

verenigde protestantse gemeente van curaçao

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Declaration for the commemoration of abolition of slavery in the Kingdom of the Netherlands on July 1, 2013

Living and working environment of slaves

Slavery has been a general accepted phenomenon in our society for ages.

But from historical sources and historical research, we know that during the 18th and 19th century many slaves have had to live and work under degrading conditions. Also on our island Curaçao. Slaves were transferred from Africa via the Atlantic Ocean to our island under horrible circumstances. The death of slaves during the voyage was generally seen as a tragic fact in economic sense. There were exceptions, but the general view of the living and work environment of the slaves on our island is negative. The uprising under the leadership of Tula in 1795 didn't just happen.

The Protestant church of the past: tacit or overt approval

From the Protestant church at that time no action was taken against this situation. With the knowledge and insight they had then, keeping slaves was even considered legitimized by the Bible. Slaves were considered objects instead of fully fledged human beings. The curse by Noë of his grandchild Canaan (Genesis 9) played an important role here. There were also Protestants who had slaves.

The Protestant church today: humbling

As Curaçao Protestants of today we feel ourselves connected with the Protestants of that time. We are one and the same body through the ages. But we do dispose of our historical and theological knowledge of nowadays. Advanced insight leads us to the point that – with our present knowledge - we humble ourselves for the mistakes our ancestors have made. For those mistakes we sincerely ask forgiveness to the descendants of those who have suffered heavily under the course of action of the Protestant church relating to slaves.

The future

As Protestants in Curaçao in the 21st century we will resist modern forms of slavery and discrimination on our island. We strive for complete reconciliation.

Central Church Board of the V.P.G.