

Holistic Vision of the World Latin American Agenda 2012

The 2012 Latin American Agenda is happy to dedicate its pages to the indigenous Utopia of “**the Good Life,**” *Sumak Kawsay* in its Quechua expression, the most well-known throughout the Continent. It does not deal with a new theme precisely, but it is true that only in the past few years have indigenous peoples been able to bring out this wealth of wisdom into the light and offer it to the world as their contribution to the human adventure. Listening to this proposal, embracing it, publicizing it in our Continent and beyond, and meditating on it—this is what we want to do in this Agenda, adding ourselves to the collective reflection on *Sumak Kawsay* that is occurring inside and outside of the Continent.

The Good Life should be combined with a **Good Life Together**: we cannot live well if we cannot live well in harmony with each other, understanding this, effectively, in a holistic sense: harmonious coexistence between humans, with other species—in order to avoid “speciesism”—and with all of nature.

The *Good Life* is not the same as an isolated good life, nor is it the *better life* of accumulation or undefined progress pursued at all costs. The *Good Life* can lead, in large part, to degrowth, to “natural” life, to a sobriety so that all can *live well*. The most radical part of *Sumak Kawsay*, without making it explicit, presents us with the necessity and urgency of a “systemic change.” What is in play under the thematic of all this debate is the unviability of the current system and the necessity of pushing ourselves to find an alternative, beginning, without a doubt, by changing our heads.

This systemic change includes recognizing the erroneous paradigms which are the foundation on which we have constructed our entire structure, identifying the historic moment and the detours we have taken, changing our concepts and basic notions which are

causing damage, and urgently preventing a return to our poorly-chosen paths and the pernicious growth to which we still feel absurdly attached.

Well, at the same time as we listen to and deeply embrace this indigenous proposal of the *Good Life*, we also want to put it in dialogue with the Great Causes of Latin America, which we have always advocated. Do the Popular Cause, Indigenous Cause, Black Cause, Feminist Cause, and Ecological Cause fit within this *Good Life*? Are they still relevant? Are we still in an appropriate time for the Great Causes, or, like some have said, have we passed the time for utopias or historical projects?

We could say that, for all of us, the Great Utopias have configured the Latin American Utopia of these times. Our traditional Latin American *Good Life* has been made from the force and passion of the struggle for these Great Causes. These have marked the ways of action and of praxis to struggle for another possible world, that for Christians is a concretization of that other *Good Life* that Jesus announced and called *Mal-kuta Yahvéh*, the Reign of God. For these Great Causes we have expended ourselves generously; to them we have consecrated the greater part of our lives; and for them our martyrs and witnesses have sacrificed their very lives. Because of this, we want to add to this Agenda some of these personal testimonies.

We have structured the **content** of the Agenda in the following way:

First we try to take up, listen to, and embrace this indigenous proposal of *Sumak Kawsay* in **SEEING**. Several authors, including some of the leading intellectuals of the indigenous proposal, expose us to it and explain it.

Next—in **JUDGING**—different authors join their reflections to discern the proposal—its riches, its

possibilities, and possibly its limitations—in order to put them in dialogue with the Great Causes of Latin America that traditionally make concrete our struggle for the Latin American *Good Life*.

In **ACTING**, we bring together steps, suggestions, invitations, testimonies...that signal paths to take and opinions and conclusions about this dialogue with *Sumak Kawsay*.

Fraternally/Sororally,

José María VIGIL



Translator's Note: *English does not have entirely adequate translations for the Spanish “el Buen Vivir” or “el Buen Convivir,” central terms throughout this Agenda. The Spanish term “el Buen Vivir” can be translated as either “the Good Life” or “Living Well.” This “Good Life” of Sumak Kawsay can be distinguished from a solitary, individual pleasant life (una buena vida) that does not implicate a holistic understanding of our place in the mystery of the universe. “Convivir” could be translated as “to coexist,” but is better understood as “to live together,” or, even better, “to live together in harmony.”*

Pedagogical Use of the Agenda

In addition to personal use, this Agenda is designed to be a pedagogical instrument for communicators, public educators, pastoral agents, group leaders, and activists...

The texts are always brief and agile, presented under the pedagogical concept of one page, formatted such that they can be directly photocopied and distributed as “work material” in schools, group meetings, adult literacy programs, or on literature tables. They can also be published in the bulletins of organizations or in local magazines.

The format of the texts is dictated by an “economic” criterion which possibly sacrifices aesthetics in the form of white spaces and illustrations in favor of a greater volume of message. This also allows us to keep a low price so the Agenda is more accessible.

Ecumenicism

This agenda is dictated by a “total ecumenicism,” not a “remainder ecumenicism.” Because of this, we do not eliminate what is only Catholic or only Protestant, but we

unite the two. Thus, in the list of the Saints, the Protestant and Catholic commemorations have both been included. When they do not coincide, the Protestant commemoration is in cursive. For example, the Apostle Peter is celebrated by the Catholic Church on February 22 (“the Chair of Peter”), and for the Protestant Churches on January 18 (“the Confession of Peter”); the differences can be distinguished typographically.

Kindly, the Lutheran Bishop Kent Mahler, in an earlier version of the Agenda, presented us with the “Protestant Saints.”

The Agenda is aconfessional, and, above all, “macroecumenical.” The world of common references, beliefs, values, and utopias among peoples and men and women of good will—which Christians call “the Reign”—is shared by all who are partners in this humble, serving, brotherly, and sisterly search.

A Non-Profit Work

In many countries, this Agenda is edited by popular and non-profit organizations that use the money received from the sale of the agenda

to support their work for popular service and solidarity. These centers ensure the non-profit character of each edition.

In all cases, the Latin American Agenda, in its central coordination, is also a non-profit initiative. It was born and developed without help from any agency. The money generated by the Agenda, after adequately compensating the authors who write in its pages, is dedicated to works of popular alternative communication and international solidarity.

Servicios Koinonia, permanently maintained, constantly improved, and freely accessible around the world, the “Tiempo Axial” Collection, and some of the prizes financed by the Agenda are the most well-known.

A Collective Agenda

This is a collective work. Because of this, it has gotten to where it is today. We continue to gladly receive suggestions, materials, documents...

In this way, it will continue being a “collective work, a community patrimony, an annual anthology of the memory and hope of our spiritual Continent.”