

## A Cry from the Heart

**WHAT'S REALLY ON MY HEART?** Questions, questions, and more questions. . . .

Is the church redeemed, saved, sanctified, and set apart for such a time as this?

Is it willing to use its voice as an instrument of confession—a way to recognize, repent, apologize to God for its shortcomings?

The Belhar. Is it a supplement? Is it fundamental to our faith? Is it a pathway to profound self-examination? Does it help us determine if the church lives by the faith it proclaims?

Our faith in Jesus Christ?

This is who we are.

This is what we believe.

This is what we intend to do.

And so we confess . . . that we might act justly  
that we might love mercy  
that we might walk humbly with God.

The Belhar. A call for the voice of the Christian church.

Stand up, Queen!

Let your voice be heard with clarity!

What does it mean for the church to confess?

That we live a life of witness in word and deed—a living sacrifice?

Has God set for us a special time and place to remind us of our purpose?

Perhaps the Belhar is a confession to correct error.

Perhaps it calls us to listen through ecclesial confusion and social uncertainty.

Perhaps this really is a confessional situation!

Perhaps God is asking us to listen and to speak a word *new* to our thinking.

The Belhar. Will it clarify what we already know to be true?

Have we made up our minds theologically and ethically?

Are we looking for a confession to ratify our position  
our authority  
our point of view?

Step up, O faithful hearers!

Perhaps the Word confronts us from outside ourselves  
into a new future—

a future against the pattern of the world

“The greatest spiritual crisis comes when a person has to move a little farther on in his faith than the beliefs he has already accepted.”

—Oswald Chambers

against false teaching

against the church's own sinfulness.

The Belhar. Is race the overwhelming question?

Do disparities between whites and nonwhites continue?

Should the church provide a spiritual product that makes people feel better about God, about themselves?

Can we learn to be culturally inclusive . . . are we willing?

*What does the Belhar call the church to confess?*

That we listen to God through diverse social backgrounds.

That we confess that the God of Israel is the God who speaks to us still.

That we resist reduction of faith to a mere feeling of comfort.

The God we serve is all-powerful, almighty, supreme, majestic.

The God we serve created us for himself and each other.

The Belhar. Should it stand alongside our three sister voices?

Have we studied it?

If adopted, will we use it?

As a Black and Reformed servant of Jesus Christ, I am empowered.

*I am waiting for my church*

to move toward change.

How many hearts have changed? How many more *will* change?

Are you one of the stubborn, unwilling, fearful ones?

I wonder where lies your faith in the One who gave his life  
so that  
we could all at least try, together.

The Belhar. If adopted, will it speak to our time and place?  
Will it challenge us with a Word of God beyond ourselves,  
not just a Word we already know to be true?

Will it help us counter false teaching about unity, justice, and  
reconciliation?

Does it convict us of sin in order to free us?

Where are all my brothers and sisters from other cultures?

Have we assimilated so much until we are not sure how to  
articulate a cry from the heart?

Will we be intellectual enough? Theological enough?

We need to keep our jobs, you know.

What finally matters is not whether the church adopts the  
Belhar,

but whether we allow it to interrogate us  
desegregate us,  
change us. ■

[STUDY QUESTIONS ONLINE](#)



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