

## Letter to the Communities

### And the Word became flesh and lived among us (John 1.14a)

The incarnation of God in God's son, Jesus Christ, is a clear message that this is the only world we are given to live our lives in wholeness, which includes physical, mental, social, psychological and spiritual health. However, the whole and holy life for which God has created us is not a reality for many people around the world.

Food and feeding have always been a very important question for the Christian faith. One of the most important sacraments of the communitarian life is the Holy Meal. In his ministry, Jesus put much effort to feed and have table fellowship with people, transforming a meal together in a path for forgiveness and salvation. Also, Jesus taught us how to pray for the daily bread, given by God as a blessing, which has fed us along history.

One of the most important human rights is access to food. However, the truth is that there are millions of people who are denied that right.

Hunger and food of low nutritional quality are a sad and common reality. That situation causes sorrow and resentment which in turn may lead to apathy or action.

A possible change in that scenario depends on the ability of churches and social movements and organizations to strongly articulate a common agenda. In order to reach that goal, they need to share information, reflect on what is at stake, and strengthen cooperation networks. Thus, starting from their own experiences, the Support Center for Small Farmers (CAPA), the Mission Council among Indigenes (COMIN), the Lutheran Foundation of Diaconia (FLD), the EST Seminary, and the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, summoned a *Conference on Food Sovereignty and Security*.

Two key concepts were essential for the presented works:

**Food Security** is the guarantee given to people to access adequate food, in sufficient quantity and nutritionally safe (in regards to quality and variety) so that they can live a healthy and active life.

**Food Sovereignty** is the right that people, communities, and countries have to define their own agrarian, agricultural, working, fishing, and feeding policies, which should be ecologically, socially, economically, and culturally appropriate for their specific contexts.

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# Conference on Food Sovereignty and Food Security

## 16 to 18 November 2010 – São Leopoldo, RS, Brazil

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Food security is strictly connected to food sovereignty; therefore, it is necessary to link the first to the planning of actions and policies that are oriented by the other. In addition to securing the right to a nutritive and healthy feeding system, food sovereignty also guarantees the right of the people and traditional communities to guard and strengthen their culture and wisdom.

### **During the Conference we also learned that:**

From the indigenous communities comes the notion that food and feeding is part of the sacred realm of life. We learned that food nourishes both body and spirit, indivisible parts of the human being.

All forms of life, including plants and animals, have the right to food security.

Any discussion regarding food security and sovereignty should be connected to reflection on gender issues. Statistics reveal that it is the women, the children and the elderly who suffer the most with the absence of these assurances.

The guarantee of food security and sovereignty is connected to the access to means of production, which include land, access and sharing of knowledge, agrarian policies, and agricultural credit.

It is the participants' common understanding that during the last years many advances in the field of agroecology have been reached. Thus, we would like to encourage the communities to continue their struggles in that direction.

### **Taking into consideration the aforementioned observations, we invite the communities:**

- To support the initiatives of family agriculture and agroecology by purchasing and consuming food they produce.
- To adopt measures for ethical consumption. This could include avoiding products which are harmful to one's health, or that produce a lot of trash, or that are of low nutritional value.
- To take actions aimed at nutritional education, encouraging and strengthening habits of adequate and sufficient nutrition, agro-ecologically produced (that is organic and produced by family farming). By adequate food we mean the food that is free of agrochemicals and GMOs (genetically modified organisms).
- To make efforts to create spaces for fair trade between farmers and their organizations and the consumers, such as family agriculture fairs and consumer cooperatives.
- To understand and to respect the different cultural assumptions regarding feeding and nourishment.

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- To denounce violations of the human right to food, seeking help from prosecutors and public offices.
- To take part in discussions, in food Security advice councils, and in the creation of public policies that deal with the human right to adequate nourishment.
- To rediscover the value of table fellowships as a source for communion, sharing, solidarity, and reconciliation.
- To promote the rescue and the guarantee of biodiversity and native seeds as a way to ensure the life and the autonomy of communities. We reaffirm that natural forms of life do not need GMOs or agrochemicals in order to reach Security, sovereignty, and nutritional sufficiency.
- To suggest and demand public policies which will benefit and empower agroecology; acknowledging the social role of land in the production of food.
- To study and to commit to the IECLB's theme for 2011, "Peace in God's Creation" as a key to the continuous reflection around the issue of food security, sovereignty, and sufficiency. We also suggest that the theme "land" comes back to the discussion in 2012, as the theme of the year for the IECLB.

*The participants of the Conference on Sovereignty and Food Security  
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Translated by Mauro B. de Souza

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