



**LITURGY FOR THE DAY OF PRAYER
FROM THE MOVEMENT OF ANABAPTIST WOMEN DOING THEOLOGY
IN LATIN AMERICA
MAY 2016**

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FOR THIS CELEBRATION

- To unite in prayer with our sisters and brothers in Paraguay, Peru and Panama;
- To learn about the history of these countries, their struggles, crises and difficulties;
- To remember with gratitude to God their needs and petitions, strengths and hopes;
- To celebrate the liturgy as an act of love and unity with all of Latin America and the global network.

PREPARATIONS

- Announce the Day of Prayer for Paraguay, Peru and Panama at least a week before the celebration;
- Encourage the families of the community so that they begin to converse, look for information, and pray for these three countries, that all, men and women, can unite this year;
- Assign to each of three families or persons of the local community, one of these three countries, so they can bring to the celebration a news item, written piece, or information about a positive item or happening in each one of these countries;
- Print the needs (that have been previously sent) of each of the countries mentioned;
- Come prepared with the chorus "Dios es bueno/God is good", which was one of the choruses from Mennonite World Conference which encourages us as a global body of faith to profound gratitude;
- Prepare the space: for example, a candle, Bible, a book, an actual news item about the countries, flowers, photographs from the countries, a wiphala (or ribbons with the seven colors that the wiphala contains).

LITURGY

1. Opening

Welcome everyone to this act of love and unity remembering the petitions and thanksgiving for the countries that call us together in this year 2016. If it is possible, prepare a short video with scenes, music, art and culture from each of the countries: one or two minutes per country.



2. Music

- Songs of special significance for the local community's prayer times;
- Mention the Anabaptist denominations present in each of the three countries;
- Remember or learn the chorus: "DIOS HA SIDO BUENO/GOD HAS BEEN GOOD" and "EL DIOS DE GLORIA/THE GOD OF GLORY". Los cantamos en el Congreso Mundial Menonita con profundo sentimiento. Es fácil, afirma la bondad y nos conecta con el cuerpo global que somos.

“///DIOS HA SIDO BUENO///,
BUENO ES DIOS/GOD IS GOOD”.

3. Reading and reflection on the biblical text

¿Why do we share gifts?

BLIBLICAL REFLECTION: 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 13:13

First Corinthians 12 is a well known text because it utilizes the image of the human body to refer to the church, the community united to Christ. The main theme is that the gifts of each member of the body are used in benefit of the totality, the community, the global body. Paul plants the idea that the church is the body, with Christ as the head.

Because of the internal conflicts that relate to the spiritual gifts and leadership, Paul makes clear to the community of Corinth that these gifts belong to the Spirit and not to us. A special manifestation of the Spirit has been given to each one... these are not for certain people but for everyone. There are no hierarchies among the gifts; all of us need them, and all are for our mutual benefit, to share them. Nevertheless, Paul suggests at the end of chapter 13 that love, the best gift, is the one that needs to permeate all the others.

In our communities today, we find different kinds of gifts, enlarging the list in 1 Corinthians 12: conflict mediation, formation of women in leadership, cross-cultural missions, the arts, pastoral care, marriage counseling, instrumental music education, worship music, inter-denominational dialogue, Bible translation and distribution, interpretation, textile painting, work against family violence, education and work for peace, attention to children and adults with disabilities, masonry, and the list could continue. There is no lack of gifts in any place; we cannot find one person without gifts. This is the bond that unites us with all people: that which we have received, and the invitation to participate in God's purpose to share the incredible diversity of our gifts.

All of us have something to offer and to receive. We do not choose, but the gifts are distributed according to the Spirit's will, and for the good of the community. It doesn't matter which gift we have, but rather how we use and share them.

There are historical patterns that have divided the Church into those who need and those who give, which has affected the relationships among all. We have been divided in two, and this has created a profound sense of superiority and inferiority. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I don't need you."



For some, it makes us feel that we don't need anyone else for anything, and for others it is hard to believe that we can do absolutely anything without the initiative of others. It makes us think that using our gifts is an optional activity for which we receive credit from God; it makes others think that we don't have gifts worth sharing. It assigns great honor to certain gifts, such as material wealth, power and some particular professions, while it takes away honor and devalues such gifts as hospitality and certain skills apparently less elevated, and mistrusts others. In this and other ways, both hidden and obvious, our wrong concept of gifts and needs divide and threaten the church.

Once more, THE MOVEMENT OF ANABAPTIST WOMEN DOING THEOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA is calling us to celebrate the World Day of Prayer whose purpose is to remember that we are a global body and that we are members one to another. That we need each other mutually in the building up of the Kingdom, in other words that we are interdependent human beings. Because what happens in the global South will have repercussions in the global North; what happens in the East will affect the West, and vice versa.

For these reasons, by means of prayer we are uniting in one spirit in order to call together and invite the global church to share their gifts, be in solidarity, and listen to each other. The call is to come together with our gifts in order to serve the global community.

Exercise to be done in group, community, pastoral circle (choose most pertinent)

1. Make a list of the gifts or charisms that we believe our community or church has.
2. Compare it with the lists in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and 28-30. What happened with those which we do not have among ourselves? (Perhaps you will need to explain the meaning of some of the gifts.)
3. How are we developing and recognizing the gifts that we identify in our communities? How are we enabling them? Are we privileging some gifts above others?
4. If the problem of the community in Corinth is the multiplicity of gifts and discrimination ("If you aren't the hand, I don't need you."), then the problem in our churches would be the uniformity of gifts, and discrimination ("If you are of another social/racial/economic/sexual status, then I don't need you.).
5. Paul's solution: the variety of gifts, far from being a problem (even though used in disorderly fashion), is God's will. It's not a matter of trying to repress or discount the different gifts I've received, but rather to see the function of all the gifts in the building up of the church. It's also not a matter of discrediting our own gifts ("since I'm not a hand, I'm not worth anything."). Since these are God's gifts, no one is without a gift, and it would be ungracious not to use them, since they are given for this purpose.
6. Our solutions: What would be our solutions to the problems of our churches in #3? Would they be the same solutions as Paul offered?



NOTE: For the reflection on 1 Corinthians, these resources are especially helpful in Spanish: Mercedes García Bachmann: *Estudios Bíblicos* and Various articles from RIBLA 20, and in English *Sharing Gifts in the Global Family of Faith*. Pakisa Tshimika y Timothy C. Lind

Moment for candle lighting

A minute of meditation and conscious breathing. This is a time to offer a prayer for the global church which is light that cannot be hidden in the world, just as this candle symbolizes the light of Jesus. We are part of a global body of faith and from this perspective, we are grateful and intercede together in this Celebration of Love and Unity.

4. Moment for Petitions

Petitions are according to the needs which were sent from the various countries. We recommend that the written piece for each country be read aloud to bring these countries to attention before continuing with prayer. Several persons can be assigned beforehand to pray after the reading. Together as a church we intercede for justice, mercy and peace that are needed in all of our countries.

5. Moment of Thanksgiving

This year as a Women's Movement, we want to bring a bit of the story of these three beautiful countries and their people's dreams and successes along with the request to pray. It is as stated in the dialogue of the movie, "Embrace of the Serpent": only if we dream, we will be able to save ourselves from death.

Along with the biblical text that our dear sister Alix Lozano offers about the body and the gifts to be shared, we bring these three beloved countries, and their gifts expressed in the arts, the idiosyncrasies of their people, the natural beauty, and the recognition of the role of women in the development and transformation of their societies.

PARAGUAY

The residents: This is the generic term used for the women that sustained Paraguay during the Great War (1865-1870), including those called the "destined", the ones punished by the government of Mariscal López and accused of presumed treason. These are the ones who practically reconstructed the country after the catastrophe.

Adela Speratti: Obeying her vocation as teacher and faithful to the attributes of her renowned intelligence, she transferred to Concepción del Uruguay in 1882, to enter the Teachers Normal School in that city. In 1890 she was in Paraguay as the director of the first graduate school. She had great enthusiasm for the cause of popular instruction.



PERU

Micaela Bastidas (1745-1781), wife of Túpac Amaru II (José Gabriel Condorcanqui, 1738-1781) and his companion in the rebellion that he headed up in Peru. They were executed the same day, with the lesser known Tomasa Condemayta, captain of the battalion of women who won battles in the Spanish forces.

Micaela Bastidas Puyucagua was a valiente forerunner of Latinamerican Independence. She was the wife and counselor of Túpac Amaru II, and her activities were vitally important in the rebellion of Tinta.

Her example of courage and determination to defend her ideals of justice and liberty up to the point of her tragic and ruthless death at the hands of the Spanish converted her into a legend and symbol of the American fight against colonial oppression and exploitation.

PANAMA

Marta María Matamoros Figueroa (1909-2005) was a defender of the union rights of the working women of Panama, a political militant, and a dressmaker by profession. Within her struggle to improve the working conditions of the women laborers, the incorporation of the maternity jurisdiction for fourteen weeks for female workers and laborers in the first work code for Panama, is noteworthy.

Amelia Denis is known, in the history of Creole literature, as the first woman to write verse filled with melancholy and ingenuity, but with strong political and social criticism, such as “Al Cerro Ancón,” considered as a national song.

In the work “From tradition to public participation,” taken from the book *Women that changed our history*, her worth is vindicated not only as one of the great poets of the country, but as a woman with feeling and political vision.

Olga Sinclair was born in 1957 in Panama City. She participated for the first time in a collective exposition among professional painters at the early age of 14.

She began painting instruction with her father, artist Alfredo Sinclair, and went to the Academy of Applied Arts in Madrid Spain, in 1976. There she also did three years of classic lessons in art and design in the Arjona studio.

“the world of ideas is very complex; for this reason, for me to face a soft canvas is perhaps the most sublime moment of the creation; it is the moment in which the constructed idea is transformed into a pictorial reality, capable of transmitting all the emotive strength of its creator.”



IN THE ARTS:

“Art should be the basis of all forms of natural and ennobling education.” Plato, 427 AD.

We encourage you to look at each country through its art; this contains part of its spirituality and serves as a container that permits us to see the conditions and characteristics of each country that we are remembering on this World Day of Prayer.

PARAGUAY

Nestled in the heart of South America, Paraguay, little by little, has been opening the road toward tourist trade based on the great richness of its natural resources. Each department has a beautiful corner waiting to be discovered.

In crafts, Paraguayan filigree is one of the most ancient and beautiful artistic expressions created by humans. The filigree technique is used to unite extremely fine threads to create elaborate pieces of jewelry and goldsmithing which form arabesque designs, and others that appear like laces.

CALL TO PRAYER FOR:

- The women who suffer family, emotional, and psychological violence,
- The right to equal labor laws for women,
- Single women who raise their children alone, without state or private help.
- That women encounter their identity in Jesus Christ and be part of the change in Paraguay.
- That more brave women full of the Holy Spirit be raised up to minister to other women.

PERU

Peruvian art has acquired world fame thanks to the work of artists so disparate as Grimanesa Amorós and Marcos Zapata. Peruvian art builds on the Cupisnique culture. These cultures coming from the turn of the ninth century AC, work with gold and silver, and create ceramics.

The Inca civilization, under whose rule Peru was found in the XVI century, left an influence of great importance on Peruvian art. Relics from this era can be seen in such museums of Peru as the Arte of Lima, and Machu Picchu remains as the beautiful memory of the Inca Empire and the best known icon of Peru's architecture.

STRUGGLES

- **Religiosity.** In Peru there are some religious communities which are growing, but are more focused on fanaticisms and rules. These cause their peoples to be dedicated to religion and rules, but not to be living out the commandments



and teachings of Jesus. Saddest is that these are not only Catholic communities, but include many Protestant groups.

- **Sexual sin.** Peru is a country where there is much sexual immorality reflected in television and the press, making it seem normal.
- **Lack of opportunities.** The Peruvian government has centralized all its activity in the capital (Lima) causing the provinces to have very few opportunities to study and work, and consequently creating a growing delinquency.

MOTIVES FOR GRATITUDE

- The church in Iquitos grows daily. The Anabaptist proposal continues to be accepted with enthusiasm and commitment.
- The Anabaptist church in Peru has now begun all the steps to register the church legally. The name is: Christian Mennonite Church of Peru.
- One of the Anabaptist commitments that we see grow most is the importance of community. It has become consistently more than community; it is a great family of faith.
- We are concerned one for the other, there is friendship, when someone is sick we visit and encourage each other, we pray for one another and continually judge less and encourage each other more.
- Gratitude for the authorities of our country. Nevertheless, they are much influenced by corruption. We need honest politicians who do not allow themselves to be so influenced.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

- This week the women's worship service will begin in our faith community (Iquitos). This is a perfect time to begin to raise up women leaders in our congregation.
- In Peru the women are community workers and leaders, but are often mistreated and exploited by their husbands, especially among the poorest families. We pray to God for the Gospel message to come into these homes, and change men's way of thinking.
- The opinions of our women are very respected in our community. Nevertheless we pray that increasingly the men will value them more and that there will be equality.

PANAMA

Today Panama is known as a metropolis because of its high and modern buildings, but behind all this is a historic wealth that converts it into a city of unique contrasts.

Its name has various meanings, but the most popular is "abundance of fish or butterflies". One may not only see this city as one of the most important international banking centers that unites the Americas. Panama is a young republic dating from the colonial period, and since then its hegemony has been consolidated by the construction of the Panama Canal. But just as its name



indicates, the Republic of Panama holds a vast variety of natural wealth and ethnic, historic, and cultural versatility in each of its provinces.

We are of the Wounaan and Embera ethnicity; the Mennonite conference includes 14 congregations that are located in the Darien province and on the coast of Panama City. In the city there are four churches, along the coast three churches, and in the province of Darién, seven churches.

The focus of the United Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church of Panama is discipleship, leadership formation, ministries for the youth, children, and women, a faith ministry, and an emphasis on potable water.

PRAYER PETITIONS

- For the youth ministry: youth who greatly desire to know our Lord Jesus Christ are being raised up. Pray that the adults can support and accompany them in this walk without any limitation, that we know how to direct and orient in this challenge; pray for both youth and adults.
- For the women's ministry: house to house visits that are being carried out to share the good news, consolation, and children's discipleship. We've had difficult challenges; pray for the Lord to give us strength, the facility to express ourselves and share, that we be women of conviction and commitment, and above all that the love of God flows through us.
- There is hunger for the Word, but there are no messengers; pray for the Lord to send messengers.
- For the youth leader, Giovany Peña and his wife Aura Itucama, and the work team, that the Lord may guide them through the Holy Spirit.
- For pastor Ricardo Membache, president of the conference; missionaries Einer and Girleza in leadership training; pastor Hermes Barrigón of the Platanares Church.

MOTIVES FOR GRATITUDE

- For the Church at Río Hondo and Platanares; there was a complete falling away because of conflicts over land. Praise God that there has been a change of heart and the fire of the Lord is again taking hold. We praise God for them.
- For the potable water that come communities now have; they cannot stop praising God for this blessing received through the church.
- For the turning over of the collective land to our people; the government has not yet fulfilled their promise. That the Lord would touch the hearts of these institutions and that this can be completed.
- For the national authorities.
- For the institution of Security. There is a lot of delinquency, hitmen, many women assassinated – things which have not been seen in our country. For the president, Juan Carlos Varela, that he may know how to guide his ministers and carry out the programs in favor of those with greatest need.



GLOBAL NETWORK

This past July 2015 in Pennsylvania our first meeting of women on a global level was carried out, with the purpose of looking ahead for new ideas. All of us said “**Yes**” to initiate a process of walking together and to form a global network of Women doing Theology. This year we invite you to pray for the following motives.

- That each continent or region can organize and be added to this initiative, and thus have women who are committed to represent their groups and motivate more women.
- That the Holy Spirit direct our dreams without permitting distance, language or race to be a limitation.
- That this movement can find recognition and affirmation in MWC (Mennonite World Conference).

6. Closing

Just as we have great ethnic variety, beautiful landscapes, a variety of languages, natural riches, the power of our peoples, the church’s urgent liberating vocation in our countries, we also desire that life flow for our sister countries, where “**Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.**” (Psalm 85.10)

In closing, share a litany that strengthens the confidence and hope for transformation that each country desires.

We suggest using the wiphala as a symbol of unity, of appeal (reivindicación??) and memory together and along with our original indigenous communities. Both words, *wiphay* (which is a voice of triumph) and *laphaqi* (understood as the fluid sound of a flexible object in the wind) are from the Aymará language. Perhaps we could read these words and dedicate them for Paraguay, Peru and Panama: *For you, the voice of triumph flows like the wind, as the Spirit of God that blows like the wind.*

We encourage you to create your own litany for the closing of this Day of Prayer liturgy. We offer you, inspired by the wiphala, some meanings of the seven colors it contains. These can become part of the litany or psalm you might want to compose.

- **Red:** represents the Mother Earth and the expansion of the Andean people over the continent.
- **Orange:** represents the society and culture, and symbolizes education, health, medicine and formation.
- **Yellow:** represents energy and strength, the collectivist practice of humanity, solidarity.
- **White:** represents the development of science and technology, art and intellectual work. It is the representation of the time needed to carry out intellectual and harmonious progress.



- **Green:** represents the economy and Andean production, and symbolizes natural wealth.
- **Blue:** represents cosmic space and infinity. It is the expression of the astral systems and their natural effects on Earth.
- **Violet:** represents Andean politics and ideology. It symbolizes also philosophy and the harmonic power of the Andes.

In many places the wiphala is used as the symbol of resistance and demand in the struggle for the rights of the Native American peoples.

Surely this can be greatly enriched, but I offer this proposal with all of my love.

One explanation about the three “P”, Paraguay, Peru and Panama: every act of love requires a “three”: the beloved, the lovers, and the Love. And the Love is God. In this occasion, you, Paraguay, Peru, and Panama are our beloved, we are the lovers (who love you across the distance), and God is the Love of all times and all the nations, peoples, tribes and languages.

We ask of you, after you carry out this liturgy in May, to send your reviews and testimonies of your event to Ester Bornes to be placed on the blog. In this way we will all be enriched. **Email: esterbornes@hotmail.com**

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