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Creemos (I Believe)

1. Introduction

In a world torn open by violence and legitimated by extremists of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, we, women of faith, which to make a declaration of beliefs that prophetically challenge the manipulation of the sacred. We believe now is Kairos time, an urgent and holy moment, which is the opposite of colonized time where time itself is another market commodity. In declaring Kairos time we refuse to be caught in the cage of violence that ensnares present time and imagination. We reject state theology as espoused by our current US administration, and we challenge too, liberal theology which lacks the moral imagination to repudiate church and state's promotion and/or acceptance of violence as a solution to the global social, moral and ecological catastrophe we face. We are dreamers whose prophetic imagination believes another world is possible.

In Kairos, time is urgent and demands action. In the year 2005 when malnutrition amongst Iraqi children has doubled since the fall of Saddam Hussein, and where 100,000 Iraqis, many of them women and children, have been killed, we call upon all people of conscience to actively resist these destructive policies.

2. We believe in the God of Life and Peace.

"I set before you life and death. Choose Life." (Deut. 30)

We reject the Warrior God whose rise is always preceded by acceptance of violence as normative or necessary for national security. In the United States the Bush administration's architects of war have executed the Project of the New American Century (PNAC) whose stated purpose is to "ensure American global preeminence" by: 1) positioning permanent military bases in the Middle East; 2) utilizing preemptive warfare; 3) controlling "international commons" of cyberspace, as well as, strategic dominance of space; and, 4) increase defense spending to a minimum of 3.8 per cent of the gross domestic product. In the name of the God of Life, we reject this plan for world and space dominance through permanent war or threats of war.

3. We believe in the God of the Cosmos who calls us to a covenant with creation, all of which is holy. *We believe* that God's breath fills all creation and coalesces the energy that fuses green shoots, two and four footed creatures, stars and galaxies---all life. Kairos time imagines and actualizes Isaiah's vision.

*"The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
The desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing." (Is. 35: 1-2a)*

We reject the destruction of the earth through pollution, devastation of rain and arctic forests, through wars for geo-political and economic dominance of earth's resources, in particular, non-renewable energy sources such as oil. Building the beloved community is impossible on an earth whose fundamental systems are toxic.

4. We believe in Sophia, God's wisdom, who stands with the oppressed, the brutalized and the raped. We believe that a masculinist church, synagogue or mosque which suppresses women, suppresses God's wisdom.

*“Can a woman forget her nursing child,
Or show no compassion for the child of her womb?
Even these may forget,
Yet I will not forget you.” (Is. 49:15)*

We reject the patriarchal violence that rapes the earth and turns a blind eye to the rape and abuse of women, especially poor women, who are silenced and made invisible by denying them decision-making power. Of the 1.3 billion who live in poverty, 70 percent are women. Worldwide, women and girls are denied education, nutrition and welfare. In the United States, domestic violence is a primary precipitating factor which leads to homelessness.

5. We believe that God's sacred Spirit burns in the hearts of all people and that God's Great Spirit is revealed in the wisdom of all faith traditions. We believe that hope and compassion are always signs and symbols of God's presence in history. God's spirit is more, too: spirit is ordinary courage, hope and vivacity.

*“Create a clean heart in me, O God.
And put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
And do not take your holy Spirit away from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
And sustain me in a willing spirit” (Ps. 51:17)*

We reject a Jesus, who in the words of Cornell West, has been domesticated, tamed, commodified and bought; a Yahweh who annihilates; an Allah who is murderous. In the spirit of the Barman declaration made by churches in 1934 against the claims of the Nazi State, we, too, wish to declare ourselves over and against the manipulation of God for purposes of dominance and control. In the year of 2005, when almost half of the U.S. Congress is backed by the religious Right and 45 Senators of the 108th Congress received favorable ratings from Christian Right advocacy groups, we wish to declare ourselves against such accommodation to false gods and unequivocally for God's holy Spirit.

6. We believe in a God of Justice. We believe in economic systems that are equitable rather than systems of accumulation and profit that benefit the rich and exclude and punish the poor.

“This I require of you: that you do justice, love kindness and walk in God's way.” (Micah 6:8)

We reject theologies that sacralize hierarchies of power (class, gender, race, caste and ability) that destroy just relationships. We reject economic or ideological systems such as the current world economic order imposed by neoliberal capitalism that excludes and impoverishes major

populations of the developing world. We reject the false god of fatalism which accepts as destiny a daily death toll (from preventable illnesses, malnutrition or starvation) of 30,000 children in the impoverished nations.

7. We believe that God is Mystery and spiritually present in history in surprising and transformative ways. We believe that God accompanies us in the struggle for life even in the midst of cultures of death. The spirit of courage, generosity, joy and willingness to suffer for justice that we live into is the *mistica* that reveals the sacred. *Mistica* is a relational, intangible, deeply felt, inscrutable dimension of all liberation processes in which people struggle to build a world of justice and peace.

“The Spirit of God is upon me because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. God has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free to proclaim the year of God's favor.”
(Luke 4:18-20)

We reject theologies that distort or reduce the mystical to orthodoxies that exclude or condemn others because of their race, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, or beliefs. Mystery exceeds canons, laws and orthodoxies.

“Blessed are you who are poor for yours is the reign of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now or you will have your fill. Blessed are you who weep now for you will laugh.” (Luke 6:20-21)

8. Because of these beliefs we join with the 2004 confession of faith of the Reformed Churches in Africa and with Bishop Alvaro Ramazzini, president of the Secretariat of Central American and Panama Bishops, in denouncing the effects of neo-liberal global market policies which devastate the lives of the poor majorities in developing nations, and which savage their ecological systems.

We join, too, with the 850 members of the World Conference on Consecrated Life who declared that consecrated men and women should take initiatives that are "new, audacious and prophetic." We affirm with the U.S Leadership Conference of Women Religious that "God's call is written in the signs of our time...(and), inspired by the radical call of the Gospel, led by God's spirit, and companioned by one another, we embrace our time as holy...."

Finally, in the words of Cornell West, we "have decided, with everything at stake, to love our way through the darkness."