



Charter of Principles of the World Forum on Theology and Liberation

In July 2007, the Organizing Committee of the World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL) endorsed the recommendation of the International Committee for the development of a Charter of Principles of the WFTL. The Permanent Secretary wrote a draft for subsequent revision and refinement by the Organizing Committee. The fruit of this process is the text below.

Fr. Luiz Carlos Susin
Executive Secretary

Permanent Secretariat of the WFTL
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1. The World Forum on Theology and Liberation (WFTL) is an ecumenical space, dialogical and plural, embracing differences. The WFTL establishes a relation between “theology” and “liberation” in bringing together the diverse theologies which refer to and/or influence the so-called Theology of Liberation. Accordingly, the WFTL opposes every totalitarian, exclusivistic, or reductionistic vision of the human being, of religious phenomena, of religious traditions, and of the representations of transcendence. The WFTL presupposes the coming together of persons who directly or indirectly do theology and religious studies, and are committed in various ways to actions for justice and peace through networks such as the World Social Forum (WSF). But WSF participation is not a prerequisite for participation in the WFTL. Rather, the prerequisite is respect for this Charter of Principles. The WFTL follows the methodological principle of promoting the free and open articulation of proposals among its participants, and assures avenues for their active participation in the WFTL and its organization.

2. Insofar as it involves events localized in time and space, the WFTL contributes to the global network of contextual theologies committed to liberation, the option for the poor, and the empowerment of all the excluded and the victims of the different kinds of hegemony in the world today.

3. The WFTL is the fruit of contact among theologies which have emerged in Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, Europe, and Oceania. Each WFTL event has been connected to the corresponding WSF event. Its slogan is “another world is possible;” and it assumes and reformulates the principles of the WSF. The WFTL brings together and links persons interested in theological mediations sensitive to the complexity and diversity of ethical, aesthetic, and spiritual experiences; persons committed to just alternatives for cultures and societies, genders, religions, ecological and planetary spiritualities.

4. Echoing the first article of the WSF Charter of Principles, the WFTL is defined as an open space of encounter in order to deepen reflection, the democratic debate of ideas, the formulation of proposals, the free interchange of experiences, and the mutual enrichment among contemporary theologies. These theologies are identified with practices of liberation, resistance, and transformation, opposing all kinds of structures which oppress and deny the fullness of life, justice, dignity.

5. A dialogical principle guides the debate, the interchange of experiences, the reflections and hermeneutics nurtured in the WFTL. These exchanges are critical and affirmative exercises of new theological readings epistemologically involved with liberation and the option for the poor. The different theologies--contextual, feminist, Afro-descendent, indigenous or aboriginal, ecumenical, and theologies of religions--affirm this. They are characterized by their commitment to the diversities of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, physical capacity, as well as by their historical-critical and creative methodologies, mediating multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary correlations.

6. The WFTL converges with the WSF and other alternative social and intellectual spaces and initiatives. It is not a parallel event to the WSF. Its plans and methodologies are developed in harmony with the WSF and with similar initiatives. The WFTL takes place immediately before or after the WSF, and is integrated in WSF programs though different forms of participation.

7. The WFTL, as a space of encounter, contributes to the formation of an ecological and planetary spirituality, strengthening the experience of meaning and utopian hope manifested in the determined search for alternatives in "other possible worlds," and going hand in hand with the social commitment for justice and dignity in transformative political action.

8. The WFTL, as a space of theological reflection on alternatives and possibilities in the world, examines contemporary socio-economic problems in the light of theological resources, and vice-versa. The WFTL stimulates knowledge and mutual recognition among the plurality of knowledges which collaborate and promote the capacity of non-violent resistance to the dehumanizing processes afflicting the world and to institutionalized violence. It strengthens initiatives and practices of liberation developing around the world today.¹

9. The WFTL, as a space of construction of a global network of contextual theologies, privileges dialogue among differences of gender, religion, ethnicity, culture, generations, and physical capacities. This is done with a view to encouraging the articulation of critical and creative correlations of these differences. The WFTL broadens theological sensibilities with the goal of understanding, interpreting and acting in the areas of citizenship, in political activities and processes promoting liberation, justice, and dignity.

10. The WFTL, as space of theological reflection with a perspective of liberation, stimulates the production of theological discourse which contributes to practices of social transformation. It is located in public space, with the goal of nurturing active subjects in the construction of a new world of solidarity.²

11. In each WFTL the forms of participation (delegations, individuals, percentages of persons according to regions of the world, etc.) and the modes of participation (round tables, prayer and cult, sharing of food, conferences, communications, etc.) are determined by the organisms of the WFTL, e.g., the Organizing Committee, the International Committee, and the Permanent Secretariat.

¹Cf. WSF Charter of Principles, paragraph 13.

²Cf. WSF Charter of Principles, paragraph 14.