

11 June 2020  
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

To all our Mayan brothers and sisters:

It is with the greatest shock, disbelief, sadness and indeed anguish, that we learn of the brutal and most horrific murder of Tat Domingo Choc Che. Under no circumstances whatsoever is murder anything other than a vile act.

Learning of this devastating news, first and foremost, we wish to extend our sincere sympathy and love to all his remaining family, his friends, and indeed the whole community and society of which he was a member.

Secondly, we repudiate and condemn this. Further, we stand in solidarity against all acts of repression, aggression, violence, or dispossession. Indeed, we stand against all forms of racism, whether specific or systemic, overt or hidden from the public eye.

Furthermore, as Christians, a community of which we are a part through our own personal beliefs, we regard everyone everywhere *regardless of beliefs or worldviews* as having been made in God's image and loved by God. (For our Christian brothers and sisters who may read this letter, please also join with us; and know that Tat Domingo was himself, like you, a child of God *and thus of infinite worth.*) Consequently, we denounce this most terrible act as an affront not only to us but to the God we worship.

There was absolutely no 'Christian-ness' whatsoever (i.e., Christ-likeness) in the acts and attitudes that were associated with his murder. Sadly, so-called Christendom has demonstrated a terrible history with genocides of indigenous peoples around the world. This has to stop. Jesus never burned anyone at the stake, and would never countenance the murder of anyone for the sake of the gospel, the Good News.

In the Bible we read, "*If anyone says 'I love God' and yet hates his brother or sister, he is a liar.*" (1 John 4:20)

We are all brothers and sisters. You are our brothers and sisters, even though we live on the other side of the planet.

In regard to sectarianism and fanaticism... it is not any religious act that makes someone a Christian; we can only come to recognize, appreciate, and humbly respond to what God has already done. Whatever the stated motivations, the people who took 'judgement' into their own hands did not act, in any way, from Christian beliefs or paradigms; their actions and any beliefs that led to them are *not* Christian!

Regarding transformation... only love can transform people's heart, not force or violence. Love is *always* others-centred. "*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

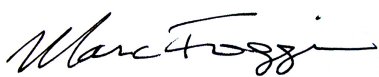
This is the greatest Christian command: to love God with all our heart, because He first loved us. And second to this, we are to love our neighbour as ourselves. But who is my neighbour? Not only those like me, but also those who are very different from me and believe differently from me. Even my enemy, real or perceived. Everyone.

Therefore, as you have written in your letter (from which we learned of Tat Domingo), we as Christians have an unambiguous responsibility to stand up, to speak, and to help moderate and, where necessary, to modify the forces at play within the so-called Christian milieu, out of which this atrocity emerged. We hereby stand up and speak. And we maintain, too, that just as God's love is for *all people* (and actually, for *all creation*, the entire cosmos), we also must live our lives in ways that contribute *to the common good*. A proper theology must be regained.

In short, we mourn with those who mourn, we condemn this most horrific murder, and we implore anyone who identifies as a Christian to revisit their understanding of God, i.e. their theology, to ensure that they in fact live in love, in others-centred ways and in this way live in the likeness of Christ. This applies not only to Christians in Guatemala, but everywhere – wherever there is discrimination, racism, violence.

All the other Christians who have signed below also stand with us – in unconditional solidarity with you. Together we denounce the despicable act for what it is: a violation of human dignity and every basic principle of human rights. We unite to demand justice, and commit to working together to eradicate discrimination, racism and xenophobia against indigenous peoples.

Your brother and sister,



Dr J Marc Foggin  
Director, Plateau Perspectives



Dr Marion E. Torrance-Foggin  
Programme Director, Community Development

### **Standing in agreement and solidarity:**

**Plateau Perspectives trustees and directors** who are personally joining with us at this time, with condolences and in solidarity:

**Barry Adams • Judi Cameron • Peter Foggin • Bill Kent  
Ken Marr • Charles Warren • Walter Willms**

**Other friends and colleagues** who also join with us at this time:

**Prof. Douglas Campbell** (Professor of New Testament, Duke Divinity School) • **Randall Gwin** (Director, Araketke-Bereket, Kyrgyz Republic) • **Sir Brian Heap** CBE FRS (Distinguished Fellow, Center of Development Studies, University of Cambridge) • **Dr. John and Susie Hodges** (formerly head for production of milk marketing board of England & Wales) • **Prof. Alan Torrance** (Chair of Systematic Theology, School of Divinity, University of St Andrews) • **Dr. Norman Wirzba** (Professor and Senior Fellow, Duke Divinity School and Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke University)