

## **TABOR/HUAROCHIRI DECLARATION**

### **FROM AND FOR A SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE OF THE CONTINENT**

We, those who sign this document, members of the Christian and Indigenous spiritualities and committed to a greater understanding and cooperation among both in the service of our peoples and of humanity, gathered in a spiritual retreat/encounter in the Tabor House (Santa Eulalia), in Huarochiri, Peru, from June 24 to 27, 2015; of various occupations - formal or informal – all in favor of healing and spiritual, social and environmental well-being of our communities; coming from the most diverse places of our continent; and participating at the aforementioned meeting on a personal basis - without representing any institutions or groups but merely as human beings, sons and daughters of the same Creator, Great Spirit or Father-Mother God - and therefore brothers under His Will, which commits us to the corresponding common action, we declare:

#### **After certifying:**

- The distressing problem of physical and spiritual diseases in the personal and social areas, that our peoples face; the increasingly notorious violence in all its manifestations - both in daily life and in social and political conflict - and the serious deterioration of the natural environmental condition of our territories, as well as the Planet;
- That in the end it is a considerable crisis of civilization, global and structural, that places the whole world in a situation of near collapse and risk of extinction, and whose most notorious lack is ethical direction or superior spiritual values that can show the way, give encouragement and provide wise answers, to find appropriate and effective solutions in favor of the imperative change of background required - in favor of Life and the Common Good - and as a response to the desire to live well and correctly that involves us as human beings.
- That for prophetic and historical reasons The Creator has arranged that Indigenous and Christian are the spiritualities that have been the prevailing or most emblematic in our continent - which gives them a

role of special responsibility that is unavoidable to contribute to the before mentioned - and without excluding other relevant spiritualities.

- That the above will only be possible - beyond mere debates or intellectual approaches - in a meeting of heart and consciousness; under the sign of the spiritual that unites and summons all of us; from a requirement of good faith and goodwill; with a sense of mutual enrichment and reciprocal revelation; with the joy of the joint celebration of Life (as all the rituals, prayers and deliberations shared in our meeting have demonstrated); and with an enthusiastic dedication that offers a vigorous testimony - in a fraternal and sincere commitment to Justice and Truth - for there can never be Peace without both.
- That, in addition, the very important and transcendent encyclical of Pope Francis, "*Laudato Si*", on Spiritual and Social Integral Ecology, has come to vindicate precisely the strong pioneering efforts and sacrifices of many indigenous people, environmentalists, religious and other activists, including among them some martyrs; who for many years have championed this theme; as well as to give them a great recognition and to expand the scope of this theme.
- That, in spite of how short the efforts of the United Nations to promote a new planetary framework to face the serious environmental crisis that the world is living have remained so far - which, as indicated above, goes far beyond a mere climate crisis - such a space also represents another field of opportunity that we must take advantage of in order to vigorously advocate for the environmental cause - within the broader perspective of a spiritual-based change of civilization.

We declare:

1. That we reject that, with the excuse of "the needs of the economic crisis", a disguised and unbridled greed and unscrupulousness of economic and political powers is promoted, that consider our continent as a mere "box of natural resources" -to be exploited as quickly as possible, without any environmental and social consideration, and for the benefit of a few, at the expense of many. When actually, it's a space full of an invaluable diversity and noble life; essential for the Planet and necessary for the survival of all humanity and other beings that inhabit it: including forests, soils, waters and other elements of The Creation - in the most complex and delicate inter-relations between them. All this,

in a generous and prodigious legacy from The Creator for the vital Common Good - today severely deranged or threatened by the mere and irresponsible short-term mentality of exploitation without measure.

2. That the Nature or Creation of which we are part deserves respect and care in all its expressions: not only in its biological aspects but also in the vital spiritual dimension. Being Nature a manifestation and sensitive revelation of the order and hierarchy established by The Creator, inhabited by visible and invisible living beings; including "particularly sacred places" offering a reading of the meaning of Life - in a spiritual geography specially deciphered by indigenous cultures, coinciding with the most pristine natural sanctuaries, and otherwise a source of healing and provision for the different kingdoms of Life in the physical, psychic, emotional and spiritual domains. For both spiritualities, although the sacred is everywhere, it is found more naturally in places where the original Creation still survives prodigiously or where human beings have left a great burden of prayer and veneration for the divine, for which said "especially sacred places" of the indigenous peoples should enjoy as much respect and protection as a Christian temple.
3. That it is necessary in particular, for a just moral restoration, to assume the respective spiritual reparation for the great damage that has been inflicted on the indigenous peoples of our continent - by not acknowledging for so long the value and relevance of their genuine and legitimate spirituality – which is at the same time vital basis of their identity and culture. In the same way it is necessary to assume the great value of genuine Christian spirituality and its contributions and to insist on the search for the common good, by mutually reinforcing natural affinities of both spiritualities. This process implies the mutual and courageous recognition of both the legitimate rights and the duties of both.
4. That it is also necessary to assume and recognize, in a constructive self-criticism, and apart from the obvious external violation, the degeneration of both spiritualities, their specific shadows and their distance from their genuine sources of origin. Humble and brave self-criticism that allows to enforce the treasure of wisdom and

relevance that The Creator has given them both; and with the mission, without false modesty and without vanity, of being clear ethical guides for our peoples - before their serious problems and challenges - in a common and unavoidable responsibility.

5. That based on the foregoing and the urgent need for healing of individuals, families, communities and of Nature itself, it is essential as a prerequisite that the process of purification and healing begin for ourselves and the spiritualities that we claim. For this, both spiritualities have numerous tools of healing, often underestimated and neglected, and abundant sources of provision or blessing -reaching from the biological to the highest and inspired spiritual level.
6. That therefore it is necessary that both spiritualities strengthen the return to their powerful and authentic sources of origin, and also renew themselves in the necessary aspects, including a more "democratic" access to their mystical dimensions, facing the new times and circumstances, considering that the insensitive, extremist or elitist segments in both often distort them seriously, hindering the necessary understanding and mutual respect, as well as making them the object of undifferentiated or illegitimate and counterproductive syncretism. By avoiding these pitfalls, it will be possible to better contribute to the remediation work of today's pressing needs of our peoples and of The Creation - as well as the sacred and wise designs of it - in the face of respect and preservation of Dignity and Life.
7. That we are extremely concerned about the urgent need to work for our youth in order to accompany or guide them in favor of their own well-being, maturation and healing: both to help them relate in a different way to Nature, and to reconnect with the dimension of sacred. We perceive a serious problem of identity in young people both in the Western Christian world and in the world of native peoples. Many young people in the city are over-technologized, disconnected from Nature and their bodies; and in the native peoples, many look increasingly uprooted and with a desire to migrate to the western world, in an identity crisis with regard to their culture of origin. Both this desacralization and this loss of identity in the face of the disappearance of clear ethical

references lead to a life without flavor, without intensity, without a spirit of joyful adventure or enthusiasm. All this generates a mistaken compensatory search for the meaning of life through misguided practices - transgressive, dangerous - and even lethal, self-initiation such as drug use, improvisation and ritual manipulation, or different ways of inducing extreme and violent experiences. We are called to be interpreters of the pressing needs of responsible guidance and accompaniment for young people.

8. That it is necessary to urgently encourage spaces for dialogue and joint action initiatives, which must be inclusive, between both spiritualities - and others that want to join - in order to all make concrete contributions in the field of ethical and spiritual guidance; and develop remediation strategies on specific key issues such as healing, the establishment of cultures of peace and the safeguarding and protection of the vital Natural Order - topics widely and in detail discussed in our deliberations.

In view of the above mentioned, we propose the following "Action Plan", to be disseminated or detailed in a more exhaustive way by all - and according to the circumstances of each one and their respective communities:

### 1. Regarding Dissemination and Communication

Broadly disseminate the "Spirit of Tabor/Huaro-chiri Declaration" as orienting testimony; with all the wealth of what has been lived and achieved in this Meeting-Retreat in order to promote its national or regional replication, in view of its broader and more universal execution and future implementation, and considering that the aforementioned meeting is just the beginning of a process of many more manifestations that, with new contributions, have to be staged throughout our continent.

Therefore, being everything lived and deliberated in our meeting something difficult to encapsulate through the mere written text, it was also agreed to develop an audiovisual presentation as a complement to the written record.

And also the following measures:

- i) make available an appropriate "report and summary or more detailed summary record" of the main deliberations and agreements, as well as the auspicious and productive "methodology" followed in the Meeting;

ii) write a subsequent "publication of individual written contributions" on the part of the attendees;

iii) open some communicational space on the web (a blog, a web page, social networks - or all of them);

iv) invite interested persons to join this initiative and disseminate it among social groups, NGOs, episcopal conferences, churches, youth movements, associations, indigenous confederations, etc;

v) invite groups already very active in the discernment of "Indian theology, to incorporate more qualified experts in the dynamics of indigenous peoples, not only from a "pastoral" point of view but also from fields such as the one of healing, the defense of the environment, cultures of peace, art, etc., in a more open "one-to-one dialogue", in order to clarify together a more profitable and respectful mutual enrichment.

## 2. Regarding Healing

Both spiritualities can and must make use of their great healing wealth, especially regarding the emotional and mental fields, in which ultimately most diseases originate; and in which they preserve relevant therapeutic resources, including the field of "expurgation or spiritual liberation" where both have tools of long and proven effectiveness.

Indigenous spiritualities maintain a particularly lively and effective heritage, given their closer relationship with the generous natural world in its different dimensions, from which countless resources come, as well as their ancestral expertise in its proper therapeutic use. From physical healing to the most sophisticated exploration of consciousness, they offer a millenary experience, which risks of disappearing, and that deserves to be safeguarded and revalued in all its amplitude.

On the other hand, Christian spirituality should rescue more its dimension of incarnation in the healing in "here and now" - in front of the emphasis on a sometimes too abstract "salvation in the future"; in order to claim or honor

more the primitive and prodigious "Christian healing ministry" so clear in the teachings of Jesus; including the sacraments, fasting, prayer and procedures of spiritual liberation so that the Christian source becomes more relevant not only as regards the remediation of "the evils of the soul and spirit" but also "those of the body". The responsible re-appropriation of the dimension of the body in con-celebration through dance, music, and others, as well as the surviving manifestations of popular religiosity and fervor, often despised, become imperatives today.

In such a context, it is necessary to educate our communities and populations much more to avoid falling into the illusion of "healing panaceas", discarding the sectarian mentality, preventing the commercialization of health -as it is often encouraged in super-specialized modern medicine. As well as preventing the great distortion of the very commercialization of spiritualities as new products in the great and widespread "modern market".

Both spiritualities should also encourage the care of the vital healing and preventive aspects of health -in the sense of conceiving it as a whole healthy lifestyle; including proper purification and rest habits, the use of non-toxic remedies (preferably natural and without adverse side effects), an appropriate diet (this one today very degenerated - especially as regards the so-called "modern industrial junk food", or excessive use of agrochemicals and the abuses of transgenic interventionism), the preservation and free access to water and air that we consume, and, finally - and always as the key issue - the cultivation and transmission of adequate ethical and spiritual values and feelings.

It is necessary to heal our family, community and nature disconnection. The modern way of life, its rationalist technological hyper-alignment, its addictive projection to the virtual, and the tendencies towards urban concentration, generate a loss of contact with the true essence, simplicity, direct human bonds, with the wisdom and source of regeneration that exist in the contact with Nature - as revealed by the instinctive name of Mother-Earth or Pachamama.

The homogenization and undifferentiation represent a common adversary of both spiritualities. However, within the phenomenon of globalization we

consider that modern technology can be incorporated to relearn how to create and raise life, and to promote a sustainable ecology, while at the same time recovering the wisdom and technology of native peoples, thus avoiding an overreaching inadequate adaptation to the western social model in its compulsively uniform, repressive, and inoperative modalities for Life and the Common Good.

The necessary healing of the Memory should not imply being prisoners of it or falling into an inconvenient over-victimization. For this it is recommended to recognize and resort to the potentiality of the rites and rituals of both spiritualities; in order to repair, forgive, heal wounds, restore and reconcile; those resources must be applied both individually and collectively.

In the same way, we need to heal the contemporary imbalance in the male-female relationship, or the masculine-feminine, for which it would be good to rescue the notion of a Creator not only as "Father" but also as "Father-Mother" -although we know that in the end it's about a straightness that is much more than that.

### 3. Regarding the promotion of Cultures of Peace

We must begin by stating clearly that violence does not only reside in physical abuse, but also in aggression "in thoughts, words and acts" - as both spiritualities say - and in protection or respect for the integrity of individuals, groups and all the living beings of Creation. About this, we can rescue the venerable and proven methods of peaceful resolution of conflicts present in both spiritualities, both the consensual deliberations of indigenous cultures and the reconciling processes of Christian culture.

In this, exemplary legacies such as the "Law of Peace" of the Iroquois confederation in today's USA are of interest, which in turn greatly influenced the founders of that country for the elaboration of its emblematic Declaration of Independence; the proposal of the Suma Kausay; the "Chief Seattle's Letter"; and legacies such as that of Martin Luther King and Mandela, in order to contribute to a just pacification of nations currently under explosive political conflicts of a cultural/racial nature; from a



Christian or indigenous perspective - and certainly by emphasizing more the "duties" than the "rights". From these models the need to build peace without an "over-emphasis" on "the memory of wounds" is affirmed; as Nelson Mandela pointed out and who, himself, for the reconstruction of South Africa, did not remain only in "the wounds or resentments of the past" but focused on "the possibilities and promises of the present" as a fresh starting point from which to give birth together to new opportunities to build the future.

Peace - a word whose translation does not exist in some indigenous languages - must be truly conceived as a permanent dynamic, in movement, and not a static situation that is the result and end of a process: it is the means and the way. It implies, therefore, constructively assuming conflicts, in order to emphasize common interests and the enriching "Unity in Diversity", resolving them through non-violent actions. In this way we must be alert against the current uniformizing and homogenizing tendencies - since true peace is built from the healthy recognition of differences in the perspective of "Unity and Complementarity" that are natural and common to us.

We want to emphasize that without inner peace, justice and divine approval, there can never be outer peace. Neither without a recognition of the indigenous territories, their freedom, the defense for the common interest of the free and responsible access to forests, soil, water and pure air; and the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples with their respective duties.

#### 4. Regarding the Protection of the Environment

We reviewed with great concern the very serious and pressing problems of deterioration faced by all the main natural environments of the continent, including the emblematic and vital Amazon, emporium for life and the balance not only of our continent but also of the entire planet.

This problem is presented as consequence of calamities as the devastating growth of all the extractive industries that are predatory of the environment (large and small mining, oil and gas extraction, timber exploitation and traffic, large dams, abuse of agro-chemicals, monocultures exterminators of biodiversity, penetration routes in delicate natural areas, large-scale

livestock activity, predatory action by mafias and paramilitary groups, production, processing and trafficking of drugs, etc.); and under "right" or "left" regimes alike. All this generates a growing encroachment and extinction of the valuable native cultures, which are guardians or wise beneficial owners for a sustainable development of biodiversity -as for example wisdoms such as the "use of standing forests" - and constitutes a loss for all Humanity and the Creation.

We therefore call for the constitution of a broad front of Christians and indigenous people to fight for the salvation of the natural environment; without which all life - including not only the human but all other creatures that we must see as well as our sisters with love and responsibility - is in danger! Part of which should be the establishment of an "alert and early communication network" in the Continent for the detection and timely prevention of the most critical environmental abuses.

We also call for the urgent increase of education and training for the formulation of a new lifestyle and civilization, of respect for the environment; in sustainability, fraternity and responsibility - based on a commitment to personal, community and social change; where the inhabitants of the countryside and of the risky dependent cities must end up shaking hands (since it is a concatenated problem).

We are summoned to be guardians and caretakers of The Creation and not its owners or exploiters – as in a mistaken, narrow and irresponsible human-centric vision - which must be replaced by a more holistic, cosmo-centric and responsible vision. So, we invite to exert a greater pressure on public policies, governments and companies or economic entrepreneurs; so that they assume a much greater responsibility and ethics consideration regarding the ecological issue -both in its environmental and social dimensions.

Under this perspective, all of us participants welcomed the important *Encyclical on Integral Ecology - including also the ethical-spiritual and social dimensions* - of Pope Francis. This great pronouncement, in addition to settling an old and important debt of Catholicism / Christianity toward the Theme, as well as vindicating the pioneering struggle of many years of environmentalists, indigenous and committed Christians, comes to give a

great encouragement to these struggles and greater amplitude to its universal consideration.

5. Regarding other possible actions, it is proposed to:

i. replicate retreats or meetings of unity and search for Indigenous / Christian convergence similar to ours, at the level of the countries or sub-regions of the continent;

ii. program, in contribution to the aforementioned causes, chains of joint prayer or even initiatives of purifying or solidarity fasts in an *ad hoc* or periodic way, at a continental level or in our places of origin;

iii. perform coordinated spiritual and religious acts among the assistants and their communities when situations of threat or risk to the integrity of these or of Nature appear;

iv. foresee the call for solidarity, dissemination and testimonial joint pilgrimages/walks, at continental, sub-regional or national level, for the sake of the aforementioned causes;

v. encourage reciprocal visits to renowned healing centers or "sacred places", led by qualified participants;

vi. strengthen at the interreligious or inter-spiritual level a theological reflection that seriously considers the problem of salvation and the revelation of God from a "Theology of Creation", natural theology or theology of Nature; of a fruitful review of the best language and ways of thinking in our communities; and the comparative study of biblical texts with texts, myths and oral traditions of native peoples;

vii. incorporate studies and scholars, regardless of their beliefs, and competent traditional and scientific wise men (e.g. in astrophysics, quantum physics, biological medicine, neurosciences, etc.) as a key to a better understanding / interpretation of observable phenomena in the practice of both spiritualities;

viii. encourage spaces for the reconnection of the sacred to youth through the rediscovery of Christian contemplative spiritual practices reconnected with the mystical tradition and the reactivation of traditional indigenous initiatory processes; In order to responsibly and qualitatively make them available to individuals and communities able to receive them;

We note and underline the constant and close interconnection between the three major themes (Healing, Cultures of Peace and Environment), highlighting in the end, as the most important of all, that there can be no healing if we do not repair our spirituality through a reconnection with a living sacredness and a spirituality in accordance with the Divine Will, that moves, transforms and gives back meaning to our lives.

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