

At the convocation, each of the CCT families were invited to present an overview of what their traditions considered essential when addressing issues of life in the context of our religious, social, and cultural context. Speakers were not instructed by the organizers to address any particular area on matters of life. The outcome was very intriguing, giving the churches hope of what they can discuss and achieve together. As expected, the subject of abortion was highlighted. One would assume that this topic of abortion would be a very divisive one, but after listening to the different speakers, it was clear that the churches are not that far apart from each other.

Some churches emphasize the sanctity of the unborn, others emphasize the freedom of conscience and the dignity of women. All of the presentations on this topic clearly articulated the importance of respect for all life, from conception to death. Something we can celebrate is the fact that after many years of dialogue on issues of life pertaining the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed; all of the participant churches in CCT are in agreement about the right to life during all stages of our lives. This does not mean there are not essential differences in the churches approaches, but it reveals that there are possibilities for mutual understanding and agreement. The more contentious topic, one in which the traditions have a strong disagreement is human sexuality, including same-sex marriage.

The discussion on the “Unity Declaration on Poverty and Racism” was supposed to take place the second day, but from the very beginning, the issue of racism was integral in the discussion about life. The emphasis was so strong that most of the conversations during the convocation geared around this one issue. Dr. Barbara William-Skinner made a passionate articulation of the main points in the unity statement. Rev. Jim Wallis joined her in the Q&A time. Even though there was much agreement on the pervasiveness and the sinfulness of racism in our country, there are still some communions that struggle with their level of involvement in social and political action.

The bonds of love that Christian Churches Together has fostered for many years, was evident in this gathering. One surprising way in which we experienced this was by the spontaneous invitations of the family leaders to include members of different families to join in the leading of their respective worship times.

Everyone left the gathering with the hope that next year in Montgomery we will go deeper, and take bold steps towards repentance, conversion, and action regarding the sin of racism.