing, mainly because it comes from Father Alberto Franco. His invitation always addresses something pertinent to solidarity with those who suffer under injustice and a motivation to search for a future filled with hope and faith in Jesus Christ.

I feel a great harmony with the speakers since we all come with the same commitment to confess the God of Life in the midst of a world fallen among thieves. We share the feeling that this issue is urgent; it has to do with the life and death of people and with the earth. It is necessary to collaborate ecumenically from the perspective that this is much more than any ethical, social-political issue because it has to do with our most profound commitment to faith in Jesus Christ -the crucified one- and our confession to the God of Life.

I am an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada. As a Canadian, I see the poles that have characterized our struggle for justice on this issue. The first aspect is the praxis of the Church in solidarity with churches, communities, social movements, and indigenous peoples in the Global South. That is, accompanying peoples' struggles in their fight to defend their lands and lives in different countries, especially in Guatemala and the Philippines.

Admittedly, most mining companies are listed on Canadian stock exchanges. Often to very low ethical standards and with little regulation. So, the Canadian Church has had to recognize that it is not just a matter of accompanying the struggles of others. We have a direct responsibility because transnational companies are profiting at the cost of lives in the Global South. We benefit from our investments in such companies as direct accomplices of injustice. That has led us to a process of internal struggle within the Church to apply fair investment principles and decide where it is necessary to practice divestment. This is not easy, but insisting that we practice the norms of justice in our economic life, the Church, and society, is an ongoing responsibility. The Church does have pro-divestment policies consistent with its ethical and theological principles.

My reflections then come from a Protestant and global perspective, situated in the experience of the Global North and as someone who has accompanied struggles in the Global South as well.

As General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, I want to share some of the testimony of our Christian world communion - the largest of the Protestant communions - representing 233 churches in more

than 110 countries, nearly 100 million believers in this global koinonia. There is a long history of our communion and the articulation of the confession of the inseparable nature between socio-economic-political justice and faith in Jesus Christ.

Due to time constraints, I will focus on our response to the powerful impact of the first wave of globalization on the whole economy in the 1990s, striking cruel and deadly blows in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Our churches in the Global South are the majority of our membership. Still, normally the agenda was conditioned by the churches of the north on theological issues not close to the daily reality of the majorities. But in the face of the massive suffering caused by globalization, the churches of the South have insisted that the entire communion reflects on the imperatives of faith in the face of a very destructive reality of the people's and planet's life. It is a reflection from faith, explicitly on the world order and the economic model of capitalist neoliberalism and its ideology.

Thus we have made two great leaps: First, a reflection on the global reality but from the perspective of the global South and rooted in the actual everyday material reality of life and death. Second, the whole communion entered into the theme as an ethical and theological issue in itself. In our tradition, this implied seeing the issue and the reality of economic globalization and injustice of the neoliberal capitalist system as a "status confessionis", that is, confessing God as the God of Justice and Peace, God of Life, and then being complicit with silence in the face of an unjust global system, which threatens and destroys the life of humanity and creation.

By remaining silent and passive in the face of a system of domination and exploitation against the poor of the earth and nature itself, we run the risk of being far from the God of life and effectively jeopardizing our faith in God. It is not just about sin; it goes directly to the heart of the meaning of the Jesus Christ gospel, in obedience to the God of Life. It is clearly a matter of faith beyond political, social, or ethical issues.

Biblically, we have recognized that - as followers of Jesus of Nazareth - we must place the practice of justice at the center of our faith in God. To practice justice, to know and love God. To love and know God is to practice justice.

Because of our communion, our stance on the neoliberal capitalist system made us question the integrity of our faith in Jesus Christ. If Jesus is Lord, the neoliberal market is not. Nor are the banks. Nor the economic system, nor

the transnational corporations. Nor the armies. Nor governments. Jesus is Lord. Caesar is not. End of story.

A document known as the Accra Confession emerged from this long and arduous biblical-theological discernment. Accra is named after the African city where the General Council that proclaimed the Confession was held in 2004. It is worth mentioning that the Accra Confession followed in the tradition of other "reformed statements of faith" before other socio-political "status confessionis" situations such as the Barmen Declaration, the Belhar Confession, and the Southern African Kairos document.

The Accra confession drew a strong link between economic-political-social gender injustice and ecological injustice, i.e., the cries of the poor and the cries of the earth. That was, more or less, ten years before Laudato Sí.

The Accra confession has made it clear - as a statement of faith - that the neoliberal economic system and its ideology are against the will of God. Accra condemned any economic system that exploits and destroys life, that promotes the interests of the few at the expense of the welfare of the many. Accra says that any system that presents itself as powerful and immutable, using theological concepts, defiles itself by pretending to solve all the problems that idolatry represents. That is Mammon. Accra is not just the reflection of a few theologians; it is the official faith position of a worldwide Reformed Christian communion of 100 million believers. That is its importance.

For our topic today, it is essential to underline that Accra directly links economic injustice and ecological destruction. Then, theologically substantiates that creation care requires us to reject and thus change the current economic model, which is not only unjust; it also represents sin and idolatry.

The Accra Confession has placed another critical element in reading the signs of the times. The document points out the fact and nature of the neoliberal capitalist system and analyzes how the system is protected and defended by the empire. It states: "In using the term "empire," we refer to the conjunction of economic, cultural, political, and military power that constitutes a system of domination directed by powerful nations to protect and defend their own self-interests."

It is a system and structure of domination defended politically, economically, militarily, yes; but, here, I want to emphasize that empire is theologically justified as well.

So, there is a distinctly theological task in resisting the empire—a spiritual task and burden. Our mission is in the mode of the confessing Church. To confess the God of life is to resist the empire.

For us, there is no other confession with more political impact than the confession of the 24 Psalm "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." The earth is the Lord's makes it explicit that the earth is not a good or commodity that can be sold. Neither the banks nor the market owns the land in any way. Neither the governments nor the elites. Jesus is the Lord. To clarify that the lordship of Jesus -in an interfaith key- is not a claim of supremacy over other beliefs, but it is interpreted from John 10.10 where Jesus says, "I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness." It is the lordship of life over the systems of death.

When Jesus is Lord, everybody, the whole of creation, has life. A radically egalitarian lordship without any domination.

Today we live in the midst of the crises that we have analyzed since the times of Accra and worse: economic, environmental, racial, social, patriarchy and gender supremacy, authoritarianism, nationalism... All these crises have led us to a civilizational crisis, an existential crisis for the planet.

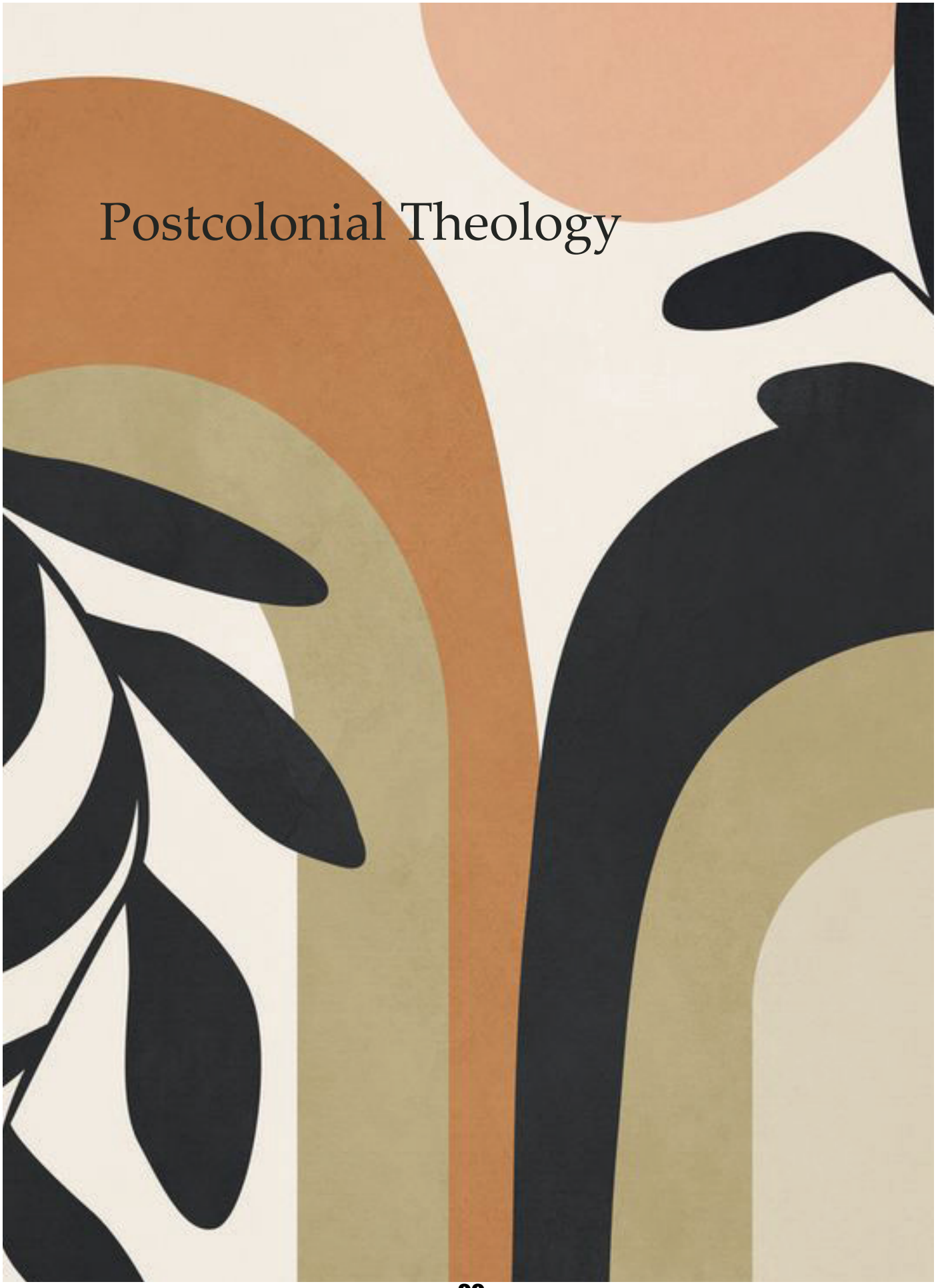
On top of it all, the Covid 19 pandemic has arrived. Apart from being a significant health crisis, the pandemic has served as an apocalyptic event in biblical terms. That is to say, it has served to unmask, unveil, reveal, make visible the nature of the world's captivity. We are living a crisis in the biblical sense, a global judgment. A moment where - to live, to survive - the world order must be reoriented and brought into conformity with God's will. Our communion has two mottos: "We are called toward unity and committed to Justice." So we say that we are called to confess the God of life in a fallen world among thieves. (John 10:10) .

So, together we must join forces to make God's promise of abundant life a reality in heaven and on earth.

Thank you.

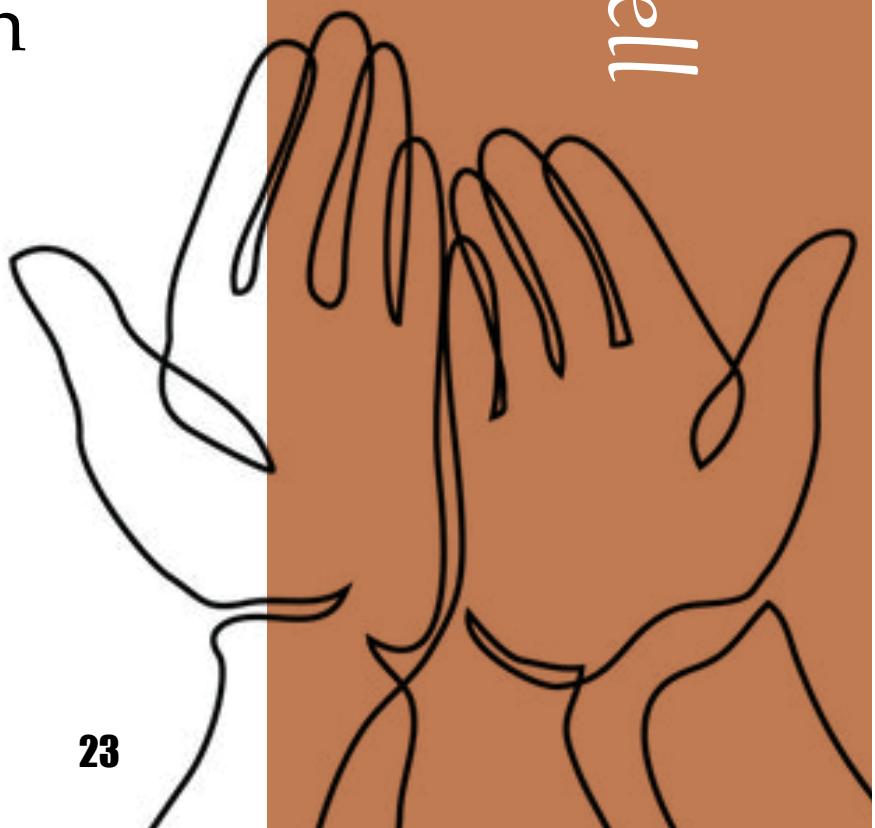
Chris Ferguson: is the outgoing general secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, a position he has occupied since 2014. He is an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. He has had extensive experience around the globe as an ecumenical leader and theologian, including in Colombia, Jerusalem, the United Nations in New York City, San José, Costa Rica, and Canada.

Postcolonial Theology



Postcolonial Reflection on Extractive Industries, Communities, and the Church

Hunter Farrell



Every year, more than 300,000 Christian pilgrims - primarily European - travel the Camino de Santiago de Compostela (Spain) to seek spiritual growth and to venerate the Apostle St. James, who was buried according to history in that town in Galicia. Although they may not realize it, the churches and chapels of the Spanish towns they pass are covered with gold and silver taken by force from the Latin American indigenous peoples during the colonial era. According to historians, between 1545 and 1823, some 22,700 metric tons of silver were extracted from Latin American mines and exported to Spain (worth more than $12.5 billion today)[1]. But the economic cost of this plunder on an unprecedented scale was not the only price to pay.

Colonization as an economic, political, and ideological phenomenon was born in the 15th century with the Portuguese and Spanish explorations of Africa and the so-called "New World," and is defined as the European project of domination of other territories and peoples for its own economic advancement. According to historian Philip Hoffman, if in 1800 Europe controlled 35% of the world's territory, by 1914, it had come to control 84%. To understand the scale of violence, theft, and pain that this movement generated in many countries, one must understand the basis of colonial logic:
Fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people were made and implemented by the colonial chiefs to satisfy defined interests in a distant metropolis. The colonizers were convinced of their superiority and divine mandate to rule, thus rejecting any negotiation process with the colonized peoples.[2]

The Martinican philosopher Frantz Fanon and the Palestinian literary critic Edward Said open a new space for literature and social research by perceiving and describing a phenomenon that will be called postcolonialism. Although it begins as a current of literary criticism that tries to give voice to colonized peoples, it grows to include a less visible aspect of colonialism but much more enduring than the colonial economic system: the cognitive.

According to Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano: "It consists, first of all, in the colonization of the dominated imaginary. That is to say, it acts in the interiority of that imaginary..."[3] This, which Quijano calls coloniality, represents the practice

1 Kris Lane, "Potosi Mines," Latin American History, Oxford Research Libraries: https://oxfordre.com/latinamericanhistory/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.001.0001/acrefore-9780199366439-e-2, accessed 10 June 2020.

2 Osterhammel, Jurgen. Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview. trans. Shelley Frisch. Markus Weiner Publishers. (2005) p. 15.

3 Quijano, Aníbal. Peru Indígena. 13(29), p. 12.

of imposing European culture, values, faith, and logic on the colonized peoples, which generates a hierarchy of binary social categories that privilege white skin, Western education, European languages, the capitalist system, and the Christian faith. He adds that their force is based on being able to give access to these cultural goods to the elites and general members of society in the colonized territories: "...European culture became, moreover, a seduction: it gave access to power. After all, beyond repression, the main instrument of all power is its seduction.

"Postcolonialism is a discourse of resistance to any project of domination..."[4] that questions the hegemonic systems of thought, textual codes, and symbolic practices constructed by the West in its domination of colonial subjects. Postcolonialism addresses the issue of cultural and discursive hegemony."[5]

The urgency of a postcolonial Church commitment in relation to extractive industries

Although there have been important exceptions to the rule, over the last five centuries, the Christian Church has generally played an indispensable role in justifying the colonial system: in exchange for the advantages granted by the state to facilitate the evangelization of colonized peoples, the Church offered its blessing and an ethico-theological justification for the historical processes of colonization. Today, without a clear postcolonial commitment, the Church can reproduce domination and white supremacy patterns in its structure, teaching, and practice.

In the 1990s, liberation theology - emerging from the Latin American context of poverty and oppression - is often cited as one of the first examples of a postcolonial theology formulated from a particular context. After several years of opposition to the methodology and assumptions of liberation theology from the Church hierarchy, a significant shift has recently occurred.

Because of his Jesuit formation and his pastoral work in the slums of Argentina, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio - upon his appointment as Pope Francis - immediately began to question the capitalist system and its impact on marginalized countries and sectors, as well as prioritizing the protection of the environment. His first encyclical letter, Laudato Si, on Care for the Common

4 Keller, Catherine, Nausner, Michael, Rivera, Mayra, "Introduction: Alien/nation, Liberation, and the Postcolonial Underground. Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press. 2004, pp. 1-19.

5 Sugirtharajah, R.S. Asian Biblical Hermeneutics, and Postcolonialism, Bible, and Liberation. (Maryknoll: Orbis), 1998, p.17.

Home, emphasizes the Church's moral obligation to protect the environment, an unprecedented pronouncement. The encyclical links the harmful impacts of the capitalist system to the destruction of ecosystems and the climate. In Fratelli Tutti, it criticizes the consequences of "consumerist fever," which leads the world into the disaster of unbridled capitalism[6] and classifies humanity into "first or second class categories, of people with more or less dignity and rights"[7]. Pedro Barreto, S.J., the Peruvian cardinal who serves the archdiocese where La Oroya - one of the ten most polluted places in the world because of toxic emissions from a North American smelter - is located, said: "We have to change this system, this system has no human face, it does not represent human beings but group interests. This system does not express human dignity. This interrogation, not only of the capitalist system but of the codes of thought that sustain it, represents essential steps on the part of the Church to correct its historical role of complicity with the forces of Empire.

The conflicts generated between indigenous and rural communities in Latin America and the extractive industries offer an opportune space for the Church today, for it is the arena in which the most marginalized political-economic actors in societies confront the most powerful. This David-Goliath confrontation offers two incomparable opportunities for the Church and the people of God:

The conversion of Zacchaeus: Concerning its long history of theologically justifying the European plunder of Latin American natural resources and the oppression of so many communities, the communities-mining companies confrontation offers the Church space for personal, communal, and ecological conversions to which Pope Francis repeatedly referred in Laudato Si. Like Luke's narrative of Zacchaeus' conversion, the postcolonial perspective allows the Church to acknowledge its complicity with unjust ways of thinking, structures, laws, and practices, and to respond with confession and indemnity: "Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19.8). (Luke 19.8) This process allows the Church to dream of a more just reality, which coincides more with the Kingdom of God, and to foster spaces and processes of postcolonial reflection for members of society.

The power of witness: Following the ministry of Jesus Christ, a postcolonial theology argues that Empire cannot

6 Holy Father Francis, Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on fraternity and social friendship, (35-36).
7 Ibid., (99).

exercise absolute control: "The ministry of Jesus who resisted the oppression of the Roman Empire continues to inspire churches to identify alternative ways of life and stand with those who have been exploited by the empire of transnational corporations Along the lines of German theologian Joerg Rieger, "If theology does not take into account how the Empire has influenced Christian history and continues to shape the thinking and practice of Christians today, it will necessarily reproduce imperial ways of life and legitimize imperialism, in the name of God." The Church can open up spaces for reflection to question the systems of mining exploitation and the power of seduction of European lifestyles (culture, language, education, political-economic organization, religion, etc.) that have been imposed until now.

When David wins

The Peruvian Church, more precisely the Archdiocese of Huancayo and the Episcopal Conference for Social Action (CEAS), engaged in a David-Goliath struggle. A small group of parents and schoolteachers began to question the imperial logic that assured them that the emissions from the metallurgical complex in the city of La Oroya - owned by a North American company - were not harmful to the local population. The company's statements justified its non-compliance with Peruvian environmental laws, even though it had accepted them. The Church decided to accompany the families of La Oroya and their Movement for the Health of La Oroya, and joined a Technical Roundtable of Peruvian and North American non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and church groups (eventually, a solidarity group <<Friends of La Oroya>> would be formed in the U.S. composed of the Jesuit Fathers of Missouri, the Dominican Sisters of Illinois, the Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches, four North American NGOs, the Uniendo Manos Network, and St. Louis University of Missouri). Together they responded to the two requests from the families of La Oroya:

1. An environmental health study was organized, led by the School of Public Health of the University of San Luis and the Archdiocese of Huancayo, valued at more than US$450,000, which conclusively proved the high levels of lead present in the blood of the general population and especially in children (in addition to arsenic, cadmium and sulfur dioxide), removing the imperial mask of an all-powerful company whose logic and needs dominated the public spaces of La Oroya and the country in general.

2. A national and international press campaign was organized to pressure the Peruvian government to enforce the

environmental laws that the company had agreed to when it bought the refinery.

In short, the Church lent its prestige, resources, and social capital to a group of local people who did not accept the imperial myth, often uttered by the mining companies, that health was the price to be paid for "development." With the tools provided by the Church and NGOs, the organized villagers succeeded in demanding that the Peruvian government enforce environmental laws by taking the metallurgical complex and toxic emissions away from the U.S. company. Since then, pollution levels have dropped significantly, while another company is being sought to operate the complex.

The victory of this little David against a powerful Goliath, the latter protected by imperial logics (development will save us from ourselves, mining is necessary for development, health is a cost to be paid for the benefits of mining, etc.), offers the Church an emblematic case of the mutual blessing that is woven when it accepts to accompany the communities affected by mining, in their struggle for a better world, a postcolonial world.

Hunter Farrell: anthropologist and theologian of the Presbyterian Church of the USA. He worked in Peru and Congo. He encouraged the interaction of churches and social movements in the campaign for the health of La Oroya (Peru). He is currently a professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (USA).

Tania Avila

Dignified life: overcoming extractivism

to human beings and nature

In the Andean lands, evangelization came hand in hand with colonization, and soon after, mining was added as the "curse of abundance." The first evangelization did not manage to detach itself from its own worldview in order to meet "others." The worldview of the Andean world had a holistic view, with three interdependent ways of life: Alaj pacha-world above, Uqhu pacha-world of the depths, and Kay pacha-here, this world; together they make the Pacha, the whole of life. These three modes of life needed, and still need, to interact continuously and in balance to generate harmony in the Pacha. For the early evangelists, the world was organized into three levels: heaven, earth,

and hell, each level with its respective value judgment that considered heaven as good, earth as a place of temptation, and hell as evil. Each level as an almost independent compartment.

These two ways of conceiving life, very different, were in the same time and space, but the first evangelists did not consider them; they entered with their cosmovision organized by levels and interpreted the Andean world from those categories, making arbitrary parallels. They interpreted that Alaj Pacha-world above was heaven, good; Kay pacha-here this world, is the earth subject to temptations and Uqhu pacha was identified as hell, evil. Then everything linked to the Uqhu pacha was censured as diabolical activity, which had to be punished; thus arose one of the justifications for the exercise of violence on the people, not only the Andean.

Where my ancestors saw the need for relationship and interaction to care for balance, the early evangelists (who also became my ancestors) saw diabolical associations. Thus they divided society into worthy beings who deserved abundance and unworthy beings who should be sacrificed for their evils. As a result of this misunderstanding, and despite more than five hundred years on the road, there remains symbolic coloniality that has led to a distorted interpretation of the spirituality of the peoples, and that sustains asymmetrical relationships between people and peoples, between men and women; and extractivist companies use it as a smokescreen to continue abusing Mother Earth and her children.

Thinking of possibilities for 'healing' our relationship between the Church and the peoples (who have also become Church), I propose to sharpen our gaze and listen to other languages, which, like the symbolic, need a process of internal decolonization (from the gaze of the peoples themselves) and external decolonization (from the gaze of the Church itself), processes that allow us to be 'allies' in the care of the common home and those who inhabit it. To this end, I share four short reflections based on: the symbol of the Sumaj Orqo, the symbolic figure of the Uncle of the mine, the phrase "women bring bad luck, they do not produce ore," and this refrain from a song "minerojina kausakusan, mana ni imaypis kapuanchu, qonqetollayta saqeskayki" (as a miner I am going to live, I have nothing, only my heart I am going to leave you). Each one with three movements: the situation of coloniality that I perceive, the risks of this situation, and a movement that could make a decolonial process possible.

Sumaj Orqo. From good, beautiful hill to rich hill

Located in the department of Potosi-Bolivia, its indigenous name is Sumaj Orqo. The translation into Spanish is good, beautiful hill. A pre-Inca sacred space that was a ritual place until before the colony, respected as a meeting place with the divine, where the richness of

the silver, the greenery of the kewiña, made it beautiful and abundant in mineral and vegetable wealth, the first to obtain silver from this hill was Diego Huallpa. Today the Sumaj Orqo is the rich hill of Potosi, national monument, whose veins produced the largest amount of silver during the colony; it has also been a producer of lead, zinc, and tin.

Today they extract some rocks with small amounts of various minerals. In April 2020, for the first time in more than 500 years, work stopped for a while and, even so, it is said that it is empty, poor, barren...

In the eyes of investors and with the perspective of extractivist development, it is a poor, lifeless place with worthless stones. But, for those who are part of this people and cultivate their link with the ancestors, it is an ancestor, worn out by greed and that, despite the damage received, it is looking after us; it is not a useless hill, it is a sacred place that has life... face... it has 'its' place. But, unfortunately, from being the good, beautiful hill that implies a face, feeling emotions, and interaction, it became a rich hill, an object of consumption and extraction without a face, without life.

The category of wealth is more strident than the category of goodness. Therefore, many local people opt for this view and are easy prey for the mining companies that affirm this category of wealth-poverty in oral and symbolic language to put a price on an inert object, even under the image of a national monument. But this hill has lives working inside it, and these deteriorated lives are also made invisible, as the gaze is focused only on the rich hill.

A movement that could help a Church-driven decolonization process could be along the lines of Laudato Si with two keys, "we are earth" (LS 2) and "each being has value in itself" (LS 140). The first would help to reconnect with the ancestral bond of co-care by restoring the face of Sumaj Orqo. The second would affirm that care is required for being part of the biome, which is the common home, and not for the utility it provides to man.

I make a special note about a painting called the Virgin Hill, an artistic expression of Mary in the form of a hill that is not exclusive to the rich hill of Potosi.

However, an interpretation could express a sample of the predatory link between the Church, the crown, and the indigenous subjugation. Even though the image also includes in its body the life of other beings, the proportionality of the events it narrates gives rise to the interpretation that God allows (if not endorses) this situation of extractivism that the hill is undergoing; it is necessary to generate semiotic analysis that allow us to deconstruct interpretations that justify, with different languages, the constant ecological damage.

Uncle of the mine. From being a caretaker to a diabolical presence that provokes fear.

All the mines in Bolivia have an image made by the miners themselves, with some variations depending on the place, such as the number of horns, the size; still, the common thing is its bright eyes, which make it visible in the dim light and the erect sexual organ. To this image -which occupies an important place inside the mine, generally where there has been an accident or where the mineral has gone- all the miners go when they begin their work to ch'allar with alcohol, to sprinkle drops of alcohol, and to leave some coca leaves. They also share a time of akulliku, chewing coca together with him and co-workers, asking for care and good ore production. This image of the Uncle could be linked to the mythical figure of Pachacamac, the divinity with two faces, who inhabited and protected the world of the depths, the Uqhu pacha. From being the inhabitant of the depths and caretaker of the riches that inhabit it, the Uncle became the devil; from having rituals where coca leaves and alcohol were shared, he became a being with punishing traits that demand coca leaves and alcohol consumption on a daily basis. This relationship between the Uncle and the miner is based on fear rather than on the search for protection; it is common to hear miners say 'he can get angry,' at some point in history, the symbolic meaning suffered a deformation because neither the care of the miner's body nor the body of the mine is of interest anymore, "it takes a bestial energy to endure breaking stones and working in the mine," but to produce to avoid punishment, first by colonizers and now by the extractivist economy.

At the same time, the ritual system of the permission was altered from being at key times to being daily and perhaps more than once a day; and from the sprinkling of alcohol on the image and its surroundings, it becomes of frequent consumption of the miner, which causes micro dependencies. The same happens with the ancestral peoples' coca leaves of ritual consumption, which gave voice with interdependent energy to the searches and hopes of the peoples; the coca leaf becomes of frequent labor consumption and altered with external alkalizing agents... curiously now it is used to silence hunger, thirst, tiredness, lack of air... that is to say to justify an abusive work.

These are symbolic violences, which sustain spiritual violence that deforms and undermines the cosmovisions of the peoples. There is a manipulation of ritual use that leads to a spiritual colonization-coloniality that allows the exercise of domination of the miner's body and the mine's body, thus silencing the cry of the poor and the earth.

A movement to promote the decolonial process could be centered on listening, on those long hours that the Pope suggests that young people spend listening to the elders because, in this way, the deep

meaning of myths can be recovered. At the same time, young people must take charge of their roots (QA 33), not only the miners but the priests, religious men and women who are part of these peoples; a personal conversion is needed to sustain a structural conversion in time.

"Women don't go into the mine. It's bad luck, it doesn't produce ore." From the relationship of abundance between Pachamama and women to a sterile confrontation.

The relational closeness between women and Pachamama, Mother Earth, is frequent because they share rhythms of life and interact in agricultural production. However, women are not welcome in the mines, which are also the bowels of Mother Earth; it is said that they bring bad luck. This seemingly simple phrase underpins a sexist work system that does not recognize women's value and labor skills and, in a certain way, invisibilizes the work of the Palliris women, who are the ones who collect the stones outside the mines and break them to rescue ore. And in the end, it generates a division between the private sphere of the house "where women should not leave and should only dedicate themselves to the home" and the public sphere, where only men should participate. If women become co-participants (which was natural in indigenous cultures) in work, men are judged as weak, who "let themselves be bossed around by women." This division generates a conception of life alien to the people, where the community participates in all life, where women and men share the work, and where interaction with mother earth is necessary. This fissure leads to a machismo that generates violence among men and against women and at the same time weakens the social fabric because there is no longer unity to resist, protest, and demand fair work systems. It is worth remembering that the strike initiated by the Palliri women in the 1980s began the fall of the dictatorship in Bolivia.

But there is another subtle symbolic and spiritual colonization: the confrontation between women and mother earth. They cease to be co-creators and now compete because if one enters the mine, the other no longer produces. This rupture is also reflected in the competitive relationship taking place in the mining society, where women whose husbands work in the mining company's offices believe they have more value than women whose husbands work in the mine. These competitions between women constitute a significant link in social divisions driven by employers because a divided society is easier to manipulate and/or silence.

In order to generate movement in a decolonial process from the Church, it would be convenient to echo Francis' Economy, not only with the miners but - above all - with the business people who are members of transnational corporations. This requires the members of the Church to have an interdisciplinary formation and to inhabit the territory.

Furthermore, it is to pass the social doctrine of the Church to daily life, to incarnate it in the global ecclesial action, because a global problem cannot be addressed locally.

A shared task between the people and the Church is to publicly restore the value of women's actions in history, make visible the richness of their relationship logics, and empower them from women themselves. A process is also necessary to heal the feminine dimension of humanity...

"minerojina kausakusan, mana ni imaypis kapuanchu, qonqetollayta saqeskayki" (as a miner, I will live, I have nothing, only my heart that I am going to leave you). Work, from an expression of creativity to a system of death.

This was one of the most popular songs when I migrated to Cochabamba in the 1980s. The miners owned my neighborhood; only my family was alien to this social group. I still remember the carnivals with laughter and water; they ended with the tears of my neighbors who sang to the sound of guitars with bitterness because they knew that Don Veizaga -Felipa's father- would soon get sick and die...

Besides remembering the hard work of a miner in the times of the Republic, this song also normalizes and idealizes the situation of labor exploitation. Where work ceases to be an expression of creativity and becomes a process of slow death, where every human being, miner, has an expiration date; therefore, he must be used to extract as much ore as possible while he is still young and still has the illusion of 'doing something for his family... so that his children will not be like him'.

I saw how this mental colonization-coloniality imprisoned Don Costo, a cheerful, smiling farmer, who laughed so happily as a catechist in his parish near a mine. When I saw him at the mine mouth, outside his community, I asked him: "What are you doing here? And he said to me laughing: the land has not produced well, here I am to earn for my children. I answered: but you know about the disease, and he said to me with a smile: "I will be able to do this a few more years before I spit out my lungs..." They have put to sleep our consciousness of being beloved creatures made by God in equal dignity; they have put to rest our consciousness of being co-creators of the abundance of the earth in order to turn us into objects of work and thus increase the wealth of a few, destroying the earth... destroying ourselves...

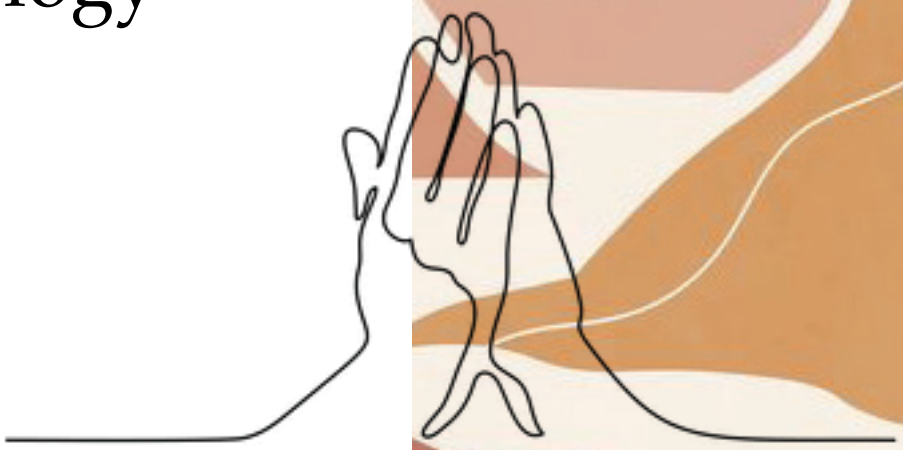
The Church has the power not to be part of these colonial processes; it can stop them by providing spaces of formative containment and being participants in them. A place to unlearn in community all these views embedded in the daily life, to generate ways and times of learning among equals... from the experiences and current technical knowledge, and allow us as Peoples of God to relearn ways of

integral economic management... this goes through the macro structure of the Church and also through the micro structure.

Tania Avila Meneses: Bolivian laywoman of Quechua descent. She has a degree in Theology and studies in Missiology from the Bolivian Catholic University. She has training in Semiotics for Intercultural Communication and Methodological Facilitation on Dialogue and Conflict Transformation. Independent consultant with experience in managing formative spaces in intercultural dialogue, integral ecology, synodality, and theology from the people. Volunteer in institutions such as the Network of Amerindia Theologians, as coordinator in Bolivia; the Integral Ecology Commission of the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR) and the Religious Life Commission of the Laudato Si Platform for Action; the Indigenous Peoples Axis Pan-Amazonian Network (REPAM); and the REPAM Women's Nucleus, as co-coordinator. She participated as an Auditor in the Synod for the Pan-Amazon.

Extractivism, territories, communities, and Christian commitment: A Reflection from Postcolonial Theology

Birgit Weiler, HMM



I begin by commenting on the geographical and socio-cultural place where I developed my reflection. I am originally from Germany, a country of the global North with a colonial history; a highly industrialized country that imports the vast majority of the necessary minerals from countries of the global South, including Latin America. At the same time, for more than thirty years, I have been living in Peru, a country of the global South that was colonized and is still heavily affected by neo-colonialism[1]. This is especially evident in mining and extractivism, activities on which the Peruvian economy is predominantly based.

For many years, because of my mission, I have been linked to the Amazon and - in particular - to the two native peoples, Awajún and Wampis (Amazon of Peru). Both are threatened in their territories by several large-scale extractivist projects: the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources such as gold, oil, and gas. The two peoples are fighting to safeguard their territory on behalf of many others in a similar situation. They do so in full awareness that their territory is part of the great Amazon, whose existence is increasingly threatened. They know that in the Amazon, everything is connected and interacts.

My reflections are shaped by my reality of being part of both worlds, witnessing the tremendous socio-ecological, economic, political, and cultural injustices caused by a neoliberal and extractivist capitalist system. I am also linked to the "Peru Node of the Latin American Network of Churches and Mining." With the communities affected by extractivism, I hear the cry of the earth and the poor getting louder and louder because of an unsustainable situation of violence and negative impact on the life of the inhabitants, other living beings, and the earth as a whole. Also, I make my reflections as a theologian inspired and challenged by the thoughts and postulates of postcolonialism and postcolonial studies.

Regarding the term "postcolonial theology," it seems necessary to emphasize that this way of doing theology, with a pronounced postcolonial approach, exists only in the plural. There are various postcolonial theologies. In their way of doing theology, they embrace the approach and endeavor of postcolonial studies in general. That is, to expose, question, and deconstruct the colonizing domination relations of some over others and the abuse of power committed in these relations. Such domination and abuse are analyzed and denounced in diverse fields such as the relations between the peoples of the global North and South, as well as between the population groups of the "north" and "south" in each country, and between people of different cultures, social contexts, and of diverse sexual orientations.

1 The term neo-colonialism refers to the process that followed independence in the formal and legal ("de jure") sense that the colonized countries achieved. The expression neocolonialism draws attention to the fact that in this process, direct domination (colonialism) was replaced by indirect domination (neocolonialism), through political, economic, financial, cultural, and technological dependencies closely linked to a capitalist system, in many countries of a neoliberal nature and its predominant "rules of the game" in the world market. See Klein, M., Neokolonialismus, at: https://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/definition/neokolonialismus-39344, accessed 18 June 2021.

The postcolonial is not yet a generally achieved reality in our societies and at the global level. Instead, it is a horizon towards which we must walk consciously and decisively. It implies a transformation of neo-colonial relations that exist in many parts of Latin America and other regions of the world. From the Christian faith, striving for this transformation is an ethical requirement of the following of Jesus and his project of the Kingdom of God and the 'option for the poor,' practiced in this context. To arrive at postcoloniality, it is imperative that we first take the necessary steps to decolonize[2] our minds and the various spheres of our lives, including interpersonal relationships, relationships among diverse groups and peoples, as well as our knowledge and ways of generating knowledge (epistemologies) and our diverse ways of understanding the world (worldviews). It is worth emphasizing that worldviews lead to different ways of understanding our place as human beings, men and women, in the world and our relationship with nature and the earth.

Decolonization is a complex process for both sides, that is, for those who in one way or another have to do with establishing and maintaining neocolonial relations, and also for those who suffer from these relations of hegemonic domination. However, suppose this process is assumed and lived in a respectful interrelationship, based on mutual recognition as diverse but equal subjects. In that case, it can be a process of mutual and integral liberation. Postcolonial theology wants to contribute to this.

In fidelity to the Gospel, we are called to be the leaven of this process. This is especially true for the questions of mining and extractivism because, in the increasingly strong struggles and conflicts in this field, multiple dimensions of injustices and asymmetries of power are condensed. In many places, women play a central role in the process of the "courageous cultural revolution" (LS 114) in the face of situations of so much abuse of power and so much violence. Let us remember that in one of the parables about the kingdom of God, the protagonist is precisely a woman. She mixes the small portion of yeast with the immense quantity of flour (Lk 13:21), and in this way, she sets in motion a process in which, as time goes by, the strength of the yeast succeeds in leavening everything. In the end, there is a tasty bread to be shared as the food of life.

It is undoubtedly a sign of hope that in many parts of the world - including Latin America and the Caribbean - various processes of decolonization have long since begun. At the same time, these processes must be further intensified and continued to fully overcome neo-colonial mentalities, attitudes, and practices in and among our societies. This is especially true in relation to mining and extractivism.

As mentioned above, this process also involves decolonizing knowledge and the ways of generating it, also in theology.

2 It is worth bearing in mind J. Osterhammel's observations that decolonization thought and postcolonial thought have important points in common; both thoughts are not identical but have their own respective characteristics. See J. Osterhammel, Dekolonisation. Das Ende der Imperien, München 2013, 115.

Therefore, I chose as a starting point for my contribution the reflections of the Indian author Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. She developed them in her programmatic article for postcolonial thought provocatively entitled: "Can the subaltern speak?"[3] It is a classic text whose contents and interpellations are still very current and can tell us a lot concerning our theme of extractivism and the overexploitation of nature.

A challenging question

The provocative question posed in the title of her programmatic article is much more complex than it may seem at first glance. Through it, Spivak wants to motivate a reflection that leads to a greater awareness of the violence and the profound effects that colonial and neocolonial mentalities and practices have on those who suffer them. The term "subaltern" has as its main linguistic element "alter," which comes from the Latin alter ('the other' of two)[4]. In postcolonial reflections, this word expresses an interest in difference, diversity, and plurality and in interactions based on them[5]. It is important to note with M. L. Taylor that the term 'subaltern' expresses not only human suffering of humiliation and degradation experienced by the person because of being considered different and therefore inferior, but also a living resistance to being perceived and treated as such[6]. The term subaltern is also linked to the resistance to an order established in a rigid and imposing way by those who have the power to "organize the world according to their criteria, interests, and benefits. The term also alludes to the fact that subalterns can fight against subordination in different ways."[7] They can defend the diversity and plurality of cultures and knowledge, as well as the flora and fauna (biodiversity) in their territories, and resist monocultures of all kinds.

Spivak emphasizes in her reflection the fact that the subalterns are subjects with their own voices and actions. Therefore, the mechanisms that place and maintain them in the position of subalterns must be denounced and suppressed. This is part of a liberation process so that people can assert themselves as subjects and act with their own autonomy. That means to have what in English is called "agency," to be the one who acts by his or her own will and initiative and not forced by others. Having "agency" is a central element in postcolonialism since it is a discourse and a practice of resistance "to any project of domination," as Hunter Farrell emphasizes in his contribution.

Decolonizing means transforming relations based on hegemonic power and subjugation towards relations of equality and equity. It is a continuous process of conversion for those in the privileged

3 G. CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK, Can the Subaltern Speak? Revista Colombiana de Antropología, vol. 39, January-December, 2003, 297-364.

4 See Taylor, M.L., Subalternität und Fürsprache als Kairos für die Theologie, in: A. Nehring/S. Tielesch (ed.), Postkoloniale Theologien. Bibelhermeneutische und kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge, Stuttgart 2013, 284.

5 See Taylor, Subalternität und Fürsprache, 284.

6 See Taylor, Subalternität und Fürsprache, 285.

7 Taylor, Subalternität und Fürsprache, 285. The translation of this and other quotations from German into English is by Birgit Weiler.

position in social relations based on strong asymmetries of power. The Synod of the Amazon made a hard call to this conversion process towards more fair and decolonized relationships, relationships of sisters and brothers in which respect, human closeness, and the practice of love in solidarity prevail. This opens the way to a phase in which neo-colonial mentalities and practices no longer predominate, and we can speak of a postcolonial reality. In the meantime, in the process, it is worth keeping in mind the warning of Pope Francis in The Beloved Amazon, that "colonization does not stop, but in many places, it is transformed, disguised and concealed, but it does not lose its arrogance against the life of the poor and the fragility of the environment" (TBA 16).

Speaking with one's voice – full and equal participation

Based on Spivak's contributions, analyses in the postcolonial perspective have revealed the multiple acts of violence of colonial and neocolonial systems. They have shown that they also include epistemic, discursive, and cultural violence inherent to the domination over those who are relegated to the social place of the "subalterns." It is worth emphasizing that epistemic and cultural violence, which is part of neo-colonial systems in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in other parts of the world, seeks to silence the voices of many indigenous and riverine peoples, as well as of so many Afro-descendant and peasant communities that present another worldview, and with it, another relationship of human beings, men and women, with nature, the earth, and other living beings.

These worldviews understand people as part of a larger community of life and criticize abuses of power by humans in their relationship with the earth and other living beings, abuses that are often committed in the context of mining and extractivism. These peoples and communities are aware of the close link between socio-ecological justice and the urgent need for an integral ecology. It is a moral imperative in the Christian faith to support liberation processes and overcome epistemic and symbolic violence and monocultural ways of defining 'development.' The original and coastal peoples, as well as the peasant and Afro-descendant communities, have much to teach us with their wisdom and their projects of Good Living. In order to learn how to promote a non-colonizing and non-monocultural globalization, the wisdom of these peoples and the diverse communities can enlighten us with their appreciation of diversity. An example of this is the wise conception of a world in which many worlds fit; such a conception expresses a central dimension in the cosmovision of the Tojolabales, a native people in Chiapas, Mexico.

Here again, it is important to note that there is a close link between liberation theology and postcolonial theology, as John Beverly points out: "I sometimes think of subaltern studies as a secular version of liberation theology's 'preferential option for the poor;' a version that shares with liberation theology the essential methodology of what Gustavo Gutiérrez calls 'listening to

the poor'."[8]

Spivak and other representatives of postcolonialism, in connection with it, have sensitized many people, also in the theological and pastoral field, with their reflections for the problem of speaking in the place of the "other" person, being the voice of those who have no voice of their own and thus assuming the "representation" of the poor, excluded, and thus violated in their rights to full participation in society in general and in decisions about projects in their territories in particular.

Many of these projects seriously affect the health of ecosystems and communities and Good Living. But, in the end, this practice of being the voice of others keeps those represented in the position of subordinates. That the different peoples and communities can speak with their own voice is a demand for justice and a right. For this reason, many organizations of indigenous peoples, peasant communities, and Afro-descendants have been established to express their disagreements, protests, and demands with their own voice and to contribute - from their worldviews and ways of living in connection with the land - to the "courageous cultural revolution" (LS 114). This is necessary to overcome the ever-worsening ecological crisis and resist the seemingly all-powerful system of neoliberal capitalism.

An example of the strength of speaking with one's voice is the peaceful and persevering struggle of the majority of the Awajún and Wampis communities for their right to prior and informed consultation regarding extractive projects in their territory. They have initiated legal proceedings against the Peruvian State, a historical event in this country, because the State did not conduct such consultation before granting licenses for projects in indigenous territory, although the law prescribes it. In this way, a fundamental right of these peoples was affected. So far, the communities and their representatives have won in two judicial instances. Currently, the judicial process is in the Supreme Court of Peru. From the beginning, the communities requested the collaboration of the Church and a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) as allies. In the Synod of the Amazon, the representatives of various native peoples and peasant communities also asked the Church to accompany them as an ally in defending their territories (Final Document 4 and 46).

A "DANGEROUS MEMORY" (METZ)

A postcolonial theology reminds us of the challenging and liberating potential of Jesus's message when announcing the reign of God in word and deed. In the audacity of the Spirit (see Lk 4:18-21), Jesus radically questioned the relationships of hegemonic domination and subjugation in the society and cultural context of his time. He sought to break mental, cultural, and religious segregation patterns, marginalization, and exclusion of individuals and entire groups. Jesus dared

8 Beverley, John (1999). Subalternity and Representation. Arguments in Cultural Theory, Duke University Press, Durham, and London, 38.

to make public prophetic gestures through which he subverted existing relationships of exclusion and bore witness to God's inclusive love by generating a community of disciples. He demanded from those who followed him a radical change of mentality and a willingness to break with the logic of power as domination, hegemony, and abuse: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the powerful make their authority felt. It must not be so among you" (Mt 20:25-26). He reminded his disciples of a fundamental truth in the kingdom of God: "you are all brothers and sisters" (Mt 23:8ff), something that was revolutionary in the society of that time, as it is in many societies of our time which are characterized by strong hierarchies and asymmetries of power.

The theologian Johann Baptist Metz spoke in this context of the "dangerous memory"[9] that should be vividly present in Christianity and the Church. He emphasized the "critical and liberating, but also redemptive danger"[10] that calls the Church to bring the memorial message of Jesus into the present time.[11] For Metz, the Judeo-Christian tradition can become "dangerous" because it can give rise to liberating visions and forces and question structures of plausibilities and mechanisms that generate blindness or a distorted vision of reality. For Metz, it is key that the Christian faith is understood as subversive memory. It must play an essential role in postcolonial theology and the processes of decolonization. It can be a leaven in these processes. At the same time, it is a "memoria passionis"[12], a memory of the historical suffering of so many people and communities, victims of the violence of multiple injustices and exploitations.

In our present reality, so marked by a profound socio-ecological crisis, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is evident that violence in the treatment of other human beings also leads to violent treatment of the earth and nature, and vice versa (see LS 92). Therefore, in the "memoria passionis", it is necessary to include the earth, keeping in mind that "among the most abandoned and abused of the poor is our oppressed and devastated earth, which 'groans and travails in birth' (Rom 8:22)" (LS 2).

The Living Memory of Suffering Calls for Compassion, Solidarity, and Justice

The memory of the suffering of the people and the earth impels us to assume and reinforce an attitude and practice of compassion and solidarity with the harmed people and with the earth; to resist injustices together, taking the side of those who are violated and mistreated, including "our sister, mother earth" (LS 2), by extractivist projects.

In theology, also in this aspect, there is a close link with the postcolonial critique,

9 Metz, J.B., Theology in the struggle for history and society. In AA.VV. Teología y liberación, perspectivas y desafíos. Ensayos en torno a la obra de Gustavo Gutiérrez, Lima 1989, 285-296, 290.

10 Metz, Theology in the Struggle for History, 290.

11 Metz, J.B., Theology in the Struggle for History and Society, 290.

12 Metz. J.B., Memoria passionis. A provocative evocation in a pluralistic society. Santander 2007

since a postcolonial theology urges Christians not to remain indifferent in the face of the great injustices and immense suffering caused to individual persons, especially leaders, to numerous communities and the earth. Furthermore, a postcolonial theology strengthens the awareness that was very present in the Amazon Synod, that overcoming colonial mentalities and practices, especially in cases of extractivism, requires alliances between the various local Churches and between the Churches and other actors in civil society.

What the Final Document of the Synod affirms for the Amazon is equally valid for other geographical regions: "Perhaps we cannot immediately modify the prevailing model of destructive and extractivist development, but we do need to know and make clear: where do we stand? Whom do we stand beside? How do we transmit the political and ethical dimension of our word of faith and life? For this reason: a) we denounce the violation of Human Rights and the extractivist destruction, b) we assume and support the disinvestment campaigns in extractive companies related to the socio-ecological damage of the Amazon (DF 70) and elsewhere.

In the intense listening processes in the various territories of the Amazon, in preparation for the Synod and at the Synod (Rome 2019), the awareness was strengthened that it is part of the mission of the Church to promote social dialogue, in alliance with other organizations of civil society; this is particularly true for conflicts caused by extractivist projects and practices in the territories.

In his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, The Beloved Amazon (TBA), Pope Francis reaffirmed the importance of facilitating and strengthening social dialogue. At the same time, he clarified the conditions and characteristics of such a dialogue. In this context, the Pope highlighted several equally valid points for other settings, also being emphasized in postcolonial theologies. Francis emphasizes in TBA: "If we want to dialogue, we should first of all do so with the last ones. They are the principal interlocutors, from whom we must first of all learn, to whom we must listen out of a duty of justice, and to whom we must ask permission to be able to present our proposals. Their words, their hopes, their fears should be the most powerful voice at any dialogue table about Amazonia, and the big question is: How do they imagine their good life for themselves and their descendants?" (TBA 26). He adds another aspect, also central to postcolonial theologies, when he says: "It is a matter of recognizing the other and valuing him "like other," with his sensitivity, his most intimate options, his way of living and working. Otherwise, as always, what results will be 'a project of a few for a few'" (TBA 27). He affirms that "a prophetic voice is needed when this happens, and we Christians are called to make it heard" (TBA 27). Because of the complex web of neo-colonial relations, this prophetic voice must be raised not only in Latin America but also in the countries of the global North, which - because of their economies and styles of consumption - are involved in these relations. Alliances between local

churches and civic organizations in the global North and South are needed to make prophetic voices heard that denounce neocolonial mentalities and practices, and at the same time communicate existing and viable alternatives, based on the care of people and the earth, our common home.

God or gold, a long prophetic tradition in the Church

There is a long prophetic tradition in the Church concerning precious metals and their use in the Churches and liturgical celebrations. In the context of this reflection, only one example can be commented on, but it is representative of several prophetic statements of the so-called Fathers of the Church on the subject. I present the example of St. John Chrysostom (347/349 - 407), who says provocatively in his Homily on the Gospel of Matthew: "What is the use of adorning Christ's table with golden vessels if Christ himself dies of hunger? [Do you want to make an offering of golden vessels and are not willing to give a cup of water? And what good would it do to cover the altar with gold embroidered linen when you deny the Lord himself the necessary garment to cover his nakedness? What do you gain by doing so? [...] Wouldn't he think you want to mock his poverty with the most sarcastic of your ironies? (no. 50). His message has not lost its relevance for our time.

A close relationship between gold and the Christian faith also provoked the prophetic protest of the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484-1566) and several of his companions of the Order of Preachers in the context of the colonization of Latin America and the Caribbean. As Gustavo Gutiérrez reminds us, "Bartolomé always fought this relationship between gold and the Gospel." For this Dominican, it was evident that the integral and not "half-hearted" option for God excluded the option for gold, the cause of so much injustice, violence, and death linked to the exploitation and commercialization of this mineral. For Bartholomé, gold is also an expression of great greed, lived at the cost of the health and life of the poor, especially the indigenous peoples. He established a close relationship between the body of Christ mistreated by the cruel violence he suffered in his passion and the violated and broken bodies of his smaller brothers and sisters (see Mt 25:40).

The question of the coherent practice of our Christian faith concerning the issues of the exploitation of gold and other minerals is also being posed to us today in an acute way. Closely linked to this is the question of solidarity and justice in its various dimensions, i.e., socio-ecological, economic, political, ecological, and climatic at all levels, from the local to the global.

On the part of a postcolonial theology is the postulate of the living memory of the victims of multiple extractivisms, to help them make their voices heard by articulating their denunciations of the numeorus injustices and violence suffered, their demands to decolonize relationships, knowledge and practices, to overcome a neoliberal capitalism and to work together

in the "great transformation" necessary to arrive at sustainable societies and a sustainable planet, our common home. In this, the celebration of the Eucharist has a central significance; for in the celebration of this sacrament - fundamental to our faith - we anticipate (prolepsis) in our present time something of the time of the new creation ("new heaven" and "new earth," Rev 21:1). This is characterized by relationships of mutual recognition as brothers and sisters, members of the same human family, living joyfully in the love that generates communion and unity in diversity.

The new creation also means a reconciled relationship of appreciation, respect, and love for our "sister mother earth" (LS 2). From the prophetic tradition mentioned above and in a postcolonial perspective, the newness of the renewed creation commits us to ask with a critical and responsible sense about the origin of the gold of the chalices in our Eucharistic celebrations, as well as of the other metals used in our Churches.

We are called to do so in coherence with thanksgiving (eucharist) as we commemorate the life and prophetic practices of Jesus in announcing the reign of God, taking a stand for those whose dignity and right to be a full part of the human family have been violated. At the same time, we remember in the celebration of the Eucharist that, by the gift of his life on the cross, Jesus has redeemed the whole of creation by making it partake of his life in fullness. Therefore, it is inherent in a Christian commitment to care for the common home, to ask about the origin and the chain of production of gold and other metals, and with it - because of the injustices and suffering generated in the process - about our contribution to the necessary cultural transformation that implies a significant reduction of the exploitation of minerals for socio-ecological reasons.
It would be a vital sign to start this process from the gold used in the Eucharistic celebration, which is at the heart of the experience of our faith. Here, gold represents the many metals whose exploitation puts more and more at risk many communities and many native peoples in Latin America and elsewhere. Let us not forget that "God's call requires attentive listening to the cry of the poor and the earth at the same time" (TBA 52).

Birgit Weiler: German theologian based in Peru. She belongs to the congregation of the Medical Missionary Sisters. She collaborates with the Episcopal Commission of Social Action of Peru, with CELAM, REPAM, and Churches and Mining Network. She accompanies the work of the Church in the Awajún and Wampis indigenous communities. She participated as an expert in the Amazon Synod.
weiler.mms@gmail.com

Liturgy

Basiluis J. Bert Groen

Gold and Liturgy

An musing on how the use of gold and the celebration of the liturgy relate to one another, my point of departure is as follows: There are three pillars upon which the Christian faith community is based: (a) practicing diakonia, charity, (b) celebrating the liturgy, and (c) being witnesses of and proclaiming the good news. These three principles are tied up to one another in order to make real communio, koinônia possible. Hence, the Christian liturgy, including its sacred art, architecture, and music, indeed popular religious culture at large, is quintessentially interlinked with both diakonia and martyria. This starting point also entails the duty to convert, wherever and whenever possible, worldly standards of exploitation and manipulation into genuine Christian charity and the willingness to

serve and love, qualities that the Holy Spirit evokes. Regrettably, however, many Christians and non-Christians think that liturgy and diakonia are two very different fields with little to do with one another. And overall, a great many Europeans are immersed in concerns about their personal and financial security. For myriads of them, religion is overwhelmingly a private affair, something that should not influence society. In addition, there are a number of bishops, monks, nuns, and other faithful who advocate for their church to concentrate upon, indeed limit itself to, liturgy, worship, a life of prayer, fasting, abstinence, and the salvation of individual souls. They are, therefore, not in favor of collective diaconal action and do not wish to set up diaconal projects, which they regard as one-sided activism. Still, other believers are convinced that the Christian message of redemption refers primarily not to the here and now but to the hereafter. They embrace, accordingly, suffering and poverty, which are considered an opportunity to participate in the passion of Christ.

In countering this, in my view, wrong direction, let me point to several fundamental theological aspects. Liturgy is the ritual dialogue between God and humanity, in which God has the first and the last word, with human beings responding in the assembly called by God. The center of attention of this celebration are God's great deeds: creation, God's journeying with Abraham, Sarah, as well as the other matriarchs and patriarchs, the exodus from Egypt, liberation from oppression, the covenant on Mount Sinai, the new freedom of the children of God, and the life of Jesus, viz. how he loved and healed people, denounced injustice, sacrificed himself in his passion and death, God, however, resurrecting him; it is through Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit transmits true and everlasting life to all open to this mystery of faith. These 'events' are not mere history as, on the contrary, the Holy Spirit reveals the historical foundations of our faith in the actual celebration and enables the community to enter into God's tomorrow. It is the concrete celebration, the proclamation of God's word to human beings living here and now, so the present-day commemoration of Christ's self-gift once and for all which is at stake.

Of particular note for us in the framework of our subject of 'gold and liturgy,' is that this liturgical 'today' includes an ethical command: the covenant has to be converted and expressed in acts of righteousness and love, since the Christian liturgy, animated by the Holy Spirit, proclaims the biblical experience of liberation and redemption by God. The concrete experience of being freed from slavery, poverty, and hunger actualizes the biblical vision of a new world and a new covenant in which there are food and shelter for all, life in peace and health, coexistence in solidarity, reconciliation, mercy, and fidelity.

So the Word of God celebrated in worship, and the Word of Scripture heard and explained in catechesis are inseparable from the Word lived out in diakonia and active charity. If the Word celebrated in worship is separated from the other two

forms of God's Word, the liturgy risks becoming self-centered, 'a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal' (1 Corinthians 13:1). In that case, the sharp criticism which the Old Testament prophets and Jesus in the New Testament direct against cult is correct.

The prophets fiercely criticize liturgical services that do not involve social justice. (Recall, for instance, the harsh and cynical statements in Isaiah 1:10-17; Jeremiah 6:20; 7:1-15; Amos 5:21-25; and Hosea 6:6.) If justice, solidarity, and goodness (Hebrew: chesed) are not both the basis and the consequence of worship, and if mutual help and love (Hebrew: chesed again) as expressions of the knowledge of God are non-existent, then the most abundant sacrifices are meaningless.

Also, Jesus sharply criticizes such 'senseless routines' and is thus fully agreeing with the prophets just mentioned (Matthew 9:12-13; 12:7; cf. Mark 12:33). Yet such criticism of worship does not mean that liturgy is superfluous. According to Psalm 50:18-21, for example, God commands that no one perform sacrifices except those of a devout and just heart. If human hearts are full of justice, God will accept the right sacrifice. In other words, when liturgy, social justice, and diakonia converge, the Eternal One accepts the gifts. Jesus himself attended contemporaneous Jewish liturgy: he made pilgrimages to the Jerusalem Temple and attended the synagogue's services.

Furthermore, in his Acts of the Apostles, St Luke depicts the ideal situation of the early Christian community in which common property, helping the needy, 'breaking the bread,' common meals, prayer, unity, joy, and praise of God essentially belong together (Acts 2:44-47; cf. 4:32-35). It is joining the Eucharistic liturgy and prayer to charity and material support of the poor that unites the congregation and grounds the church. It is also relevant to note that, in its narrative of the events on the eve of Jesus' death, the Gospel of John does not mention the institution of the Eucharist but focuses instead on the charitable washing of the feet (John 13:1-20).

Throughout the history of worship, there are several fine examples of the close links between diakonia and liturgy. Let me name here but these: (a) the Eucharistic offertory during which gifts for the poor are brought forward and offered; (b) the interconnectedness, in several monastic houses, of asceticism, liturgy and care of the sick, poor, and other needy; (c) the bonds between catechumenal preparation rites for baptism and doing works of charity; (d) public penance and performing good works. However, there are also many examples of discontinuity, that is, periods when and places where liturgy and charity were no longer interconnected and liturgy confirmed, in many cases, the wealth of the ecclesiastical institution and socio-political status quo with its privileges of the 'happy few.'

As is well-known, in the course of history, churches and shrines were embellished with valuable cultic objects made out of precious metals. Particularly altars, sacred

vessels, like chalices, patens, monstrances, icons, and the interior decoration of the church were to be as beautiful, ornate, and rich as possible. Gold, considered to be the most precious metal, played a key role in this process. However, where the gold which was used for sacred art and architecture came from, even if it had been acquired in very contentious ways, was a matter that usually concerned neither artists nor their ecclesiastical patrons.

I just made mention of icons. Let us ponder on their theological significance, which will clarify why gold again plays out here. God the Father, incomprehensible for human senses and intellect, has become visible in his Son, the incarnate Logos, and the Holy Spirit leads the believers into this mystery of selfless love and fellowship that is celebrated in worship. Because of the incarnation of God's Son, material images of this salvation mystery and the events and persons related to it are legitimate and, in firm Byzantine Eastern Christian belief, even required. Eastern Christian faithful and other people who venerate icons are convinced that the power, energy, and grace of the persons and events depicted are present in the images. Therefore, the latter must or can be venerated. When the faithful open their minds and hearts for the self-disclosure of the triune God, the Holy Spirit fills their prayers. One might even say that the liturgy itself is iconic because when Christians assemble for worship, they bear and symbolize God's image and constitute a community gathered by the divine 'eternal bosom of mercy and justice.' According to Byzantine liturgical theology, there exists a close bond between the painted images, the church interior, and the enactment of the liturgical prayers, hymns, and other rituals, all of this being a coherent complex that symbolizes the triune God's redemption of humanity and his love, indulgence, and righteousness. For this reason, only the most precious materials are deemed good enough to express the process of divine-human exchange. Hence, the key role of gold leaf is not merely in icons but also architecture. Two recent examples of the use of gold leaf in sacred architecture are the gilded domes of the Russian Orthodox Christ, the Saviour cathedral in Moscow, and the Russian Orthodox cathedral in Vienna. This, however, does not relieve us of the obligation to critically wonder where the gold comes from, under which conditions it has been mined and what role it plays in political and economic processes.

Let us now glance at what a key service book of the Roman Catholic Church has to say on the subject of the use of gold for liturgical ends; I limit myself to the General Introduction of the current Roman Missal. The Missale Romanum lays down that – I quote – 'sacred vessels are to be made from precious metal. If they are made from metal that rusts or is less precious than gold, then ordinarily they should be gilded on the inside.' This regulation candidly betrays the Missal's preference for gold. Nonetheless, this is not a general rule because other materials might be if they are deemed worthy, employed as well. I quote again from the same source: 'sacred vessels may also be

made from other solid materials that, according to the common estimation in each region, are precious, for example, ebony or other hard woods, provided that such materials are suited to sacred use and do not easily break or deteriorate. This applies to all vessels which hold the hosts, such as the paten, the ciborium, the pyx, the monstrance, and other things of this kind.' So, plainly and fortunately, the use of gold is no longer prescribed.

A key reason for using gold or other precious materials in the liturgy is that the ecclesial liturgy should be as beautiful and worthy as possible. According to the Constitution on the Divine Liturgy, promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, on the one hand, 'sacred arts are oriented toward the infinite beauty of God… and the Church has been particularly careful to see that sacred furnishings should worthily and beautifully serve the dignity of worship.' On the other, 'Ordinaries, by the encouragement and favor, they show to truly sacred art, should strive after noble beauty rather than mere sumptuous display. This principle also applies in the matter of sacred vestments and ornaments... Let bishops carefully remove from the house of God and from other sacred places those works of artists which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity, and pretense.' Is this not relevant to gold that is acquired in very contentious ways, at the cost of many others? Is the liturgical use of gold that is produced in an unjust way not repugnant to faith and morals? When long ago, according to a moving story, the Roman deacon, St Lawrence, was ordered by the pagan emperor to bring out the treasures of the church, he first sold all precious objects, distributed the proceeds among the destitute, and then appeared in front of the emperor together with a host of poor people, telling him 'Well then, these are the treasures of the church!'

In this context, I also wish to point to the conciliar Constitution on the Divine Revelation, according to which 'the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since, especially in the sacred liturgy, she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the bread of life from the table both of God's word and Christ's body… Therefore, like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and regulated by Sacred Scripture.' Well then, we have just seen that prophetically denouncing the oppression of the poor is a key issue of the Bible. Does this in consequence not mean that illicitly acquired gold has no pride of place in Christian worship?

Let me wind up this short and perhaps unsatisfactory communication, and let me underscore once more the interconnectedness of authentic liturgy, mutual concern, love, and justice for the global community. Receiving Holy Communion unites us with both the giver of life and one another. Liturgy is foundational for community and a place par excellence where dialogue between

'me' and 'you,' God and humanity, humans and fellow-humans can and should occur. But this dialogue can only grow when all of God's creatures concretely participate in his love, when God's affection is handed on by people, when children and adults no longer have to live in misery and die because of hunger, thirst, and lack of medical care. God's love and charity are two sides of the same coin. There is cohesion between the two great biblical commandments to love God and one's neighbor, and they exceed all liturgical offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:28-34). Especially God's solidarity with the poor that is manifest in numerous texts of Holy Scripture, and Jesus' appeal to follow him and practice justice and charity, belong to the nucleus of worship. So acting out of love and a sense of social righteousness cannot be separated from genuine worship. Of course, the worship service is not a recipe book for concrete actions, but in the liturgy, the Holy Spirit reveals the New Jerusalem, a vision that calls for social, ethical action. Therefore, in other words, once more, the lex orandi and the lex credendi, which are interrelated, must intersect with the lex agendi/vivendi. Not only does the way in which Christians pray and celebrate define their faith, but these two 'laws' determine the way of action and, vice versa, the right way of doing things lays down the correct way of worshiping and believing. Orthodoxy and orthopraxy are essentially interrelated, the latter being no less important than the former. Celebration, contemplation, and action belong together. There is also the 'liturgy after the liturgy' and the 'liturgy before the liturgy.'

Basiluis J. Bert Groen: Native of the Netherlands. Professor emeritus of liturgical studies and sacramental theology at the University of Graz, where he has also held the UNESCO chair for intercultural and interreligious dialogue in southeastern Europe. In addition, he is a visiting professor at the Catholic University of Leuven and the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. More information at www.b-groen.org

Extractivism and Liturgical Theology

Some notes for discussion.

Daniel Córdova V.

Allow me to be a voice from the Evangelical Confession («Evangelical») and even more «Pentecostal» without becoming «neo-Pentecostal»; from here, at least, a focus of reflection on "Extractivisms and Liturgical Theology" should be specified. From the point of view of these Churches, it is a rather strange topic. At the pastoral and missionary level, "Extractivism" - although it is a reality for the world - is not so for their evangelizing work and "Liturgical Theology"; it is only timidly beginning to appear in the curricula of the Biblical Institutes and Seminaries of pastoral formation.

About "Extractivism" and specifically gold (and silver as well), I must say that, as Peruvian citizens, we ascribe or not to the «Gold cycle and its ethical issues» expressed very well by Afonso Murad: how and what its rustic extraction implies; its extraction by large mining companies (socio-environmental impact, the economic consequences for the approval of these projects, its extraction without environmental control, the misleading ideology behind this mining, etc.); the uses given to it and its effect, as well as the ethical implications of investing in this activity. But as evangelical Christians, in general, it is not a matter of faith to be discerned, nor of Christian confession, less it is considered for a declaration of Church's principles. There could be several mitigating factors: like the topic's total ignorance (it would be necessary to see the reasons).

The "Liturgy" is an inherent part of the exercise of the Christian faith in the community. Still, it has traditionally been preferred to be called "worship" in our Church because

of its distance from the Institutional Church. It has to do with the history of the Evangelical Church, with the successive detachments in the evolution and journey of the original Church from the first century until today, with the history of our "Western-Judeo-Christian" world, in which Christianity played and has tremendous importance. The evangelical reaction was antagonistic to everything that seemed to be identified with the Official Church. These include the liturgy, the sacraments, the symbols, the rites, the sacred spaces, etc.

The evangelical Temple is fundamentally a "four-wall" confluence environment to express gratitude, learn and intercede; all the implementation is complementary to this end. The implements are furniture, instruments, and didactic materials; the practicality, not the (sacred) symbols, takes precedence. The pulpit and the Bible have the central focus every time the community gathers. It has only two sacraments: Baptism and Holy Communion (Eucharist). Bread (broken into pieces) and wine (in individual cups) are shared simultaneously.

Understandably, some starting questions of reflection on the topic are not part of the experience in this Church, while of course, the background ones are, such as:

• Liturgy and the evangelical preferential option for the poor.
• The use of gold, silver, and diamonds by the Churches, as opposed to moral values such as sobriety, charity, fraternity, and other different moral values that lead to Integral Human Development (cf. FT 112).
• What would be the decent and correct alternatives to follow the rites with dignity without promoting extractive economies that violate the entrails of Mother Earth?
• How to promote reflections on liturgical change in the logic of the permanent inculturation of the liturgy?

Liturgy and the evangelical preferential option for the poor

The Pentecostal Church has been portrayed as the alternative faith of the poor. Today this Church is different from its beginnings. Certainly, it is still an alternative in liturgical terms since whoever participates only has to give himself and does not require "silver or gold" (Acts 3:6).

Use of gold, silver, and diamonds

It has to do not so much with the institutional Church (it has no possibility of justifying its use) but instead with its use (justified with the prosperity that comes from God) by certain leaderships that have twisted their ministry to their advantage. It is an evangelical principle to abstain from ostentatious and unjust wealth.

Alternatives to follow the rites with dignity versus extractivism

Liturgy, rites, and so on (the work of the Church) is in itself "dignity." "Extractivism" is not only a violation of "Mother Earth." It is violence against life;

it is death; for this reason, it is a sin against God. Therefore, the great challenge is to reformulate the "status quo of theology" that has always been a "doctrine" that rules existence. As if time had not passed and humanity had not had the scientific development we have participated in and witnessed.

In this sense, the Church must promulgate a theology that starts from assuming and preaching ecological and holistic conversion, rather than just an anthropocentric one. But unfortunately, it is clear that two thousand years of Christianity, with its theologies, today does not respond to the challenge of the imminent destruction of the Environment and Climate Change.

Evangelical teaching - doctrine and pastoral care - should not be divorced from the sciences and should take them profoundly and seriously.
The Church's preaching must have as its center the sin of the «hybris» of the human being, and its pastoral care must be prophetic in the purest sense of biblical OT prophecy.

How to promote change reflections

I believe that there are three promotion fronts:
• Christianity
• The pastoral care of the Church
• Christian doctrine

1. From "Christianity," I am referring to Christians, regardless of their participation or not in a community of faith. It will be necessary to influence culture and idiosyncrasy by all means with this proposal. Here the use of the different means of communication becomes relevant.

2. The pastoral care of the Church from the Local or Parish Congregation. Two strengths: a context to transform and a message to deliver. Starting from the tradition of the Church, as it has «the Jesus principle,» which extends the reign of God and his justice into a "real world" (with all that "context" means).
3. From the theology or Christian doctrine, to prioritize the prophetic exercise of the Church as its primary and pertinent teaching.

Daniel Córdova: Bachelor's degree in Theology from the Instituto Universitario ISEDET. Buenos Aires, Argentina. Professor of Bible, Biblical Languages, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in several Theological Education Centers in Peru since 1990. Currently, he is a professor of the Faculty of Theology and Religion of the Evangelical Theological Educational Association (AETE) and the Wesleyan Theological Seminary of the Methodist Church of Peru. Member of the Board of Directors: of AETE, of Proceso Kairós Perú, of the National Evangelical Council of Peru (CONEP), and the Collegiate Coordination of the Evangelical Collective Defenders of Creation (CEDEC).

SPIRITUALITIES, THEOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVE CAPITALISM LITURGICAL EXPERIENCE AND REFLECTION WITH THE THEOLOGY OF GOLD

Gloria Ulloa

I hope to share some of my experiences and reflections from the context of extractivism, present in the Christian liturgy.

I lived my first years as the daughter of a Roman Catholic family, between pilgrimages within my town, Barbosa (Santander - Colombia), and to Chiquínquirá, Tunja (Boyacá - Colombia) and surrounding towns, cities of great pilgrimages. I was impressed by the shine of gold on their walls, in their temples, the vestments of their leaders, and other ornaments, always listening to a question that my mother repeated:
Why all this luxury in the church and so many people dying of hunger?

My adolescence was closer to the evangelical and Adventist churches. Along with my youthful friends, I discovered several ways of celebrating life; as a teenager, I continually heard about gold in church. For example, when we sang: "I'm going to walk on those streets, streets of gold, a sea of crystal," the church created inseparable bonds in me, in the sense of the beyond, towards the shine of gold and its ornaments. With the above, I ratify that the sumptuousness and the image of powerful and mighty within the liturgy are given in all Christian areas.

When I finished high school, I traveled to Medellín to do my theological studies. As I traveled through the department of Antioquia, I continued to marvel at the magnitude and magnificence of the Antioquia temples and their brilliance. At the same time, I began to discover the existence of theologies, with their celebratory and liturgical forms that questioned the intrusion of colonialism and the extraction of wealth from our territories.

To participate actively in the base communities, to participate in the Assembly for Life in the framework of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of the Spaniards in Colombia, and to be immersed in the ecumenical world, showed me the faces of the liturgies of peasants, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, women, children, youth, of diverse confessions of faith, within Colombia itself. To know the reality of indigenous peoples in the United States, in South America, in Norway, was to discover the harmful effects of hegemonic and authoritarian theologies that justified - and still do - the plundering of gold, emeralds, tin, so many precious minerals, for the benefit of selfish economies that destroy of the lives of these communities.

I am originally from the Andean region of Colombia, in the heart of Muisca society. From a very young age, I heard about the "golden guacas," mysterious places where the indigenous people buried their treasures. I heard about El Dorado, legends, myths that came out of the Guatavita lagoon, where gold - or more specifically an alloy of gold, silver, and copper called tumbaga - was highly prized, not only for its material value but for its spiritual power, for its connection to the deities and its ability to maintain balance and harmony within society. For the Muisca of today, as for our ancestors, gold is nothing more than an offering. "Gold does not represent wealth for us," says Enrique Gonzalez, a Muisca descendant.

Our millenary cultures do not apprehend reality but feel it and live it by entering into reverent communion with the Pachamama. It is very different from the worldview of the global North of thinking and treating the planet as "natural resources," as an "object" to be tortured until it produces gold.

The way history transformed El Dorado into the myth of a legendary city of gold reveals how the precious metal was a source of material wealth for the conquistadors. They did not understand its true value to Muisca society. Old Continent minds could not process the idea of how much gold could have been dumped at the bottom of a lake and buried at other sacred sites in Colombia. Tragically, the desperate hunt for gold lives on. Archaeologists working at research institutes - such as the Gold Museum - are battling a rising tide of looters. As a result of that looting, the vast majority of precious pre-Columbian gold objects have been melted down, and their real value as clues to understanding the work of ancient cultures has been lost forever.

Pope Francis has shown signs of a new perspective, a new vision of the Church in the world. He insists that "An authentic faith always implies a deep desire to change the world" (EG 183). Let us come out of our comfortable indifference. Let us pray for "those responsible for thinking about and managing the economy, that they may have the courage to refute an economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths ." For this reason, he has shown coherence in refusing to receive the golden cross and using his wooden cross, with the image of the shepherd carrying his sheep. Within the liturgy, the religious ceremonies, the leaders express their personality, and the Holy Father Francis has shown that he does not feel comfortable with so much ornamentation and does not mind skirting the rules; he has been seen seated in a comfortable and simple chair, and not on the well-known golden throne occupied by his predecessors. We also know of other customs that he has modified. He has insisted that "we must ask the market not only to produce wealth efficiently and ensure sustainable growth but also to put itself at the service of integral human development. We cannot sacrifice on the altar of efficiency, the 'golden calf' of our times, fundamental values such as democracy, justice, freedom, the family, and creation. We need to civilize the market," he explained.

Jesus was killed, among other things, because he expressed his rejection of gold and temple wealth, the economy at the service of the few as a rule, because of the golden rule, treating the next person with dignity, tearing down every physical, psychological, and metaphorical dividing wall, which became the first baptismal formula of Galatians 2, verses 26-28.

The church - following Jesus - has timidly spoken out against practices that reveal a well-off, white, male God. Still, much more decisiveness is needed because the whole world, the church itself, the companies, and the parishioners insist on maintaining the established order around the neoliberal and globalized economy. Let me share an

example: in 2016, when the Pope was in Colombia, in Villavicencio, they gave him a work of religious art in gold with three rubies as a sign of the bloodshed by the Colombian martyrs, and palm leaves that symbolize the suffering of some religious people. A hand-woven momposina filigree was made on the cup with silver threads thinned to the thickness of a hair. The whole element is made of silver, but the inner part is bathed in Colombian gold. The chalice also carries eight emeralds donated by a Colombian family whose identity has been withheld.

The Italian carmaker Lamborghini gave Pope Francis a special edition of its white model with gold details, the colors of the Vatican flag. The purpose was to auction the car to help displaced Christian communities return to Iraq. Through the organization's project 'Aid to the suffering Church,' the Christian communities that had to flee from there with the arrival of Islamic State militias can return to the Nineveh Valley. Another part of the money obtained from the vehicle's auction - whose market price reaches 200,000 euros - will go to the Pope John XXIII community that takes care of women victims of trafficking. The source of this information is Agencias En Centímetros Cúbicos.

WHAT IS THE LITURGICAL THEOLOGY BEHIND THESE GIFTS?

At this point, it is important to recall some aspects mentioned by Chris Ferguson that feed into Protestant thought and liturgy and have also been positioned in the World Council of Churches (WCC). The Reformed tradition affirms that global economic justice is essential to the integrity of our faith in God and our discipleship as Christians. The integrity of our faith is at risk if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the current system of neoliberal economic globalization.

"We believe that God is sovereign over all creation. "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof" (Ps 24:1). So we must reject the current world economic order imposed by global neoliberal capitalism and every economic system, including absolute planned economies that challenge God's covenant and exclude the poor, the vulnerable, and all creation from the fullness of life. We must reject all claims to an economic, political, and military empire that subvert God's sovereignty over life and undermine God's just reign. We believe God has sealed a covenant with all creation (Gen 9:8-12). God has created an earthly community based on a vision of justice and peace. The covenant is a gift of grace that is not for sale in the marketplace (Isa 55:1). It is an economy of grace for all creation as our home. Jesus shows us that it is an inclusive covenant, in which the poor and marginalized are the preferred parties, and urges us to make justice for "the least of these" (Mt 25:40) the centerpiece of our community of life. In this covenant, the whole creation is blessed and included (Hos 2:18ff). And accordingly, we reject the culture of unbridled consumerism, the competitive greed and selfishness of the neo-liberal world market system, and any other system that claims that there are no alternatives." (Accra Confession)

Within the Reformed liturgy that I have experienced, we contemplate that heaven and earth belong to God, and we can worship anywhere. The Old Testament describes stone altars, tabernacles, temples, and other places where people gathered and met with God. The Gospels tell us that Jesus worshiped in a synagogue and the temple, but he also worshiped in nature, on

hillsides and lakesides, showing that God cannot be located in just one place.

The early Christians worshiped in the temple, synagogues, homes, catacombs, and prisons. The important thing was not the place but the gathering of the body of Christ, the people of God, and the presence of Christ among them, through the Word and Sacraments.
The space set aside for worship should foster community and be accessible to all people. It should not be an escape from the world but a place to encounter the God of creation who gathers us together and sends us out.

Because God created the world and saw that it was good, we use material gifts in worship. The Old Testament tells us of various things used in God's worship: the ark, linen and vessels, oil and incense, musical instruments, grain, fruit, and animals. At the same time, the prophets warned about the danger of idolatry: mistaking physical objects for the divine presence. The Gospels show how Jesus used everyday objects: nets and fish, jars and ointment, a towel and a bowl, water, bread, and wine in his ministry of teaching, healing, and feeding. On the cross, he offered his body as a living sacrifice.

The offering of material gifts in worship is an expression of our self-giving as an act of gratitude for God's grace. We give our lives to God through Jesus Christ, who gave his life. The practice of giving also reflects our stewardship of God's good creation. Being aware that the earth and all that is in it belongs to God, we present tithes and offerings for use in the ministry and mission of Christ.
We want to offer the best to God and those we admire: textiles, embroidery, paintings, fabrics, precious stones, and that should be the understanding in our Christian and interfaith liturgies. We offer creative gifts such as music, art, drama, movement, media, flags, ornaments, vessels, furniture, and architecture, and now - in the midst of virtuality - we must show them more strongly. When such gifts only draw attention to themselves, they are idolatrous; when they give glory to God in their simplicity of form and function, they are appropriate for worship.

When we gather in Jesus' name, we join in the praise and prayer of God's people in every time and place. Therefore, it is appropriate for us to share stories and sing songs from cultures different from our own as we pray for and with the Church around the world. (PCUSA Book of Order)

The CRY OF THE FOREST, broadcast on February 27th of this year, has been heard all over the planet: The Amazon, the planet's source of life, is today threatened with death. "With its eight million km2, it is the heart of the planet. More than 400 indigenous peoples and three million Amazonians live in the middle of the jungle and the greatest biological diversity on Earth, surrounded by impressive freshwater reservoirs that produce "flying rivers" that bring rain to different corners of the globe. Yet, this Amazon, vital for stabilizing the planet's climate and for the future of humanity, is today experiencing an escalation of pandemics." The statement

says:

• That it is necessary to suspend and prohibit extractivist activities, investments and projects at the mining, oil, mega-hydroelectric, agricultural, forestry, infrastructure, and other levels in the Amazon.

Concerning the ratification and implementation of the Free Trade Agreement between the European Union and Mercosur, the Assembly of the Peoples of the Amazon agreed:

• Demand that banks and investment funds in developed and emerging countries suspend the financing of extractive, productive, and commercial activities such as the intensive livestock industry, monoculture plantations and others that bring us closer to the point of no return of the planet's ecosystems.

• Reject and denounce the Treaty for its severe impacts on the Amazon. Denounce the Free Trade Agreements that threaten our local economies and feed the profit circuits of big capital.

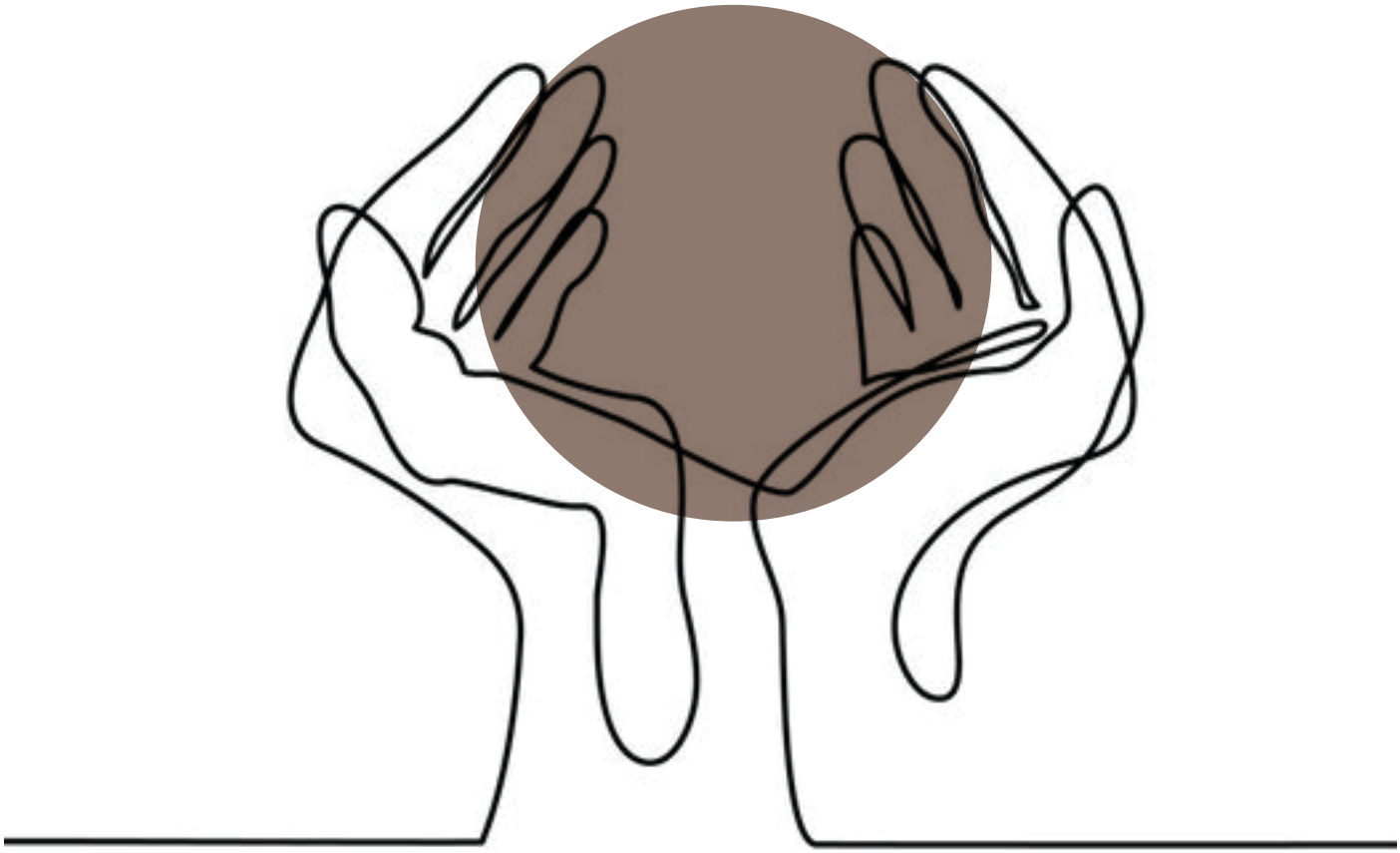
On climate and environmental justice, we propose:

• Stop the criminalization and assassination of indigenous leaders and defenders of nature. Strengthen the peoples' cultural mechanisms to stop the violence against them.

From Colombia, one of the countries where more environmental rights defenders have been assassinated in recent years, we raise our voices so that the campaigns - which are initiative of this team that has invited us to reflect on "Spiritualities, Theologies, and Extractive Capitalism" - continue to advance in the need for profound changes and in the expression of our Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant, Christian liturgy that brings hope, comfort, and health to the communities that are victims of this predatory economic system. "I have come that they may have life."

Gloria Ulloa studied theology in a conservative seminary, with several deep conversions in her life from the encounter with Latin American theology, liberation theology, and emerging theologies that she is currently following. In addition, she is a teacher and educator from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, where she did her undergraduate studies in Basic Education.

An ethical-theological view



Gold and Christians

Gold fascinates us with its brilliance and beauty. Although the vast majority of the world's population will never touch a gold object or invest in the financial market for this precious metal, gold remains a symbol. It reminds us of the beautiful gold ornaments worn by the native peoples of the Andes. Or the majestic baroque churches and their altarpieces. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the values of monetary units were fixed in terms of gold (the Gold Standard). The best athletes at the Olympic Games receive gold medals. Various representations of saints have a golden "aura" around their heads, signifying the light of God shining on them.

But glittering gold hides - in the past and present - the exploitation and destruction of peoples, a trail of spilled blood, violence, and accumulation, as well as the growing negative impact on soil and water. Therefore, we must reflect on the meanings of gold and the most appropriate attitude of Christians and churches towards this metal.

This article contributes to the Working Group

"Theologies, Ecologies, and Extractivism" and the International Campaign for the Divestment of Churches in Gold in the Financial Market. As illustrative data, we will mainly use information from Colombia and Brazil.

Initially, we will present a brief biblical-theological reflection on gold and its meanings. And in the second part, we will show how the gold production cycle has serious negative consequences for the environment and the population. Therefore, the Christian Churches must assume the commitment of not agreeing with this "cycle of death" and support the communities affected by mining.

I. Some Historical and Biblical Data for Theological Reflection

Gold in ancient Mediterranean cultures

The value of gold is not an intrinsic quality of the metal but a cultural attribution. According to Diana Angoso de Guzmán (2017)[1] "in archaic societies, objects were not goods and products, but were part of a system of relationships in which favors, rites, courtesies were exchanged, and alliances between collectivities were established" (p.137). Gifts express a spirit of sociability, spontaneity, and reciprocity, but they are also calculated exchanges, oriented to the benefit and interest of individuals and ethnocultural groups (p.113). In ancient societies, "great importance was given to bodily adornment, above other needs. Therefore, gold, silver, and jewelry were considered not only valuable but also necessary, thus placing them at the top of the scale of values" (p.132). In traditional Mediterranean cultures, gold objects are preferably used as gifts, body ornaments, and raw materials for making idols.

Gold evokes many positive meanings in different cultures, such as beauty, perfection, purity, light, incorruptibility, fecundity, transformation, and eternity. However, it can also express negative values: worldly wealth, idolatry, greed, and ostentation (p.25,58-69).

In egalitarian societies, gold, already molded in sacred objects, was destined for religious ritual. From the hierarchization of society, gold and other metals acquired an active role in expressing rank and social status. The possession and use of gold played a prominent role in the emergence of unequal societies. For example, "gold jewelry gave a presentation to the wearer - warrior, chieftain or shaman - that established an affirmation of superiority over his peers, thanks to the numinous power of the gold-sun binomial" (p.138). Then, there was an "identification of gold with authority, hierarchy and masculine power" (p.135).

In ancient Egypt, gold was the monopoly of the pharaohs, who considered themselves kings and divine figures.

1 Diana Angoso de Guzmán. Gold: substance and meaning. Uses of the auric material in contemporary artistic practices (1953-2013). Complutense University of Madrid. Faculty of geography and history. Doctoral thesis, 2017.

With its bright yellow glow, the precious metal was reserved for the exclusive use of kings and priests. The main function of royal monopolies was to maintain sumptuary exclusivity, commercial advantage, and demonstration of rank. Much more than metal for exchange or for hoarding wealth, gold was a sacred substance, "the flesh of the gods" (p.141).

"Exchanges through gold bars or other metals multiplied among the Mesopotamian, Assyrian and Babylonian peoples. Gold became money when King Croesus (568 BC) minted the first gold coin around 550 BC" (p.143). Throughout history, this precious metal has undergone changes of meaning: "from a magical material it has become a store of wealth; from a store of wealth to a coin; from a coin to a unit of exchange; and finally from a unit and (monetary) standard to a sign" (p.133). And before their commodification, gold objects were symbols of power, authority, social rank, and hierarchy.

In the religious symbolism of several cultures, gold represents the masculine element and silver the feminine. This classification reinforces the supremacy of the male in a patriarchal society.

Gold in the Jewish Scriptures[2]

The Jews, like other peoples of the East at the time, valued gold for its beauty, splendor, brilliance that resembles the sun (source of vital energy), and the fact that it is a soft material easy to manipulate and transform. Gold does not oxidize or decompose. It is a sign of purity and constancy. "Artisans (silversmiths) took grains of the metal and beat them with a hammer until they became very thin plates. They also melted the gold in a furnace to put it in molds when it was in a liquid state. Various objects were made this way, especially idols" (Mundo Hispano Bible Dictionary).

Gold mining centers were located outside of Palestine. It was found in alluvial lands, rivers, and streams. There were gold mines in Egypt, Sudan, Arabia, and India. Famous was the fine gold of Ophir (Sl 45,9). Gold was used to exchange valuable gifts (2 Kgs 5:5), to make jewelry and ornaments, and objects for kings' court. In the temple, it was used to cover the wooden walls, the altar, the furniture, and as raw material for manufacturing utensils in the cult, such as chalices, candlesticks, and plates.

In the Bible, we find the expression "gold and silver" to signify the material wealth of people (Gen 24:53; Ez 16:13) or kings and their court (1 Chr 29:3; 2 Chr 9:14; Ez 28:4). The prophets denounce wealth, symbolized in the expression "gold and silver," which results from accumulation and cunning (Ez 28:4-6). The same outrage is expressed in the Epistle of James against the rich: "Your gold and your silver have rusted, and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the

2 See: https://www.biblia.work/diccionarios/oro

last days that you have stored up your treasure! Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord Almighty" (Jas 5:3-4).

Unlike other peoples, the Jews did not identify gold, nor sculptures made of this precious metal, with divinity. Jahveh, the God who has freed the people from slavery, does not accept to be represented by statues of gold, silver, or bronze (Ex 20:4). God approaches and proposes a covenant of love: "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Ex 6:7; Jer 32:38). He remains entirely Other, who does not allow himself to be manipulated. The famous scene of the golden calf (Ex 32, Dt 9:7-29), which Moses destroys, shows how fidelity to God requires perseverance and not allowing oneself to be seduced by a magical religiosity.

The book of Deuteronomy, which has prophetic inspiration, establishes some rules about the use of gold and silver. It says: "Do not covet the silver and gold with which foreign idols are clothed or take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it; for it is detestable to the LORD your God" (Dt 7:25). People should not accumulate too much silver and gold (Dt 17.17). In the same vein, the book of Joshua states that when Israel wins the battle and enters Jericho: "All the silver, all the gold and all the vessels of bronze and iron are sacred and belong to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury" (Jos 6:19), which avoids violence against enemies, personal accumulation of wealth and competition.

The biblical accounts influenced by the priestly tradition, which took shape after the exile, exaggerate when describing the use of gold in the rituals of the Temple of Jerusalem. For example, it is unlikely that the Ark of the Covenant, which was carried during the years of the wilderness wanderings, was overlaid with so much gold, as described in Exodus 25:10-28. A poor people, of pilgrim shepherds, did not have that amount of precious metal. The same is true of the incense dishes and the seven-branched candlestick, called Menorah (Ex 25: 29-30). Likewise, it is said that Solomon adorned the entire interior of the temple and its altar with pure gold (2 Kings 6:20-22).

The reigns of David and Solomon were consolidated at the expense of domination over other peoples, plundering, and accumulation of wealth (2 Sm 8:11). After conquering Rabbah, the city of the Ammonites, David took the golden crown from Molech's head, adorned with precious stones, weighing thirty-five kilos. And he put it on his head (2 Sam 12:30). The golden crown and scepter represented the absolute power of the king.

When Solomon's sons divided Jewish Palestine into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, the idol of the golden calf was again used for clear political purposes. To secure his power and prevent the pilgrims

from the northern tribes from going to the temple in Jerusalem, King Jeroboam made two golden calves, destined for worship in the sanctuaries established in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:27-30). He went to the people, saying: "Here is your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt" (v.28). Idolatry and political use of religion go hand in hand.

At that time, the kingdom of Judah was threatened by an Assyrian attack. Then, the king asked how much they demanded so that Jerusalem would not be destroyed. The answer of the king of Assyria was: "ten and a half tons of silver and one thousand and fifty kilograms of gold" (2 Kings 18:14). Years later, the city was taken by the troops of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He "took away all the treasures of the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, carrying away all the golden vessels that Solomon, king of Israel, had made for the temple" (2 Kings 24:13). The Babylonian empire appropriated the gold accumulated by kings and priests at the expense of domination and injustice. Vessels of gold and silver, sacred objects of the temple, were used in the feasts and orgies of the court (Dan 5,2-3). Such use was to provoke great humiliation and resentment among the exiled Jews.

The New Testament for Today

In the Gospel of Matthew's account of Jesus' infancy, the Magi are said to have offered Jesus "gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Mt 2:11). These offerings have a symbolic meaning. Matthew's community recognizes that Jesus is king (gold), is to be revered as the son of God (frankincense), but is also the man who was condemned to death on the cross (myrrh, used to anoint the dead). Out of context, this biblical quote was later used to justify the use of gold in objects of worship and Christian temples.

When Jesus sends his disciples to announce the Kingdom of God, he asks them: "Do not carry gold, silver or copper in your pockets" (Mt 5:9). It is a recommendation to detachment to avoid the accumulation of goods and focus on the evangelizing mission. The other reference to gold, in the Gospel, is more difficult to understand (Mt 23:16-22). In the polemic against the Pharisees and the doctors of the law, which constitutes the whole of chapter 23, Jesus denounces how these religious authorities put ritual laws and precepts before fidelity to God. They do not realize that in swearing by the temple's gold (a practice of the time), one must refer not only to the sanctuary but also to God himself. The most important thing is not appearance but "justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Mt 23:23).

As their faith went through many crises and became more mature, the people of Israel and Christians used the analogy of gold to express deep religious convictions. For example: "the commandments of God are more to be desired than the finest gold" (Ps 19:10). Wisdom is to be sought more earnestly than gold (Prov

16:16). Those who truly serve God are tested, as gold is purified by fire (Sir 2:5; Prov 17:3). "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise, and honor, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:7). The gold refined in the crucible serves as an image for the purification of God's people in the furnace of testing. It is fidelity to God's plan.

With its symbolic solid weight, the book of Revelation also reveals the ambiguous character of gold. Chapter 17:1-6 presents the immense political and religious power of the Roman Empire, which is compared to the great prostitute sitting on "a beast with seven heads and ten horns." It is a clear allusion to the seven provinces of the empire, with enormous complexity and capacity for destruction. Her seductive power is immense: "the kings of the earth have played the harlot with her. The inhabitants of the earth have become drunk with her wine" (Rev 17:2). And also: "the merchants of the earth grew rich by the power of her sensuality" (Rev 18:3). She "was all adorned with gold." In her hand, she held a golden cup full of obscenities and impurities (Rev 17:4). Her name is "Babylon" (Rev 17:5), an image of the historical forces that subjugate the peoples of pride and arrogance; an allusion to the Tower of Babel that causes confusion and division. Moreover, Babylon is violent: she drinks the blood of the saints and the witnesses of Jesus (Rev 17:6). Opposing her is the woman described in Revelation 12: clothed with the sun (the light of God), pregnant and in labor, a wanderer in the desert, persecuted by the dragon and protected by God and the earth.
Now, the seductive and destructive power of the "new Babylon" is very current. We can see it in the force of the global market, in its perverse laws, in its deceitful and seductive ideology, and in the deaths it causes. One of its arms is mining.

On the other hand, the symbol of gold is used in Revelation to signify the persevering faith of Christians, the glory of God manifested in the risen Christ and his witnesses (especially the martyrs), as well as the planning of the Kingdom of God, the new Jerusalem.

The biblical author warns the community that was carried away by the fascination of riches, that became self-sufficient and indifferent in faith, "neither cold nor hot" (Rev 3:14-20). In reality, this community is unhappy, blind, and naked! The angel of God shows her another way, expressed by the analogy of "acquiring my pure gold, which went through the fire (the perseverance of faith), white robes (purity and honesty) and eye drops" to see reality with God's perspective. Finally, he proposes to her to be educated by Jesus and converted.

Today, such a call translates - among other things - into an "ecological conversion": adopting a simple lifestyle, establishing honest relationships, allowing oneself to

be moved by the suffering of humanity and Mother Earth, nurturing a daily relationship with God through his Word. Revelation 4 presents a vision of twenty-four elders and four living creatures who take their respective golden crowns off their heads and "render glory, honor, and thanksgiving" to the Creator God and the dead and risen Christ (the slain lamb). They kneel before the glorified Christ. "Each had a zither and a golden cup of ointment, the prayers of the saints" (Rev 5:8). For "praise, honor, glory, and power" belong to the Trinity (Rev 5:12-14). It is an allusion to the martyrs, who bear witness until death to their fidelity to Jesus and the Kingdom (Rev 6:9-11). Finally, Revelations represents the consummation of the Kingdom of God with the image of the "new Jerusalem," the ultimate tent in which God will dwell with humanity and the new creation, the new heaven, and the new earth (Rev 21). The city with its streets will have pure, crystalline gold (Rev 21:18,21).

In summary: In Sacred Scripture, the symbolic dimension of gold prevails with many variations: gold is a sign of perseverance in faith, righteousness, and honesty; it alludes to the preciousness of the Word of God and the search for wisdom, it is the human reflection of God's radiance, it represents the beauty of the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God among his people (the new Jerusalem).
The quotations from the Bible in which "gold and silver" are valued as synonymous with wealth are less significant than those in which the use of wealth to the detriment of the Common Good is condemned. The same is true of the gold used in religious worship, objects, the ark of the covenant, and the lining of the temple. The priestly current influenced such texts after the exile. They are an idealized vision of the past and are not part of the central message of the Bible. The prophetic texts emphasize that the authentic worship of God requires a communitarian ethic: "Though you multiply prayers, I will not listen (...) Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow" (Is 1:15-17).

Gold in the temples?

According to Diana de Guzman, for the medieval people, "gold and precious stones are objects endowed with a magical and supernatural force, possessing properties assimilated to the holy virtues and, therefore, capable of elevating the spirit through their contemplation" (p.28). If such an argument can explain the use of gold in churches, especially in the Baroque period, this does not justify assuming it in the same way today. In the Middle Ages, there were positions against this procedure. The famous St. Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153) censured the waste of gold and the artistic work with it, "and argued that the beautiful and costly forms incited to worship, but for the wrong reasons, because it stimulated the devotion of the material instead of the spiritual" (Diana de Guzman, p.28). In the words of the saint: "Those things

are not necessary to meet practical needs, but for the lust of the eyes (...) "They attract the eyes of the devout and hinder their attention... They are more admired than venerated holiness... The resources of the neediest are consumed for the gift of the sight of the rich. The curious find entertainment, but the poor find no succor" (Bernard of Clairvaux, quoted by Shapiro Meyer, 1985, p.19).

In the course of history, the Catholic Church used gold to cover the images of saints, altars, and walls of temples, with the intention of reverencing God. And how many times that gold was mixed with the blood of the peoples from America and Africa, trafficked and enslaved in our continent. There was a dissociation between religion and ethics reinforced by colonialism. The attempt to put religions and churches' corporate and institutional interests in the foreground departs from the authentic Christian spiritual experience. It can become a subtle form of idolatry, sometimes disguised in pious discourse.

In the preaching and practice of Jesus, there is no valuation of gold nor the recommendation to use gold utensils to praise God in homes or the temple. Perhaps this should inspire Christians who today are mobilizing to divest from gold, especially in a society where gold has become an important value in the financial market, feeding unfair relationships that harm the lives of the poor and the environment.
The most consistent practice of the Churches concerning the use of gold should be similar to Peter's attitude when he met the poor paralytic at the entrance to the temple: "I have neither silver nor gold, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, get up and walk" (Acts 3:6). Not to accumulation, but to the promotion of life!

II. The GOLD production cycle and its ethical issues

The ethical issue of gold investment is not limited to a financial choice. The entire gold production cycle presents risks, as well as social and environmental problems. The process involves prospecting, licensing, installation and operation, extraction, processing, production of ingots and other gold products, buying and selling, and use in the financial market. Some of these problems are common to other metals used in mining.

The establishment and operation license

The exploitation of metals by companies obeys the environmental standards of each country. However, after a period of progress in environmental legislation in the last 30 years, there is a movement in Latin America to "relax" (a beautiful and false word) environmental legislation, especially in right-wing governments. This initiative aims to favor an increase in the profitability of mining companies.

In countries with more developed

environmental legislation, gold mining by mining companies requires an "implementation license," followed by an "operating license."

According to the legislation, a prior study by the environmental agencies with a technical opinion is required (EIA: environmental impact assessment and RIMA: report of probable impact on the environment). A process of public discussion and consultation with the community involved must be followed to approve or not the mining project. Even in countries where this happens legally, there are cases of corruption. Mining companies interfere in the technical opinion, claiming that the undertaking has many economic and social advantages with few negative impacts on the physical (water, air, soil), biological (plants, animals, and the ecosystem as a whole), and human environment. They also corrupt the local political powers and even the communities' leaders to approve the project.

Another serious issue: in several countries, the extraction of gold and other metals is not permitted in indigenous areas and, above all, in environmentally protected areas. However, it is estimated that more than half of the gold mining on the Latin American continent takes place clandestinely in these areas. For example, according to a United Nations (UN) report, more than 60% of gold mining in Colombia is illegal.[3] The multilateral organization also states that "alluvial gold mining takes place in environmentally and socially vulnerable territories, where illegality is expressed in different ways; thus, in 43% of the territories with Evoa (alluvial gold mining), the presence of coca crops was identified".

Alluvial extraction

Panning is the oldest form of gold exploration and has a negligible environmental impact. It is an ancestral trade in the history of some countries, considered as "subsistence mining."

The problem lies in alluvial mining with dredges. Gold is mined in river beds (alluvial gold). Alluvial gold mining has a strong environmental impact due to the release of toxic products generated in the process required to separate the precious metal from the materials with which it is mixed in nature, residues that reach the rivers and soil.[4] Usually, amalgamation with mercury or cyanide

3 https://www.portafolio.co/economia/mas-del-60-de-la-mineria-de-oro-en-colombia-es-ilegal-onu-547193 "The results of the study show that 12 of the 32 departments exhibit evidence of alluvial gold mining on land, with a total of 98,028 hectares (ha); and about half (52%) is located in areas excluded from mining, territories in which, due to their function of protection and conservation of the environmental heritage, mining is not allowed", the UN report highlights.

4 According to Brazil's "Ministerio Público Federal," one kilo of gold represents around US$ 300,000 in environmental damage, resulting in a cost approximately ten times higher than the market price of gold. In the last two decades, the price of the raw material has risen from US$ 400 an ounce to US$ 1,861.50, driven by demand from China and India. One ounce equals 28.35 grams (https://www.noticiasdemineracao.com/sustentabilidade/news/1408041/estudo-encontr-321-minas-ilegais-nos-nove-estados-da-bacia-amaz%C3%B4nica)

extraction is performed.[5]

Mining removes the soil's organic layer, altering its physical and chemical properties, generating instability processes, sterilizing the area, and increasing erosion. It also increases the risk of flooding due to reduced infiltration of rainwater. Nearby water bodies suffer from the introduction of toxic agents. In addition, increased concentrations of particulate matter in the environment and the generation of harmful gases or vapors can affect air quality.

People working there "may be exposed to environmental conditions that affect their health, such as particulate matter, acid solutions, toxic gases or substances that can bioaccumulate, such as heavy metals" (Casallas and Martines 1).

The use of mercury (amalgamation process) generates several impacts on the air, soil, and water. "Cyanidation produces dust, tremors, and explosions (...) The fine dust generated by the extraction process is very volatile, harmful, and easily blown away by the wind. Cyanide, heavy metals, nitrites, carbon dioxide, etc., can also leak out and are deposited in dams for containment. These represent a high risk since they must be controlled for up to 20 years and during this time they can infiltrate and contaminate soils, groundwater and surface water" (Casallas and Martines 1).

Illegal extraction and its socio-environmental impacts

It is common in alluvial mining or clandestine open-pit mines to use child labor and workers in conditions similar to slavery. They are workers without social rights, without a fixed salary, without medical care, with risks of illness and death. Around this type of mining, there is a trade with abusive prices and a prostitution network, with a predominance of adolescent women.

In addition, there is a growing invasion of gold prospectors on indigenous lands in the Amazon region. During the coronavirus pandemic, several indigenous communities were affected by the virus brought by the mining agents and lost their lives. Gold mining in the Amazon region[6] causes the deforestation of this vital biome, which is responsible for the balance of rain cycles and the capture of

5 Cf. Miguel Casallas and José Alejandro Martínez. Panorama de la minería del oro en Colombia. Ploutos Magazine. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280298770_Panorama_de_la_mineria_del_oro_en_Colombia

6 A study published by the Igarapé Institute shows 321 illegal mines in the nine states that make up the Brazilian Amazon basin. The increase in the metal price in the last 20 years has boosted demand and irregular mining in the region, bringing "deadly consequences." The estimate is that today this industry has revenues between US$ 12 billion and US$ 28 billion per year. According to the Real-Time Deforestation Detection System (Deter), the contribution of gold mining to deforestation rates in indigenous territories in the Amazon jumped to 23% in June 2020, against only 4% in 2017. Deforestation was concentrated in indigenous territories where, between 2018 and 2019, environmental degradation caused by mining increased by 107%. (https://www.noticiasdemineracao.com/sustentabilidade/news/1408041/estudo-encontr-321-minas-ilegais-nos-nove-estados-da-bacia-amaz%C3%B4nica).

greenhouse gases.[7]

The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime has shown in its report on "Organized Crime and its Connection to Illegal Gold Mining in Latin America" (2016) that illegal gold production is now more important to criminal groups than drug trafficking in some countries. For example, "in Peru and Colombia -- the largest cocaine producers globally -- the value of illicit gold exports exceeds the value of cocaine exports. Illegal mining has been the easiest and most profitable way to launder drug money in Colombia (Global Iniciative, 2016, p.5)"[8].

The data in this document are impressive. According to the report, Latin America is characterized by high percentages of illegal gold extraction. Some 28% of the gold mined in Peru, 30% in Bolivia, 77% in Ecuador, and between 80% and 90% in Venezuela is produced illegally. Such illegal gold mining "employs hundreds of thousands of workers across Latin America, many of whom are extremely vulnerable to labor exploitation and human trafficking" (Global initiative, 2016, p.6)[9]. "Colombia has the largest population of displaced people in the world, 87% of which come from areas where there is an active illegal mining presence (...) More than 30 tons of mercury are dumped into rivers and lakes in the Amazon basin each year through artisanal gold mining, poisoning fish, and causing brain damage for people also residing up to 400 km downstream (...) The human cost of the expansion of illegal mining is horrifying. The analysis reveals many cases of labor, sexual, and child exploitation" (p.8).

Gold mining in mines owned by large corporations

These powerful organizations are responsible for most of the world's gold mining. They extract the ore in open or subway mines. Like any other mining enterprise, gold mining has a strong environmental impact: (a) Toxic substances that pollute soil and water are used; (b) The protective vegetation layer is removed from the soil; (c) In several regions, the mining area is also a region of rainwater penetration that slowly feeds the groundwater. In the long term,

7 "The preservation of the Amazon rainforest is fundamental to avoid irreversible climate collapse. Therefore, the need to prevent illegal mining and protect indigenous lands in the Amazon is more urgent than ever." In addition, as miners use mercury to extract the metal, they contaminate rivers, fish, and those who depend on them for their livelihoods, such as the Yanomami and Munduruku indigenous peoples. The exposure also left these groups more vulnerable to the spread of Covid-19. (https://www.noticiasdemineracao.com/sustentabilidade/news/1408041/estudo-encontr-321-minas-ilegais-nos-nove-estados-da-bacia-amaz%C3%B4nica).

8 https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/El-Crimen-Organizado-y-la-Miner%C3%ADa-Ilegal-de-Oro-en-Am%C3%A9rica-Latina.pdf

9 https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/El-Crimen-Organizado-y-la-Miner%C3%ADa-Ilegal-de-Oro-en-Am%C3%A9rica-Latina.pdf . The complete results of the research are available at: https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Organized-Crime-and-Illegally-Mined-Gold-in-Latin-America.pdf.

mining reduces water penetration into the ground, reducing water sources for the population. (d) Another problem is where mining waste is deposited. Tailings ponds, when breached, cause a significant environmental disaster, causing the death of people and the community of life in the rivers and soil around them.

Extraction without environmental control: government environmental agencies in charge of inspecting companies are often silent. Implementing actions to control, mitigate, or compensate socio-environmental impacts is below the planned level.

Misleading ideology. Mining companies say they will bring wealth and progress to the country. That is not what happens in many places. The countries where the largest amount of gold mining takes place are not the richest, nor the ones with the best income and quality of life of the population. See the countries in the world with the largest quantities of gold mined[10]: Ghana - 90 tons; Mexico - 92 tons; Uzbekistan - 102 tons; South Africa - 149 tons; Peru - 150 tons; Canada - 158 tons; United States - 211 tons; Russia - 243 tons; Australia - 270 tons; China - 450 tons.

Transnational companies are the largest gold miners in the world. They have mines in several countries. The most important, in order of market value and production quantity: [11]Barrick Gold (Canada), Newmont Mining (United States), AngloGold Ashanti (South Africa), Goldcorp (Canada), Kinross Gold (Canada), Newcrest Mining (Australia), Polyus Gold (Russia), Agnico Eagle (Canada), Sibanye (South Africa). Canadian, North American, and South African companies predominate. However, the Chinese are rapidly increasing their share of the gold mining market.

In 2020, the nine gold mines that stood out in Latin America were Pueblo Viejo (Dominican Republic), Paracatu (Brazil), Veladero (Argentina), Yanacocha (Peru), Merian (Suriname), Herradura (Mexico), Limón-Guajes (Mexico), Cerro Negro (Argentina) and Peñasquito (Mexico)[12].

Therefore, countries with gold in their territory are not the richest, nor the fairest, from a social point of view. The wealth of the soil does not translate into the quality of life for the population. Many factors explain this situation, such as: illegal mining, increasingly associated with organized crime and drug trafficking; the preponderance of transnational mining companies, which appropriate the wealth produced by mining; the collusion of local and

10 https://www.newgreenfil.com/pages/os-10-paises-que-produzem-mais-ouro#:~:text=O%20major%20pa%20C3%ADs%20produtor%2

11 https://www.noticiasdemineracao.com/produ%C3%A7%C3%A3o/news/1141231/con-he%C3%A7a-dez-maiores-mineradoras-ouro-mundo (2016 data).

12 https://www.bnamericas.com/es/reportajes/las-minas-de-oro-de-latinoamerica-que-destacaran-este-ano

national governments with the unjust system; and the negative impact on the health of communities near the mines.
The exploitation of minerals - not only gold - accentuates social differences and increases soil, air, and water pollution. It affects the ecological balance of plant and animal relationships and reduces biodiversity.

Gold in the market

Gold lends itself to many uses. On average, a computer has a small amount of gold inside it, equivalent to 5 euros. Gold is used in the manufacture and sale of jewelry, luxury utensils, and the coating of artistic pieces. But its primary use is in the financial market. "Gold is considered one of the safest financial assets in the global economy: in addition to being a physical asset, it also underpins the monetary reserve of countless economies around the world, with its value and demand always guaranteed. As a result, gold is a store of value and a safe haven in times of crisis and financial instability"[13].

Gold has a high added value. On April 19, 2021, one ounce of gold was worth, on average on the international market, USD 57.

As we have seen, investing in gold in the financial market supports the entire production chain of this metal, which has several unethical elements, both in extraction and commercialization. Mainly because of its environmental and social impact.

There is still a more complex issue: investment in the financial market - in general - contributes to the growth of the financialization of the economy. In other words, it reinforces the spread of "unproductive capital," which artificially multiplies the value of money and does not create value from the generation of products or services.

According to economist Ladislau Dowbor, the profit from productive investments is legitimate since it generates employment, goods, and taxes. The market economy presupposes exchanges between producers and consumers, generating jobs and income. However, the profits from financial investments constitute dividends and ensure large profits for those who do not produce anything. "The money obtained from financial investments does not put a pair of shoes on the market of really existing goods. Differentiating productive investment and financial investment is basic " (Ladislau Dowbor, 2019, p.15)[14]. Financial papers have yielded between 7% and 9% annually in recent decades. However, the effective production of goods and services worldwide increased at a much slower rate, from 2% to 2.5%.

A billionaire who invests his money in the

13 https://www.bussoladoinvestidor.com.br/como-investir-em-ouro/

14 Ladislau Dowbor. A burrice no poder in: vv.aa. Novos paradigmas para outro mundo possível. 2019, p.15-16.

financial market earns without producing anything. Every day he reapplies most of his wealth, generating an unproductive enrichment that gradually multiplies the billionaires and slows down the economy. Even in economic crises, in the global financial casino, the wealthiest 1% of people on the planet own more wealth than the next 99% (Ladislau Dowbor, 2019, p.16).

Much of the stagnation of economies lies in the fact that money-capital has become the patrimony of individuals (and groups) who do not participate in the productive process. These are gigantic fortunes! Meanwhile, the majority of the world's population "does not make financial investments, spends what it earns or more, goes into debt and pays interest" (Ladislau Dowbor, 2020, p.53). Today, 737 groups control 80% of the world's business universe. In this universe, 174 groups hold 40%, of which ¾ are banks. The corporate decision space moves towards what will give the most profit, not to sustainable development, or the training of workers, or the environment, but to the dominant shareholders, the financial controllers. The basic mechanism of exploitation has changed and become more sophisticated (Ladislau Dowbor 2020, p. 52-53).

Pope Francis, in Laudato Si', affirms: "Economic powers continue to justify the current global system where priority tends to be given to speculation and the pursuit of financial gain, which fail to take the context into account, let alone the effects on human dignity and the natural environment. Here we see how environmental deterioration and human and ethical degradation are closely linked" (LS 56).

Most people and church organizations that invest in the financial gold market do not know that they contribute to this productive chain, with many social and environmental damages. In addition, the safest (and often the most profitable) investments mix the share portfolio of several companies to ensure investors a guaranteed profit in the face of crises and market instability.

Conclusion: Is sustainable gold mining possible, and is fair trade of this metal viable?

This is a difficult question. It depends a lot on who answers it. If we listen to the communities affected by mining, they will denounce that environmental laws are not being complied with, that the environment is contaminated, that gold miners do not respect people. On the other hand, if we listen to the version of the companies and their technicians, as well as the governmental statements from the "Ministry of Mines and Energy," the optimistic discourse will prevail. Let us briefly look at their arguments.

The technicians recognize that gold mining in rivers or mines presents severe environmental and human health risks. On the other hand, they state that it is possible and necessary

to reduce negative impacts by adopting remediation measures. According to Martinez and Casallas (2018), biological or bioremediation treatments include: landfarming, composting, phytoremediation, phycoremediation, artificial or constructed wetlands, aerobic reactors, and anaerobic reactors (p.38-56). Physicochemical treatments can be Soil vapor absorption, Chemical oxidation, and Electrokinetic (p.57-61). Thermal treatments are costly due to the intensive use of energy. They comprise incineration, thermal desorption, and pyrolysis (p.61-66). There are still "Non-conventional remediation systems for contaminated soils," such as Advanced oxidation, Fenton, Biological barriers to enhance electroremediation, Bioelectrokinetics, and others (p.67-73).
It is wonderful to see how technoscience has sought mechanisms to reduce the negative impacts of gold mining on communities and the environment. However, a crucial question arises: what is the effective percentage of mining companies using these resources? What is the effective outcome of this use?

Even more complicated is the question of government responsibility. Effective actions by Latin American nation-states to combat illegal gold mining and trading are far from reasonable. Where consistent environmental laws exist, there is a lack of inspection and punishment (fines) for polluters. Sometimes the extraction of metals is legal but unjust because the laws do not express the guidelines for "social and environmental justice" and the good living of the communities.

Finally, the investment of gold in the capital market is related to many unfair mechanisms linked to "unproductive capital," which leads to the concentration of income and reduction of production and employment.

Afonso Murad: educator, environmental activist, and doctor in theology. Marist Brother, professor, and researcher at the Jesuit Faculty and ISTA, in Belo Horizonte. Published: Ecotheology. A mosaic; Mary, all of God and so human. Collaborator of REPAM and Churches and Mining Network. Social networks: @ afonsomurad. Email: murad4@hotmail.com

Gunter Prüller-Jagenteufel

Theologies, Ecologies, and Extractivism Remarks from the Perspective of Theological Ethics

Let me thank you for your inviation to share some ideas from the perspective of theological ethics. I do so as a European, and so I am aware that my historic heritage includes the history of exploitation of the so called Global South. And I do so as an Austrian, a country which never had colonies but nevertheless profited from imperialistic colonialism. And, last but not least, I am here as a theologian whose theology has been shaped by encounters with the Church of the Poor in the Philippines and by reading Latin American theology: Gutiérrez and Boff, Ellacuría and Sobrino, Hinkelammert and Dussel, ...

The human person is the fundamental starting point

I would like to start with what I consider the basic theological principle of ethical reflection, which is to my understanding the human person. As Pope John Paul II. put it: The (concrete) human person is the way of the church.[1] I read this in line with Vatican II., which states in those famous words of Gaudium et spes:

"The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. […] For the human person deserves to be preserved; human

1 Cf. Redemptor hominis, chapter 14.

society deserves to be renewed." (GS 1;3)

According to Christian anthropology, the human person is not just a solitary entity, especially not in primordeal competetion against each other, as liberitarian thinkers like August v. Harnack and his economic school of Chicago like us to believe, but we are persons, subjects of history, in living and acting out our common social nature. The human person is essentially relationship, so community and society are central to our personal lives.

So when it comes to analyzing the global situation the question has to be: How is this situation contributing to or afflicting human life? And to answer this question we have to look at those least advantaged: to the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized – to all those who have no voice in this world, or whose only voice is the – sometimes silent[2] – cry. The first task of Christians in this world and of the church as a whole is to take up this cry of the poor and oppressed – in our times even more important: the cry of future generations and the cry of the earth, since ecological disaster will afflict future generations even more than us today, if we do not change our economic system. So, in short, my approach to ethics follows the ideas of the "ética de la vida" with one main goal: "Una sociedad donde quepan todos y todas y que esté en armonía con la naturaleza".[3]

From this fundamental starting point I want to focus on four basic ethical principles.

1. Common good: human rights outweigh the rights of free enterprise
2. Social justice: ensuring the well-being of all humanity and of future generations
3. Solidarity: equal sharing of gains and burdens, ensuring the participation of all
4. Sustainability: long term gain takes prevalence over short term profit

I will tackle them only in short, since I believe that our dialogue is more important than a lengthy presentation. Out of the same reason I will not give lengthy quotes or citations. I will simply focus on the main ideas, present them to you and hope it will inspire our thoughts and actions.

1. The principle of the common good: human rights outweigh the rights of free enterprise

The notion of basic human rights is ambiguous, since it often is shaped into libertarian rhetoric declaring the rights of free enterprise and private property to be the basic goods of economy. But they are not: According to Christian social ethics economy has to serve the people – all people – and not the other way round. The freedom of economic enterprise, the "free" market and the allegedly unalienable right of private property are strictly limited to that goal. So the question is: Is the most basic human right, the right to live a decent life, ensured and met by those economic factors? If it is not, then we have to change the system.

2 Cr. Hinkelammert, Franz J., El Grito del Sujeto. Del teatro-mundo des evangelio de Juan al perro-mundo de la globalisazión, San José (C.R.) 1998.

3 Richard, Pablo: El grito del sujeto: un aporte radical de Franz J. Hinkelammert a la Teología de la Liberación, in: Duque, José/Guiérrez Germán (ed.): Itinerarios de la razon crítica. Homenaje a Franz Hinkelammert en sus 70 Años, San José (C.R.) 2001, 315-327, 327. Cf. Hinkelammert, Franz J., La vida es más que el capital. La deomcracia de ciudadanos y el proyecto de la sociadad en la que quepan todos los seres humanos, in: Pasos Nr.113 (2004), 12-16.

As we might recall: According the Christian tradition private property is secondary to the fundamental rights of the person. St. Thomas Aquinas sees clearly that the whole of creation is given to all humankind. Private property is just a way to organize the creation and distribution of these goods in an effective way by enhancing responsible conduct of all. But with property comes the duty – and it is a duty in the strictest sense of the word – to use what one has for the best of the community and society. That is: To use whatever one has – property, talents, power, ideas, … – for the common good. Therefore it is clear that the right to private property has its limits: Wherever the rights to a decent life – especially for the poor and marginalized – is threatened or damaged the right to private property comes to an end.

If we look into the classical concept of the common good we can see that it means the sum of goods – material and immaterial – that a society needs to flourish. It is by no means equivalent to the economic measure of GNP but would rather follow an index measuring human fulfilment and happiness in the lines of the "capability approach" as it has been developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. It also entails the right of all to participate not only in the economic and common goods available in a society but also in relevant decision making processes. And, of course, it also means to protect the rights and needs of future generations.

Basic norms entailed by this principle

- The common good is a structural principle, not just a personal one. We have to understand that the human person is in the center of our attention, but supporting structures are essential as well. The critique of unjust structures and the fight to overcome them is an essential part of the struggle for the common good.

- The social welfare of all people – present and future – has to be met. Economic measures that leave people without work, without income, and consequently without homes, health care, education for future generations etc., have to be avoided and prohibited.

- Politicians have to work for the common good. Corruption has to be rooted out and personal gains for politicians have to be prohibited.

- The population that is directly or indirectly affected has to be included in political and economic decision making.

The ecological balance must be protected for this generation and future generations. No permanent harm shall be done to the eco system in the name of economic progress.

We can see how an "Economy of the Common Good", an economy that is oriented at the wellbeing of each and every one instead of maximizing the profits for the few, would help to bring this holistic concept of common good about.

2. The principle of social justice: ensuring the well-being of all humanity and of future generations

The basic principle of social justice sees each one as author of their own life story which entails that every human person has a right not only to fair chances and a

fair share of the common good but also to all the basic needs that are necessary for becoming "autores de su propia vida" (Oscar A. Romero). It is a matter of social justice to ensure for everyone affordable healthcare, education, housing, opportunities for meaningful work, leisure time for social life and creativity, etc. Ecological justice is an integral part of social justice since it ensures the life of future generations.

Basic norms entailed by this principle

- Social justice means a just distribution of profits and also a just distribution of burdens. It is unjust to shuffle profits only to the entrepreneurs and leave the majority of the population with the economic and ecological burden.

- It is also against social justice to "create" jobs for the few by destroying the basic income opportunities for the big majority, as mining does.

- To leave devastated regions behind, poisoned by Mercury and other heavy metals, is a crime against the present as well as the future generations.

- For investors to invest money in such industries is unethical. Therefore the industries themselves as well as the investors have to be forced to methods, technologies and structures that create well payed jobs for all, that create good living conditions for the communities and societies and that are ecologically friendly.

Social justice in the political sphere means to ensure that whatever economic enterprise and investment there may be it has to ensure the wellbeing of the local community as well as the global society. Economic measures that ensure profit for a few on the expense of the many have to be avoided, even prohibited by law.

3. The principle of solidarity: equal sharing of gains and burdens, ensuring the participation of all

Pope John Paul II. in his encyclical letter "Sollicitudo rei socialis" made a point in stressing out that solidarity is a Christian "virtue" which he describes as follows:

"This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

Therefore, still according to John Paul II., solidarity is the most important and most successful strategy in overcoming the "structures of sin" that leave the vast majority of mankind and earth itself exploited to the death.

Basic norms entailed by this principle

- Whatever costs or gains a project entails, the least advantaged should be the ones to profit most. If their gains do not outweigh their burden, a project must not be sanctioned.

- In defense of the poor and the marginalized all have to stand together, especially those who are in a position to raise their voice, to promote awareness

and to organize resistance. To do so is the sacred duty of the churches wherever the necessity arises.

- The help by the churches and other sectors must not be patronizing. The people have to be part of decision making as well as strategic and tactical action. They are the prime subjects of their own struggle.

- In any action violence against persons has to be avoided, violence against property as far as possible. But at the same time conflicts are to be expected and have to be carried out for the sake of the poor and the marginalized.

A church in solidarity with the people is living fully the preferential option for the poor. It stands with them in their struggle and suffers with them all the consequences. This also entails the way the church presents itself to the people. During the time of Vatican II a number of bishops following the initiative of Dom Helder Camara signed "El pacto de las catacumbas", a commitment not only to solidarity in action but even more to a lifestyle in solidarity with the poor. Therefore solidarity goes all the way to the symbolic level: bishops' houses, clerical vestments, and especially liturgical utensils like cups and plates. To have them made of gold is a clear contradiction to the option for the poor and oppressed, and our exploited planet earth.

4. The principle of sustainability: long term gain takes prevalence over short term profits

The last principle I want to present to you is not a classic principle of Christian social ethics but rather one of ecology and economy. It says, in a nutshell, that all humans endeavors have to be organized in a way that the economic wellbeing, the social welfare and the eco-system are organized in a way that is compatible with the long-term survival of not only humans but all creation. The long term effects of any activity on the economic and social wellbeing of society as well as the integrity of the eco-system have to be taken into account. Therefore the measures of sustainability have to be implemented in tandem with the preferential option for the poor.

Basic norms entailed by this principle

- All economic enterprise has to be in concord with long term gains for the common good. The deduction of short term profits must be prevented. Instead, profits must be invested in the economic and social welfare of all.

- Lasting damages for the eco system have to be avoided at all costs. Industrial practices that damage the eco-system in a permanent way have to be prohibited totally. It is the responsibility of the entrepreneur to implement repair measures for short term damages in case the environment has been affected.

- Ecological costs have to be considered at all stages of economic enterprise. Burdens on the eco-system have to be balanced by taxes; the tax money is to be invested in the repair of the eco-system.

- Profits for the society/the state (taxes, royalties) have to be invested for the sustainable development of society with special attention for the least advantaged

groups.

Matters for discussion

These are just a few ideas, principles and norms from the perspective of Christian social ethics that might be helpful in dealing with Gold mining and any other business of raw materials' exploitation. Of course we have already discussed the strategies of multi-national corporations in skimming off the profits and subdue not only the workers but whole countries to exploitation and social and ecological destruction.
How this ethical perspective might be helpful in the struggle for a just society and a healthy eco-system is up for discussion.

Gunther Pruller-Jagenteufel: He studied Roman Catholic theology and mathematics at the University of Vienna. Since 2003 he has been an associate professor of Catholic theology at the Department of Theological Ethics at the University of Vienna.

To speak of ethics without speaking of justice is impossible!

Violeta Rocha

Introduction

This sharing is lovingly and prophetically guided by some questions that we will try to respond to in the same way to encourage, comfort, support, and assume actions for this campaign you are organizing. Some possible answers will be contained in others and, of course, will also remain a challenge to continue reflecting in the community.

What steps do we take towards an ethical-theological perspective that illuminates the decisions of religious organizations concerning financial investments in the extractive industry that guarantee strong economic profits and dogmatic defenses of unlimited growth?

According to ecological sin, how can we understand these practices and the collaboration for evil?

How to respond to business sectors that approach the churches, in the hypothesis of supporting their extractive projects, with a discourse of progress also present in initiatives that assume inclusive capitalism?

Should churches and religious organizations take losses or reduce profitability for the common good?

How to evaluate the current economic model of inequity that has the dominant logic of extraction as one of its plans?

The current economic model and its extractive logic

The concept of "dispossession," economy or culture of dispossession, are also known as theories of "dispossession"; they belong mainly to the economic sciences but also reach other disciplines, such as theology. From a Latin American theological approach, this reality of dispossession leads us immediately to think about injustices, asymmetries, and inequalities. These pass through all the crossroads of analysis, whether of gender, social class, spaces and places, and of course, they also refer us to geographies of inequality.

This history of dispossession has deep traces in Latin America and the Caribbean, not only because of Spanish and Portuguese colonization but also because of the agrarian reform struggles that many peasants pushed for in different periods of the last century. There is much to learn from the history of the native peoples, afro-descendants, and peasants, which has marked these Latin American and Caribbean identities. Other expressions refer to dispossession, such as plundering, looting, taking, depriving, violent expulsion or displacement, forcing migration. These are just some different ways of understanding this harrowing experience.

Feminist theology and Ecofeminism have pointed out this relationship of control and domination over female bodies and nature. It is customary to make an analogy between the two from the point of view of reproduction and possession. Rita Segato, an Argentinian anthropologist and feminist, says that extreme violence uses women's bodies as part of the "appropriation" of territories since it indicates the possession of what can be sacrificed for the "sake" of territorial control. The economy of dispossession is based on hierarchical gender, patriarchal, racist, and sexist relations.

Paradigms such as assuming the human being as the measure of all things continue to sustain this system, giving creation an instrumental role, which allows for the satisfaction of human beings but not of all human beings! The maximization of profit will vary in its expression and mode of articulation as the processes of economic production and social and political reproduction evolve so that what yesterday was not extractable or transformable, today it can be. And what yesterday was not a necessity, today it is erected as such. One fact is very revealing: 26 people with the greatest wealth have the same wealth equivalent to 3.5 billion more impoverished people. The wealthiest 10% of the richest consume 49% of CO_2 emissions versus the 50% with the lowest income is equivalent to 10% of CO_2 emissions.

From this "man as the measure of all things" approach, a "smart management" approach is proposed, leaving them in control of much international decision-making. It appears to show an interest in the values of ecology, as it proposes to minimize harmful human impacts and has immediate appeal because this is how environmental policy problems are usually solved. It demonstrates an interest in the values of ecology, such as minimizing negative human impacts on the environment, maximizing ecosystems and conservation efforts, appealing to an "environmental ethic." However, reality shows the opposite of this proposal to minimize environmental and human damage. Because in the face of the boom of this "new economy" of communication and information technologies generalization, the ecological costs, the excessive demand for energy and materials required for the production and consumption

of these devices show the non-viability of this model in space and time.

It has unleashed a powerful extractive activity and a robust financial investment in this type of enterprise around Latin America, Africa, and Asia. It is called the "financialization of the economy" of mining (among others). Therefore, the whole ecological niche that summons us to rethink ethically and theologically how to call for divestment of this economic model, business models focused on profitability, which brings destruction and death. Our land becomes a resource of usurpation, reconfiguring in another way our subjectivities, the way we relate to each other and how we live in our own bodies, the extraction, and the different outbreaks of violence. As mentioned by environmental theorists and activists, the geobiophysical[1] world, which corresponds to the geological, biological, and physical, where human activity is produced for its development[2], generates other dynamics where the conditions of existence become a priority, to take action.

Rethinking Ethics from Grace, Conversion and Ecological Sin

In the Bible, the earth is God's and has been given as a grace to work it, to share in solidarity, to have the dignified sustenance of daily life, to celebrate its beauty, and of course, to care for it. The sabbatical year of the land (Lev.25 and 26), the land as a common thread, etc., show us that understanding. That is what the document of the Synod of Amazonia calls "ecological grace."

For this reason, as humans and as believers, it is impossible not to be confronted by the impact of extractivist practices due to the commodification of land. It also implies an appropriation or expropriation? of socio-territorial energies, a theoretical approach that seems important to me and is linked to the very life of people and bodies, and territory. Here arises the concept of "ecobiopolitics" linked to colonialism, which refers to the conditions of domination.[3] It is impossible not to relate these situations to what is defined as ecological sin, "an act of omission against God, against the neighbor, the community, and the environment. It is a sin against future generations and manifests itself in acts and habits of pollution and destruction of the environment, transgressions against the principles of interdependence and rupture of the networks of solidarity among creatures" (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 340-344). and against the virtue of justice (Synod, 82). The document calls attention to the fact that ecological sin is also the lack of awareness (even if it is involuntary) of what is happening to the territories, resistances, defenders of the territory, and the fact that they are prosecuted, criminalized, and even assassinated.

I would add that not being aware of the knowledge, initiatives, leadership, public actions, and spiritualities that the territories in resistance offer us is also a rejection of "ecological grace." It would be an opportunity for the Christian church to connect with the earth, to learn other forms of leadership, other ways of being church, of making consensus, thinking strategies for political incidence, understanding what the economy of life is, the theological and biblical reasons,

1 http://www.azulambientalistas.org/glosario.html

2 Understanding this development, starting from problematizing the concept itself, assuming it as those possibilities of living fully.

3 See "Colonized nature. Political ecology and mining in Latin America." Héctor Alimonda, Coordinator.

the symbols that inspire the resistance of the communities, all that is biblical-theological, other ancestral spiritualities, to maintain the defense of creation. There is a renewed ethical vision from different ways of conceiving power, being, feeling, and living, from the conflicts in the spaces of their territories and bodies. The ethical dimension of ecological conversion brings us face to face with the images of God that accompany daily processes of repentance and conversion. But it also confronts us with the reality of conflict; the history of salvation is traversed by conflict. Are we capable of assuming conflict as a place of knowledge? Sandro Gallazi,[4] a Brazilian biblical scholar, proposes a journey through the biblical text starting from the conflict, recalling Moses before the burning bush, and where Yahweh calls for the first time the ground he is treading on "holy ground." In the land, the conflict takes place, "Our God is only known in the conflict. The moment conflict arises with a whole system, the certainty is born in Moses' heart that in this conflict God is on one side, necessarily against the other." Then he takes us with the prophets, up to Jesus and the conflicts with the law, the Sanhedrin, etc. That is to say, the conflicts in the territories are not "far away"; we are part of these conflicts because this predatory relationship for the goods of the people is linked to today and tomorrow. This thought of the philosopher Martha Nussbaum points out an element that leads to self-criticism by placing us outside the conflicts, "the lack of understanding of fraternity in human relations implies a harmful perversion of the social, since those who place themselves above the vicissitudes of life establish hierarchical links that cause or inflict damage to fellow human beings".[5]

4 Sandro Gallazi, "For a land without a sea. https://www.centrobiblicoquito.org/download/por-una-tierra-sin-mar/

In his manifesto, he names four values for a global economic ethic in various religions: non-violence and utmost respect for life; justice and a just economic order; truthfulness and tolerance; alliance and legal equity between men and women. Indeed these are valid proposals; however, the ethical questions remain: who is affected by these proposals? How are the citizenship and rights of people in conflict zones recognized? How do we position ourselves before large corporations in the role of organizations, structures, churches, and groups? We know that religious organizations and churches are opinion leaders, some more than others, depending on the radius or perimeter of their power. Some ideas to share:

Inviting us to walk, to take steps

The metaphor of the New Testament's pilgrim church, the church that does not accommodate itself to the status quo, that is responding to the challenge to always reform, might be close to the idea of utopia as a movement, that is, that also walks, that takes steps. Then some coordinated steps are suggested, as far as possible.

- Reaffirm from the pedagogy of faith and praxis that the community is the center of Christian ethics and cannot be disarticulated from its natural environment. This is not in contradiction with other ancestral spiritualities. On the contrary, this community is enlarged by the territories, waters, mountains, forests, animals, and more. The invitation to remember that we are not conquerors/owners of the land or communities makes us human.
- To return to the basic concern of ethics, of koinonia, from the diversity in the search

5 Martha Nussbaum, 2004. "The concealment of the human: disgust, shame, and law." Buenos Aires: Katz. P.20.

for union and the frequent recreation of the Greek word - koinonia, which allows us to rescue the "good" of creation and where life becomes possible. Caring for the earth is an ethical commitment that involves establishing healthy relationships and coexistence.

- To accompany, to undertake the struggle for the defense of creation is an ethical demand that leads us to actions that prevent the destructive practices of those who commodify life. For this, we must be informed, use critical and liberating pedagogies, and seek forms of collaboration with others.
- The formation, through interdisciplinary studies, of our links with the environment in the different ecological zones and related to the variety of institutional mechanisms.
- To promote - through listening and feedback from communities in resistance - "ethical learning" from their experiences and to learn what kind of accompaniment they need from churches, religious organizations, and groups.
- Relate this "ethical learning" at different levels of daily life, promoting the sharing of life stories, community achievements, legal rulings in favor of resistance, processes of forced territories relocation, and conflicts over access to natural resources with faith communities and social networks.
- Writing and rewriting the histories of mining conflicts, their complexities, the responsibilities, and co-responsibilities involved in such disputes. The "occupied" territories experience battles over the capacity and legitimacy to decide about the territories and how to inhabit and produce in the territory.

To speak of ethics is to speak of justice; to carry out a divestment campaign is an ethical action that brings us face to face with the faces of the earth and the other. This look also confronts us with our own face, and the question arises: what can I become? It is an interpellation that, by putting us in front of the other, gives us signs of our vulnerability and how we learn to manage this experience of feeling exposed. The temptation of investments - even disguised with the best cause - puts us before the dilemma of whether or not to accept financing for life projects. It involves asking ourselves about the other, from all sides, from the consortiums, transnationals, corporations, and those in the territories, even as citizens of a country that will accept loans and shares in exchange for concessions. The ethical dimension will always place us before questions, and we have to assume them even in searching for answers.

Violeta Rocha: Doctor in feminist theology and biblical scholar, teacher of New Testament, collaborates with theological education institutions in the region, and coordinates the Formation Commission of the Continental Christian Network for Peace (RECONPAZ).

THEOLOGIES, ECOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVISM

THEOLOGIES, ECOLOGIES, AND EXTRACTIVISM

Ideas in the Key of F: Foundation and Action

As a result of the reflections shared by speakers and participants in the conference on Theologies, Ecologies and Mining Extractivism, which was held through digital platforms between April and May 2021 - thanks to the collaboration between the Katholische Jungschar Cooperation Agency (DKA) and the Latin American Network of Churches and Mining (C&M) - the following is a synthesis constructed in the key of F: foundation and action.[1]

This synthesis explores the richness of the polyphonic dialogue shared during the conference. In this score for collective action, the reading in the key of F (foundation and action), and the interpretation of this initial chord with its three notes, may well encourage the joy and hope of those of us who seek to offer committed responses to "ecological conversion" (LS 216-221), from "concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and inner peace" (LS10) to resonate together in the care of the Common Home.

Creative notes and key points for reading from the perspective of faith

Opening Ideas

In dialogue with Sr. Daniela Cannavina and Msgr. Bruno-Marie Duffé

The sacredness of the territory and ecological citizenship: towards the search for regenerative alternatives.

From the theological field, Sr. Daniela Cannavina invited us to explore the key to reading the "sacredness of the territory." A place from which we can build bridges of communication, understanding, and joint action towards the ancestral and native communities, with whom theological and spiritual reflection can lead to the recognition of the territory as a gift, source, and support of life. Building these bridges and walking them together with the communities requires openness to encountering cultural traditions and their symbolic, mystical, and practices richness around the care of life and the common home.

This communication, to be authentic, must start from the recognition of the suffering caused by the economic and colonial model that degrades territories and imposes the indifference and passivity of States, societies, communities, and citizens in the face of violence and the violation of rights. It must also start from recognizing those values and practices that we reproduce on a daily and systemic basis, on different scales. In this communication, the martyrs accompany

1 Text prepared by the systematization team of the meeting and finally written by the Colombian theologian Angie Torres, Rolando Perez, and Pedro Sánchez.

us, show us the way and encourage us to regenerate in favor of life.

With humility and conviction, the path of creation or re-creation of a new form of relationship with the Creation invites us to assume that we are only a thread of the loom, invites us to contribute to the weaving consciously and to pull adequately and carefully those threads that we have within reach; seeking to harmonize samaritanically, with the wisdom of a weaver, the threads of the fabric in favor of the weft of life. We belong to the fabric and to the fabric we owe ourselves.

Consciously living the gift of inclusion in the web of life mobilizes us to care for it reverentially. The gift of inclusion comes with the indivisible gift of a place in this sacred web; the degradation of the sacred places in which communities weave life and the degradation of their living conditions are attacks against the very fabric of life itself. There is, then, no compensation capable of repairing the ecological amputations of common goods or the amputations of individual and collective lives, always collective, that come along with the extractivist model.

In the face of the sacredness of life, of communities, of territories and places, of the interconnected threads of life, and in the face of the degradation, violence, and violations imposed by mining extractivism, we have regenerative tasks: relearn to look at "water, air, earth, fire"; cultivate gratitude, revere places and communities; honor belonging to the fabric and weft of life; resist, prevent and denounce ecological amputations and the permissiveness of States; transform the passivity and conformism of societies, collectives, individuals; cultivate, promote and practice ecological citizenships committed to the search for alternatives for life and ecological justice.

Towards a theology of the Earth for Ecological Conversion, with compass and conjugate-action.

Although we usually delve into other "more important" or perceived as "more sacred" issues in religious and community life, today, the care of the Earth is increasingly recognized as a fundamental issue. The martyrs of the Earth who look down upon us defended what we must all defend. Therefore, the regenerative tasks cannot be postponed.

In this journey, it is necessary to "heart" and theologize life and sacred territories from the wounded peoples, for whom the care of reflection is essential, so that it may be a source and form of hope. It is necessary then to promote a theology as solidarity with humanity, a reflection with and from the Earth committed to thinking about the future of humanity and all the beings of the planet, interconnected, interdependent. This journey, in the words of Bishop Bruno-Marie Duffé, needs the guidance of a compass or a compass rose that allows us to read the different cardinal points of the Earth as

we move towards the horizon:

In the North, the Earth that we have received as a gift and Creation that comes from God, and in which we participate as responsible and co-creators: "Source of life that comes from the hand of God" (Genesis 1-2).

In the South, the Earth today, shared or not; reduced to produce and produce more; reduced to merchandise ("instrumentalized") and mistreated; the good Earth that is not shared and that is torn between suffering and solidarity; reduction and rejection.

In the East, the Earth as promise: the "Promised Land," hope of the poor, and our shared future. The Land of welcome and joy, the shared Land (cf. Exodus; Prophets and Revelation), the Common Good Land.

In the West, the Earth as a collective memory, a memory of life and community, wisdom, and received knowledge. The Earth as promise: for all, sense of our hope, the Earth together. (Cf. Apocalypse; Cf. Decalogue: covenant and liberation).

At the center, the heart that beats and maintains the horizon, the pulse with its call to conscience, conversion, and action.

In addition to orientation, our collective walk requires verbs that allow us to walk the steps:

Receive: God gave us the Earth; she is a gift entrusted to the human community. Indigenous cultures teach us that the Earth is a mother who gives life. Thus, there is an "essential" relationship between land, life, humanity, and the future.

Protect: Reciprocity is an essential aspect of ethics. By caring for the Earth and rejecting its instrumentalization, we do our part in reciprocity to life. To produce without protection is the road to death.

Transmit: To guarantee a dignified and full life for all Creation, including future generations of human beings. Transmit also knowledge and techniques, values, faith, and hope, not only the material.

Share: Just as the Earth shares its gifts with us, human beings have in sharing one of the highest values. Current crises show us that the central challenge of our time is to share or die.

The challenges raised are fundamental in the work we carry out in each campaign to promote integral ecology and the ecological conversion to which the encyclical 'Laudato Si' calls us. Although the promotion of a Theology of the Earth, an Ethics for an Integral Ecology, and a Theology of the Common Good go beyond the mission of our institutions, the sustained dialogue commits us to contribute elements and build with other instances these urgent reflections from our fields of action.

Happily, we have already traveled a path that has allowed us to recognize the sacredness of territories and communities. We have been calibrating our compass to reflect as a community on a theology of the Earth. We have been conjugating step by step the key verbs of receiving, protecting, transmitting, sharing for our Ecological Conversion in favor of coexistence and biodiversity on this Earth; to take care of it, resist the projects of death, be at peace with it, and cultivate solidarity with those who suffer. In this journey, we will have to consider the philosophical and spiritual reflections of the ancestral and native peoples and communities, to whose listening we are led by the sacred territories threatened by extractivism.

Ethical Theological Perspectives

In dialogue with Afonso Murad, Gunter Prüller-Jagenteufel, and Violeta Rocha

We seek to illuminate the practices of the extractivist political and economic model that has been established in modernity as a dogma for growth. These initiatives are based on the utilitarian financialization of nature to safeguard speculative capital by controlling Mother Earth and the future.

The GOLD cycle, its (un)ethical issues, and biblical data for reflection

Afonso Murad spoke about the responsibilities that we believers have in the contexts affected by extractivism: to recognize the impacts of gold mining and the dynamics that are implanted in the territories with violence and corruption; to know the channels of environmental control and community and territorial rights, as well as the channels of prevention and denunciation available in our countries. In addition, believers must deepen in the biblical wisdom that guides our faith and warns of the tensions and conflicts that activate the thirst for greed, power, and accumulation of rentier and speculative economies such as gold. Rooting our campaigns in the biblical source can and should orient the active communities of faith and encourage other communities to engage and commit themselves to search for peace and wisdom, which are more valuable than all the gold and silver in the world.

In this sense, Alfonso Murad presented us with an illuminating biblical journey that covers the appreciation of gold by the Jewish people in the Old Testament who, like many peoples of the East, cultivated an admiration of this metal for its beauty, shine, purity, stability, incorruptibility; which made it possible to understand it as a sign of "power and wealth," often associated with "the masculine." However, unlike other peoples, the Jew did not identify gold with divinity because they recognize themselves in the Covenant with an Other that cannot be manipulated and cannot be represented by statues of gold, silver, or bronze, which are nothing more

than goods of the Earth.

In the biblical accounts influenced by the priestly tradition, gold is a resource that covers the goods given to the people of God, such as the Ark of the Covenant "overlaid with gold" or the dishes and candlesticks carried on the long trek through the desert. In this regard, Murad asks, could a poor and wandering people possess such a wealth of metals? Being unlikely, we ask, what did the value coating of the goods given to the people consist of? Perhaps, the beauty, brilliance, purity, stability, and incorruptibility of the Promise in action, of the fulfilled Promise.

The book of Deuteronomy, which has a prophetic inspiration, establishes some guidelines on the use of gold and silver, which - in the end, like all riches - belong to the Lord who fulfills his Promise. Thus, greed and idolatry, which lead to violence, accumulation, and competition, should not be nourished. So, we ask once again, what does the value coating of the goods given to the people consist of?

In David's reign, greed brought domination over other peoples, plundering, and accumulation of wealth and assertion of power. Gold then decorated the signs of the ostentation of power and was imposed as a crown on the head of the King: it is no longer the gold of beauty, brightness, purity, stability, and incorruptibility of the Promise fulfilled by the Lord, but the gold of the promise of "power and wealth."

When the kingdom of Judah was threatened with an Assyrian attack, gold as a bargaining chip, either to buy and secure power and wealth or to buy the security of a people, did not prove to be a safe currency for the stability and peace of kingdoms. As faith matures and goes through different crises, it is the search for peace and wisdom, the search for the Lord - which does not resemble the finest gold - the precious good that deserves to be searched for.

In this tour, we note with Murad that there is no consideration whatsoever for gold in the preaching and practice of Jesus. From this Christian inspiration in the practice and preaching of Jesus, together with the recognition of the impacts of mining extractivism, communities animated by faith should ethically commit themselves to divestment in gold. Perhaps the most coherent practice that churches and faith communities can adopt, Murad encourages us, is the one we derive from Peter's reminder: "I have neither silver nor gold; but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, arise and walk" (Acts 3:6).

Faith communities require these reflections to make critical processes regarding their relationships with mining companies that finance actions or projects through Corporate Social Responsibility to obtain the social license that allows their local operation through churches and faith communities. Therefore, it is essential to offer these

elements so that communities and their members can discern their relationship with gold mining and the need to maintain coherent practices from the ethics of care and Christian coherence.

Observations from a Christian ethical and social perspective

In this identification of community and civic tasks and responsibilities, inspired both by the recognition of the impacts of mining extractivism and by the biblical sources that motivate our faith, we explore, with Gunter Prüller-Jagenteufel, the principles of Christian social ethics, beginning with the basic principle and path of the Church: the human person (concrete and in relationship). Today, the human person in relationship is understood in the ecological fabric, in Creation; hence, in the critical context of extractivism, we must ask: how does it contribute to or affect human life, how does it contribute to or affect the poor and oppressed, how does it contribute to or affect ecological integrality, and finally, what role do we assume?

According to Christian social ethics, just as the economy must be at the service of persons, private property always has a social function; it is secondary to the fundamental rights of the human person. Therefore, it must be at the service of the community and society, the material and the immaterial common good, the service of the poor and oppressed, and the service of the flourishing of human capacities. Likewise, the economy and private property must be sensitive to the right of people to participate in the decision-making processes that affect them and to protect the rights of future generations.

Today, in the face of the ecological and social disaster imposed by the economic system, it is indispensable for Christian social ethics to listen to the cry of the Earth, the cry of the poor and oppressed, and the cry of future generations who join in a cry for ecological and social justice. Gunter Prüller-Jagenteufel tells us this listening is possible from the "ethics of life" for a "society in which everyone fits, in harmony with nature."

In this framework, solidarity must be understood as a strategy for overcoming the structures of sin that exploit the Earth, people, and communities. Solidarity, as a strategy, must be translated into individual and community practices that concretize the transforming commitment with the preferential option for the poor as a specific feature of Christian communities. Moreover, it must do so with a commitment to the care of Creation and its ecological integrity, as a sign of our times. To this end, Gunter Prüller-Jagenteufel's invitation to reflect on four principles of Christian social ethics, namely:

1. The principle of the common good: Human rights outweigh free enterprise rights.
2. The principle of social justice: to ensure the well-being of all humanity and future

generations.
3. The principle of solidarity: equitable distribution of burdens and benefits, ensuring the participation of all.
4. The principle of sustainability: long-term gain prevails over short-term gain.

In the face of the invitation to dialogue with these principles, the community reflection converged in a confession: the colonial Church fell into collaboration with the gold accumulation model due to the prestige and political positioning it received from the Crown. Likewise, today, the Churches benefit from the mining sector and we remain silent. Therefore, the ecclesial communities must not only assume the critical reflection on the historical weight of the accumulation of wealth, including the relationship with gold but also -today- we must critically consider the relationship with mining companies and investment funds.

Acknowledging and confessing is an important starting point and not remaining silent in the face of the violations imposed by the model on the rights of people and ecosystems. Faced with the temptation to critique prosperity theologies as a first step, perhaps the most honest strategy is to start with a confession of the complicity of our Churches (and personal investments/ pensions) and, from there, invite others to offer their confession and conversion. We cannot start the dialogue with an accusation and end it. Let us begin with the confession as an empathetic and summoning gesture in the key of ecological conversion.

The horizon of Christian social ethics is justice

In the course of the conversation, we confirmed - together with the theologian and biblical scholar Violeta Rocha - the importance of taking these community steps to build an ethical-theological perspective that illuminates the decisions of organizations and communities of faith from the standpoint of justice. In decision-making for investment or disinvestment, it is relevant to include the relationship between the extractive economic model, our decisions and ecological sin, and even the complacent relationship with extractivism, from the link with Corporate Social Responsibility projects from which our communities benefit.

To address this relationship, Violeta proposed introducing a critical reading approach known as the economy of dispossession. This approach allows us to identify the colonial traces of the extractive economic model based on "hierarchical gender, patriarchal, racist and sexist relations." This economy deliberately resorts to the appropriation of women's bodies and territories as a control strategy for the accumulation and instrumentalizes Creation to satisfy the needs and luxuries of the few at the expense of exploiting the many.

This economy is opposed to the biblical understanding of the Earth as a gift

from God, the Earth given as a grace to work it and share it in solidarity. The sabbatical year of the Earth (Lev. 25 and 26) is what the Synod of the Amazon document calls ecological grace, visible in "the knowledge, initiatives, leadership, public actions and spiritualities that the territories in resistance offer us." Therefore, Violeta points out, ecological sin is to reject this ecological grace while accepting it implies that communities of faith assume responsibility for its care as an ethical requirement.

From this demand, we must cultivate the attitude of learning in constant sharing, in collaboration with others, for which it is pertinent to rely on critical and liberating pedagogies. For communities of faith to connect with the Earth, with Creation and to live the ecological conversion, it is essential to be open to listening to and sharing paths with the communities that resist and that have woven the struggles for the care of the territories, native peoples, Afro-descendants and peasants of the global South.

The metaphor of the pilgrim Church that walks as a utopia in movement allows us to understand that the center of Christian ethics is the community; that the community is diversity and is always articulated with its natural environment: a fabric that extends to "territories, waters, mountains, forests, animals and more." Our communities, when they are open to listening and walking with the communities that resist and have woven the struggles for the care of territories, can learn other ways of living, being, acting, feeling, thinking, connecting, rethinking power and conflict, rethinking our conversion and our relationship with the story of Salvation.

Today's context of discussion and construction of ethical-theological criteria for making investment decisions and relationships with companies in the mining sector faces social responsibility initiatives that deepen the discourse of progress while positioning a discourse of "inclusive capitalism." These practices deserve reflection and should also be questioned from two discourses:

Collaboration with evil.
Ecological sin.

It is essential to unveil the relationship between the discourse of progress and fundamentalist religious currents that, in addition, justify the understanding of poor people and communities as inferior beings, fallen in disgrace, devoid of divine blessing. These discourses distort the critical, historical, and contextual knowledge of reality while reinforcing theologies of prosperity and wealth accumulation that legitimize the extractive model, even resorting to the decontextualized manipulation of biblical texts.

We face a pedagogical challenge that must evidence the dispute of meanings, values, discourses, and practices. A challenge that can be supported by critical and popular pedagogies that

stimulate the critical thinking of communities and believers to illuminate decisions coherent with Christian social ethics. Additionally, in the face of this panorama of reflections and tasks, we have a major challenge when it comes to orienting collective reflection and action: our anthropocentric vision.

Throughout the conversations inspired by our ecclesial traditions, the anthropocentric weight of our places of reflection has prevailed. So, a more significant effort is needed to make a necessary biocentric turn when weaving with other spiritualities and referents that resist mining extractivism while building alternatives. To heart with the fabric of life that, as Violeta says, extends to territories, waters, mountains, forests, animals, and more, also extends from there to us; thus, to heart in harmony with that fabric is to recognize ourselves as a thread of that vital loom that is grace, promise, and miracle. We recognize in a community that ecological conversion also calls us to a biocentric turn, and therein lies one of our greatest challenges.

Perspectives from Liturgical Theology

In dialogue with Gloria Ulloa, Daniel Córdova and Basilius Groen

A dialogue on the Liturgy and the evangelical preferential option for the poor, how do we see the use of gold, silver, and diamonds, and their relationship with the Churches and moral values such as sobriety, charity, fraternity, and other different moral values that lead to integral human development? (cf. FT 112)

Natural goods, liturgy, and idolatry. The paradigm of Jesus and the contemporary challenge

The meeting with Gloria Ulloa invited us to recognize key aspects of our campaigns in the face of mining extractivism and gold disinvestment, beginning with the invitation to attend to the dimension of surrender in the practice of worship. From the paradigm and example of Jesus, the worship of God invites us to rethink the value of giving our gifts, and this aspect is essential for the work with churches and faith communities that have built their pastoral practice from a Christ-centered perspective, with whom the space for worship should foster community and should do so in a way that is accessible to all people. Thus, pastoral and liturgical work linked to extractivist divestment campaigns does not propose spaces, practices, and symbols to escape the world. Instead, it provides spaces to foster an encounter with the God of Creation, who summons and sends us.

In this framework, the offering of material gifts in worship is an expression of our self-giving, as an act of gratitude for God's grace. We want to offer to God, and to those we admire, the best: textiles, embroidery, paintings, fabrics, precious stones; that should be the understanding of self-giving in our Christian and interfaith liturgies. Conversely, when

such gifts only draw attention to themselves in an idolatrous way, they lose the dimension of gratitude and self-giving; on the other hand, when in their simplicity of form and function they give glory to God, they are appropriate for worship and for fostering encounter.

The idolatry issue - previously mentioned - is another of the key aspects to which Gloria drew attention. In Christian theology, idolatry is associated with the sin of ambition, of evil power, to the annulment of the common good and against the practice of self-giving. This is what Paul denounced in Athens when he said that "his spirit was inflamed when he saw the city given over to idolatry." Considered a common sin in ancient times, idolatry as an object of critical reflection can be part of a narrative capable of questioning conservative theologies that validate extractivism and accumulation. Moreover, highlighting the idolatrous logic that supports extractivism can be powerful for the development of advocacy strategies in church and para-church circles.

From Colombia, one of the countries where more environmental rights defenders have been murdered in recent years, Gloria raised the need for profound changes in our liturgies to bring hope, comfort, and health to the communities that are victims of extractivism and the predatory economic system. We are in a context in which sectors linked to neo-conservatism or neo-fundamentalism have used liturgical spaces to legitimize oppressive discourses and narratives. We must raise our voices and work so that the campaigns against extractivism generate profound changes in the expression of liturgies in different Christian communities and churches.

It is impossible to remain silent in the face of the torture to which the land is subjected to obtain gold and in the face of the subjugation of communities and territories to different forms of violence. The integrity of our faith is in danger if we remain silent or refuse to act in the face of the neoliberal economic globalization system and the extractivist model. The danger of idolatry warned by the prophets is still present and threatening; we still confuse objects and physical wealth with the divine presence, so our liturgies have the task of not keeping silent and educating, awakening, embracing, and healing.

Liturgy and extractivism: from sumptuousness to alternative rituals

The community reflection on these challenges for our liturgical practices and reflections, and our advocacy actions, continued with Daniel Cordova, who invited us to rethink liturgical action from the construction of communities of faith inserted in concrete social, cultural, and political dynamics, for whom liturgy is an inherent part of the exercise of Christian faith. We need to build liturgical proposals that constitute alternative representations of a community spirituality that does not

reproduce the anti-Christian values of extractivism. For this, it is necessary to break with the logic of religious rituals that feed on the sumptuousness of the celebration and build - instead - liturgical practices that celebrate life, dignity, solidarity, the preferential evangelical option for the poor, and the ecological conversion that cares for Mother Earth.

It is essential to recognize that ecclesial society has nurtured images, symbols, and religious representations that, in many cases, validate the "use" of the goods of Creation as sumptuary goods. This recognition is essential to deconstruct the symbols that do not correspond to a community of faith that tries to embrace prophetic causes and confront those that minimize ecological sin. This transformation will be possible if we encourage a community vigil for the dignity and inculturation of the liturgy; a community vigil that cultivates sobriety, charity, and fraternity in the liturgy; a community vigil that propitiates in every celebration, every symbol, and sign, the ecological conversion that Creation cries out for; a vigil that allows us to overcome the limits of anthropocentric logic and opens us to the holistic encounter with life and its diverse expressions, in the celebration and community rituality.

Given that the issue of extractivism is still a strange topic for some churches, it is necessary to develop educational and awareness-raising work so that the agents of faith can recognize how extractivist practices feed a project that does not correspond to the values of the Kingdom of God. In this educational work, for the liturgy to encourage us to ecological conversion, it will have to be affirmed in the God of life; for preaching to denounce ecological sin effectively, it will have to include these issues in the agenda of pastoral formation; for pastoral care to be prophetic, it will have to root its roots in biblical OT prophetism.

This educational framework has essential references in different traditions and ecclesial communities. A reference that we should explore with greater attention and openness is the ACCRA Confession, Declaration of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, as it constitutes a milestone for the Protestant world in addressing environmental issues, which although it is not part of the framework of formal principles that frame pastoral care, it can build bridges for joint actions and can be a horizon for some ecclesial networks.

The ethical mandate of the Christian community: liturgy, love, and justice

In this community reflection on the meaning of liturgy, in the context of extractivism and solidarity campaigns that seek to contribute to overcoming it, the dialogue with Basiluis Groen led us to recognize the interweaving of three components of missiology from the communities of faith: koinonia, diakonia, and kerygma. In the Christian faith community, these three pillars

support the diaconal practice of charity, the celebration of the liturgy, and the proclamation that bears witness to the good news. The articulation between these pillars is important because it fosters the connection between the sources of faith and liturgical practices with the social context. From this understanding, koinonia practices must be rethought beyond institutionalized ecclesial communities. This is especially important for working with communities that have built their ecclesiality from a temple-centric logic.

The diaconal dimension of the liturgy, rooted in biblical sources as explained by Professor Groen, evidences the dialogical and ritual character of the relationship between God and humanity. This allows us to rethink contemporary liturgies as places or instances of visibility for people or families affected by violence and abuse rather than as particular religious rites. The references of Yahweh's people in the times of the prophets highlight how the worship of God was associated with acts of justice; thus, it is mentioned in the book of the prophet Micah: "O man, he has declared to you what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice, and to love mercy, and to humble yourself before your God." The connection between liturgy, love, and justice includes an ethical mandate for faith communities.

In the light of the experience of the liberation of the people of God in the time of the Exodus and of Jesus' pastoral ministry, Professor Groen invited us to think of the liturgy as a celebration that recalls the historical foundations of the liberating work of God among his people. Our celebrations should then become experiences in which we can be sensitive to the liberating action of the Spirit, who liberates us from slavery. May each celebration, he says, "invite us to reaffirm our hope for a new world where there is shelter and food for all, coexistence, reconciliation, mercy and unity."

Since the call of Jesus, the practice of justice and charity belong to the core of worship; the love of God and charity are founded on the two great biblical commandments to love God and your neighbor and, therefore, constitute the basis of liturgical offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:28-34). It is for this reason that every encounter to celebrate faith, far from becoming a meaningless sacrificial routine, should be an occasion to renew the links between diakonia and liturgy, in the practice of justice that educates, awakens, embraces, and heals with God's special love and solidarity with the poor. Since the call of Jesus, orthodoxy and orthopraxis are interrelated and to celebrate, contemplate and act are verbs that we conjugate together.

In light of these shared reflections, it is clear that -in the context of worship, liturgy, and to care for fidelity to the call of Jesus- the churches must have criteria regarding sacred adornments and sumptuous forms of worship. This not

only applies to the context of campaigns and actions for the overcoming of extractivism and gold disinvestment but should be a generalized reflection that in faith communities, we should assume with sincerity and honesty, the reflection around sumptuousness, accumulation, and justice with the victims that question the coherence of our experience and practice of koinonia, diakonia, and kerygma.

Perspectives from Postcolonial Theology

In dialogue with Hunter Farrel, Tania Avila, and Birgit Weiler

The overexploitation of nature, with the consequent territorial devastation by mining and multinational corporations, has updated and proposed a "modern" version of colonialism. We understand that to share "a principle of hope" post extractivist, it is urgent to decolonize the imaginary and the powers/knowledge.

Embracing David against Goliath: for postcolonial engagement

In the dialogue on the role of postcolonial theology in our reflections and actions to overcome extractivism and gold disinvestment, Hunter Farrell showed us the importance of recognizing ourselves as bearers of a series of behaviors, thoughts, and values that are part of the colonial or neocolonial domination system that has caused and continues to cause so much damage to our peoples. In line with other conversations developed in these conferences, recognizing that evangelization arrived in these territories with the sword and mining extractivism is as essential as recognizing the current colonial dynamics and the opportunities for conversion and overcoming colonialism.

In this context, the socio-environmental conflicts caused by extractive companies offer the churches at least two opportunities: a space for personal, communal, and ecological conversion; conversion to recognize our responsibilities in the plundering and violations of the rights of persons, communities, and territories; conversion to recognize that the system of domination has shaped our ways of thinking and that we are, many times, reproducers of colonial values. It also offers us the opportunity to bear witness to life alongside the exploited and victims and build with them new forms of coexistence, of relationships with nature and with human beings.

This construction requires "weaving wills," weaving with the people of the communities, working in a coordinated manner among the churches, bringing together many religious and academic institutions, and extending the weaving and the loom. This is how David triumphs against Goliath, as in the case of the community of La Oroya, in Peru, one of the most polluted places in the world, where an alliance between local, national, and international organizations and institutions was able to demonstrate

the seriousness of the pollution and the urgency of protective and sanctioning measures.

In the "weaving of wills" that aspires to triumph over Goliath, it is important to recognize that our contribution as communities and churches must have a decolonial character. Thus, ecclesial conversion today demands a postcolonial attitude and a critical and vigilant theology of the Empire's domination in the church. The postcolonial is then offered as a discourse of resistance that opposes any domination project and unmasks the coloniality behind the practices, values, and discourses assumed to be superior. For this purpose, themes such as ecological sin, ecological conversion, and liberating pastoral practices are good companions from which we can review and contribute.

Overcoming extractivism for a Dignified Life and care of the Common Home

The constant critical review of the reproduction of colonial thought and how this set of values, first imposed by the colonizers and then perfected by the extractivist system, invades us is indispensable given its survival in our peoples, our churches, and each one of us. The cruelty of these dynamics was masterfully exposed by the theologian Tania Avila. In her dialogue with us, she highlighted how the disregard and manipulation of symbols and ancestral rites have led to a spiritual colonization-coloniality that allows the exercise of

domination of the miner's body, the women's body, and the body of the mine, thus silencing the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth.

For this reason, Tania told us that deep and committed listening is an indispensable movement to further the decolonial process. For example, Pope Francis has suggested that young people have long hours of listening with elders; exercises like these can help us recover the deep meaning of myths and ancestral wisdom. In this sense, just as young people must take charge of their roots (QA 33), miners, priests, buyers, pastors, religious men, and women who are part of these peoples must take charge of their roots because a personal conversion is needed to sustain a structural conversion over time. The personal conversion that opens up to the encounter with our native peoples' deep meaning realizes that God is present in all of nature, there is not only one world but that we are diverse worlds called to coexist, learn, and mutually enrich each other.

The work to cultivate in us and our people postcolonial thinking is arduous, and the Church can help a lot if it commits to listening, learning, and building with the other worlds surrounding us. The colonialist gaze sees in the Sumaj Orgo hill - in English Good Hill or Beautiful Hill - a pre-Inca space of sacred and ritual character in Potosi, just a rich hill because of its richness in silver. It is colonialist values that impose the vision of heaven-good, earth-temptation, and hell-bad on the Andean vision of the Pacha in which three interdependent ways of life are in harmony: the Alaj Pacha (world above), the Uqhu Pacha (world of the depths) and Kay Pacha (the here, this world). It is a colonialist practice that, hand in hand with evangelization, turned the diverse wealth of the land into the "curse of abundance," the miner's body into a medium for extraction and the invisible body of women into a medium for residual labor, thus breaking the fabric of the community and the collective possibilities for demanding justice among equals and overcoming exploitation.

For the Church and indigenous peoples to be allies in defense of the Common Home, a double movement is necessary: internal decolonization from the perspective of the peoples themselves and external decolonization from the Church itself. For the decolonial path of the latter, 'Laudato Si' offers two keys: to assume that we are all "earth" (LS 2) and that each being has value in itself (LS 140). The first would help reconnect with the ancestral bond of co-care and the second to connect with all beings in the biome of the Common Home, and not for the usefulness it brings to man.

An ecclesial path towards the postcolonial: synodality and networking

This call to become aware of our colonial behaviors was shared and addressed by Birgit Weiler, for whom the road to our decolonization is still a long one. To

decolonize, she said, is to redefine how the fabric and relationships among ourselves and the whole of Creation should be. As Church, we have highlighted the need to recognize the violence used to generate and impose knowledge or to evangelize, so decolonizing implies as a starting point listening to impoverished people. We have processes of decolonization, steps on that path, which must also be taken within our Church, but we are still far from a post-colonial situation.

To move forward, we must listen and understand the processes of the communities, not judge from our conceptions how people live their spiritualities, and open ourselves to discover the Spirit of God in people and peoples who are different from us. For the Awajum and Wampis peoples, there is no dead matter, everything has life and deserves respect; for the dominant culture, this is not only impossible, but human beings are perceived as the owners of everything, of "the living" and the "non-living," thus breaking the possibility of genuine respect because domination is imposed.

The questioning of the economic model and extractivism must start from listening to the peoples because they are the ones who no longer want to listen to the discourses of development, from which they are understood as underdeveloped because of their ways of life, languages, cultures, and that is to treat them as subalterns, who are not present at the table. In this path of questioning and listening, it is essential to change the way we develop our pastoral work in the perspective of decolonizing, because only in this way is it possible to promote paths towards a new life and a time of grace, to grow in these critical moments, to transform the relationships that hurt and to discard everything that promotes or legitimizes putting oneself above the other.

An essential part of the path to decolonize the Church is possible in the current process of building synodality with three fundamental keys:

* *Learning from the poor and from nature to build new ways of relating and complementing each other.*
* *Deconstruct the "hierarchies" because we build among equals; we are sisters and brothers with sister and mother earth.*
* *To care for and recognize the role of women as the leaven and yeast of these new changes, as mother earth, generous giver of life and transformation processes.*

Decoloniality leads us to meet all of us as equals, without subalterns or hierarchies.

Pope Francis, in Fratelli Tuti, asks us to be very attentive to the colonial forms we still have in the Church. This is a complex process of mutual understanding that, from the Gospel perspective, translates into a demand for fidelity to the Gospel: to assume knowledge among people, with indigenous peoples, between intercultural spaces, as well as a commitment to rights and access to a dignified life.

In building this path and traveling it together, networking is a valuable way to join forces among equals and to unite diverse people and institutions on an equal footing. Valuable collective action initiatives such as the one undertaken by the Awajun and Wampis communities who - in alliance with NGOs, churches, and lawyers - have prosecuted the Peruvian State for having granted a concession to an oil company without consulting the peoples, or valuable initiatives such as the campaigns for disinvestment in mining and the use of gold in churches are protagonists in raising awareness and breaking with the mentality of colonial power. The decolonial path is collective. We must walk together towards the goal and the decolonial horizon, encouraging the journey as we weave in a network.

Creative notes for collective actions

The relationship of church communities with Corporate Social Responsibility programs and funds is an issue that deserves attention, since sometimes they lack information for decision making, do not have the elements for critical reading of the ethical implications and impacts on life, or, even if they do, they do not practice the ethics of caring for life in these specific areas of action.

In addition to community awareness, it is also essential to promote criticism and individual responsibility among believers through pedagogical actions and citizen initiatives: do we know what the pension funds or savings funds in which we deposit our money invest, have we asked the funds, have we asked them for information, transparency, accountability, do we prefer not to know, do we prefer not to know? So we have a community task, of course, but we also have a citizen task and responsibility that we must assume with the commitment of believers.

Illuminating these different scenarios is a contribution that our institutions can promote from complementary approaches: informing and denouncing the ecological and social impacts, informing and denouncing the impacts on rights and the dynamics of corruption associated with mining extractivism, and accompanying the transformation of the decision-making processes of communities of faith in investment practices and relations with companies.

Faced with this challenge, an important dimension to consider is the impact on the formation programs of pastors, clergy, religious men, and women, since this type of formation for ethical decision-making in administration, economics, and investment may be absent in their places or processes of study and formation. Thus, providing tools for immediate action for information and support for ethical decision-making is as important as considering advocacy in educational programs, in line with the Synod of the Amazon, which also calls us to take care of the training, especially for pastors and clergy, issues against which it is possible

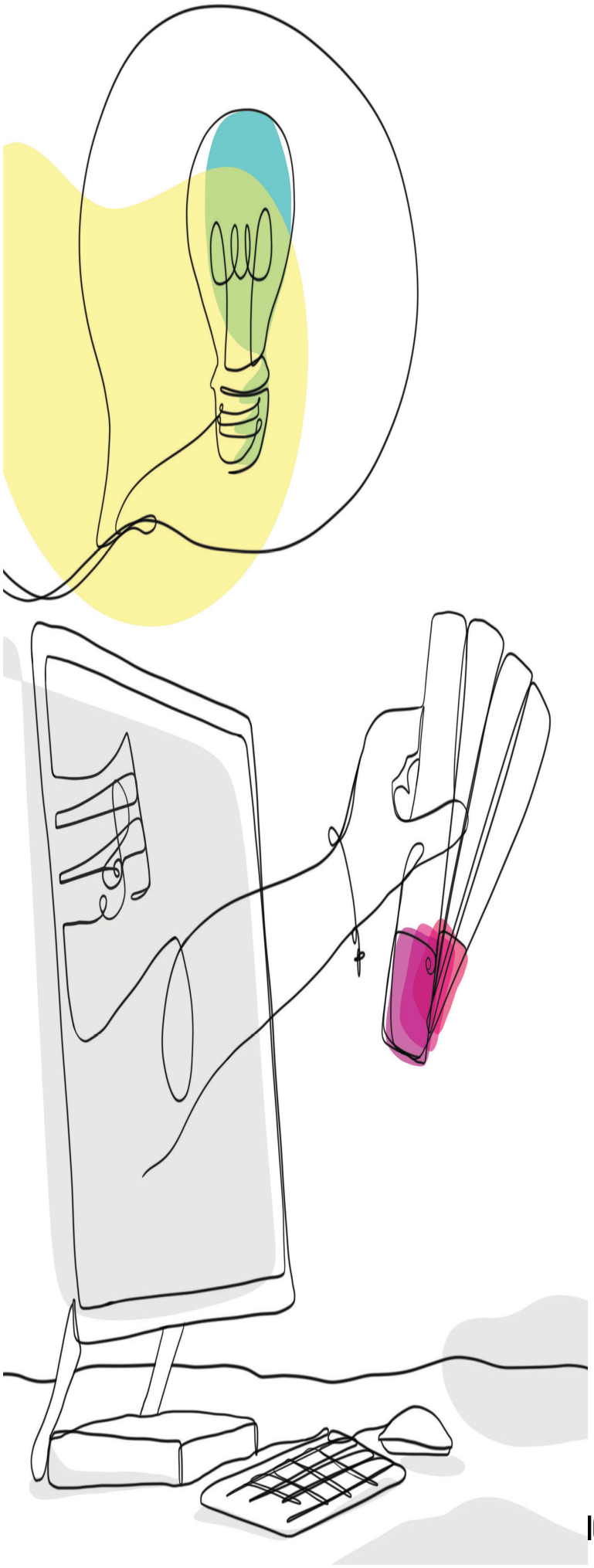
to think of a common advocacy strategy among diverse organizations, such as C&M Network and REPAM-CEAMA, among others.

From Christian social ethics, it is possible to deepen the reflection on investments and private property, from which tools can be provided that allow the churches to define ethical principles for discernment and decision making regarding investments. Our institutions could promote and facilitate both reflection and ethical decision-making through tools of analysis that are sensitive, symbolic, relevant, and practical. For example, reconstructing, visualizing, and disseminating the connection between financial investments and mining is something that the C&M Network is advancing and is a powerful tool for informed decision-making in the context of the gold divestment campaign.

Another possible form of action is the building of bridges between communities affected by mining and communities of faith, through the delivery of liturgical elements such as chalices and patens, among others, highlighting their harmony with nature, with the invitation to avoid wounding the Earth, sacred territories, communities and the fabric of interconnected life, within the framework of relationships of ecological and social justice. This communication mediated by symbols, such as Francis' wooden staff, can promote an assertive and sensitive communication based on empathy and care between the faith communities of the global North and the communities of the global South affected by mining.

The demand for a new and contextualized Church that, in this time, is expressed and embodied in the care of the impoverished and of the Common Home, in the care of the wounded and assaulted Mother, resonates with the Pact of the Catacombs and from the peripheries. This call illuminates the construction and practice of solidarity, the ethics of care for life ad intra of the communities of faith, and the communities in the sacred territories affected by mining extractivism. This call confronts the fundamentalist positions that promote the ambition and accumulation of wealth, from the logic of a God infinite in resources, by highlighting the contradictions of the accumulative model with the sustainability of life and with ecological and social justice, from the logic of the God of abundant life for all.

Now, rather than choosing the strategy of external criticism or pointing fingers at others, the community dialogue reaffirmed the importance of beginning with the gesture of confession and self-responsibility, in the key of ecological conversion. This path - which is not a short one - requires conscious and committed efforts from our community experience of faith: to accept the decolonial keys of reflection and action; to welcome the call to the biocentric turn that beats in ecological conversion; to remain vigilant in the face of colonial theories, practices, and values that have



served as the basis for the construction of experiences of Church and believers whom the following of Jesus does not call to deconstruction to be born again of water and the Spirit, in harmony with diverse life and its possible worlds.

Some of the initiatives that we can heart in the community, without the intention or possibility of collecting and exhausting the opportunities opened from the exchange, are presented below as the germinal seed of our days of reflection. The dialogues provided enriching reading keys that leave us with a diverse set of possible actions that we can evaluate, adjust and program, depending on urgencies and priorities, strategic opportunities, network articulation, and available resources, among other factors. Thus, the possibilities presented below are presented as creative notes for the generation or strengthening of actions and feed the resonance of creative waves from this initial chord.

Purpose	Initiatives / Programs
Promote and practice the ecological citizenship of churches, faith communities, and believers in the face of mining extractivism.	Program for information and critical reading of CSR programs' relationship with the mining sector's investment funds. Accompaniment program for the transformation of decision-making processes in churches and faith communities.
Promote and practice regenerative actions with the participation of the Global South's ancestral, native, Afro-descendant, and peasant communities, committed to the search for alternatives for life and ecological justice.	GRITO Program for Ecological Conversion, care for the Common Home, and ecological and social justice. "(...) We can overcome, opt again for good and regenerate ourselves, beyond all the mental and social conditioning imposed on us". (LS 205)
Promote and practice the decolonization of celebration and liturgy through solidarity and exchange.	Liturgies for Hope, Comfort, and Healing Program. "Educate, awaken, embrace, and heal."
Promote and practice actions in NETWORK from a decolonial horizon.	Among equals: without domination, subordinates, or hierarchies.

Ecological, social, and rights impacts and effects.
The economy of dispossession: an extractive economic model based on patriarchal, racist, and sexist hierarchical relations.
Corruption dynamics and networks,
Post-extractive transitions.
To spread ethical-theological and prophetic perspectives.
Build a toolbox for ethical decision-making.
Influence the formation programs of ministers, clergy, and religious to link these economic issues for life and ethical decisions.

Visibility and reporting of cases of affected communities and territories.

We do not keep silent about ecological sins: denouncing and fraternal appeal in cases involving ecclesial actors. The conversion of Zacchaeus and reparation (Luke 19:8).

Annual action for conscientious objection to investment in gold mining and extractivist projects.

Deep and committed listening to communities, myths, and sacred places.

Ecological connection: volunteering in the field or remotely.

Connecting liturgy, love and justice: support for the production of liturgical elements for communities affected by mining extractivism.

Stories of dignity and inculturation of liturgy in contexts affected by mining extractivism.

Bank of participatory liturgical proposals to celebrate life, dignity, solidarity, the evangelical preferential option for the poor, and ecological conversion.

Interreligious and intercultural exchange of liturgies and practices for the Common Home and life care.

Decolonial and liberating theologies and ecofeminisms.

Exchange meetings in the light of 'Laudato Si' and the ACCRA Confession

For a biocentric turn: we are all "earth" (LS 2), and each being has value in itself (LS 140).

How? Some ideas...

These contents have been developed by organizations, research groups, and academics with whom it is possible to generate agreements to use information, produce specific content, and joint dissemination of training actions.

A common strategy among diverse organizations, such as C&M Network and REPAM-CEAMA, among others

Georeferencing for access through Web pages. Video library, and own and networked documentary series.

Identification of cases and accompaniment for reparation actions.

Annual Avaaz-type campaign: mass mailings and letters and lobbying with investment funds and decision-makers..

Documentary series and meetings with wise men and women, elders of affected or at-risk communities.

Volunteer initiative to accompany cases with a willingness to learn.

Seek funding for these educational and entrepreneurship projects, and ensure the strategic and symbolic delivery of liturgical elements to churches.

Documentary series and liturgical guides for formation and advocacy.

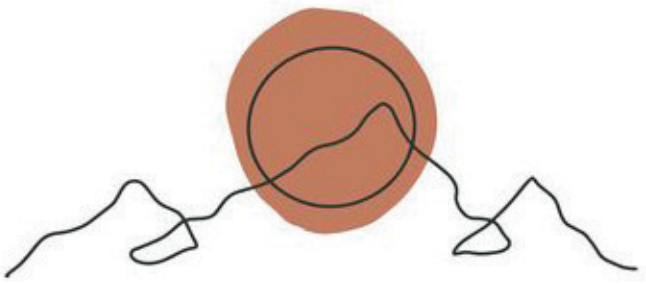
Structuring an online bank in the cloud.

Interreligious and intercultural meeting

Contribute to dialogue, meetings, and diffusion in alliance with strategic actors.

Ecumenical meetings.

Reflection meeting to address this pending issue.



Let's continue to heart together, in a network...

Other purposes..
Other possible initiatives...
Other actions and contents...
Other ways and means...

Mining Divestment Campaign

Urgent call to religious entities to withdraw their economic investments from mining projects that destroy the environment and affect the rights of communities and nature. It also seeks to raise awareness of the negative impacts of mining that violate rights and endangers life. This proposal emerged from the Synod for the Amazon and aimed to seek economic alternatives that are more sustainable and friendly to nature.
The Mining Divestment Campaign, born from listening to the cries of Mother Earth and the cries of the people affected by mining, is a call to the churches to rethink their financial practices to move their finances away from banks and funds that support the extractive industry. It urges us to have ethical coherence in defense of life, communities, and the Common House.
Join this campaign promoted by the Churches and Mining Network and several congregations and religious entities. www.divestinmining.org

Gold and Church Project

Campaign promoted by the Katholische Jungschar Cooperation Agency (DKA, Austria). In the Catholic Church, gold is used in many ways: for the ornamentation of churches, as a store of value, for religious symbols, and particularly in the liturgy, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. Today, we are no longer talking about large quantities of gold. But, the church can intercede on behalf of people affected by gold mining in the south if it questions its own handling of gold and takes seriously the “ecological conversion” that Pope Francis calls for (LS216-221). This includes overcoming the colonial mentality (QA17).
DKA proposes that fraternal organizations in Latin America, Asia, and Africa - mainly in the regions affected by gold mining - can fight for their rights, social justice, human rights, and environmental conservation. In addition, together with other organizations, DKA advocates for legislation (e.g. within the EU and the UN) that obliges companies to take responsibility for their supply chains, respecting human rights and environmental standards. With the Gold and Church Project, we want to reflect on the supply codes of the dioceses within the Catholic Church in Austria to raise the awareness of the faithful regarding the use of gold. https://www.dka.at/gold

Dreikönigsaktion
Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar

ISBN: 978-958-625-858-6
9 789586 258586