

Bills and Overtures Committee- Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area

Reasons to support the motion to add the Belhar Confession to the *Book of Confessions*:

1. *It is consistent with our understanding of Reformed theology.*

It begins with a brief Trinitarian formula and affirms our belief in one holy universal (catholic) Christian church, and the communion of saints “called from the entire human family.” (Belhar 11.2)

“It reflects major themes of the Reformed tradition: its deep biblical roots, its high Christology and Trinitarian theology, its emphasis on the sovereignty of God over all creation, its commitment to seek the visible unity of the church as the body of Christ in whom the walls of hostility are broken down, its call for justice for all o humanity, its conviction that in our common baptism in the one Lord and one faith all have been empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry of reconciliation.” SCBC (*Special Committee on the Belhar Confession*)

2. *It connects us in very tangible and practical ways to our brothers and sisters on other continents, specifically those in the global south where we have not always been actively engaged with other Reformed Christians.*

Is it time to make our connection with the global church more explicit?

Richard Weis’s video presentation

“At present, The Book of Confessions represents well our historical connection with European theology and our own confessing on the American scene. But it lacks any witness to our profoundly significant theological bonds with churches on other continents.” SCBC

“It would be a confession that has as its origin a faith community from below the equator, and as such would be the first in The Book of Confessions, all the others of which are European in origin.” *Association of Stated Clerks statement*

“Eighty-five million Reformed Christians live in the world today; 80 percent of them live in the global South. Through this first step, we will be able to hear all these voices and engage in rich theological discourse. This is the good part of globalization.” *Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk PC(USA)*

3. *It challenges us once again to struggle with both explicit and implicit racism in our society and to stand with those who are oppressed and who suffer because of it.*

“Our church is preoccupied with questions of justice, certainly including racial justice. . . . We identify profoundly with the struggle in South Africa to defeat apartheid at least partly because we see in that struggle our own story.” SCBC

We (the church) are still divided by race, class and culture. It undermines our witness. Are there circumstances similar to those that preceded the writing of the Belhar Confession that pose a threat to our integrity?

4. *We believe that as the church we are called to Christ's work of reconciliation by standing with those who are victims of injustice.*

“Again, the Confession of Belhar both reassures and challenges our church. It reassures us that God is active in bringing justice and true peace to the world, and that when we stand with the oppressed, the poor, the orphans and widows, the stranger, and the prisoner, we stand with God. The confession challenges us to take that stand with God.”

SCBC

This is just for information, and has been gathered from various sources on the Bills and Overtures Committee page by a member of the Bills and Overtures Committee.