

World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Wednesday November 18, 2010
Colombia Session I
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Las iglesias y su incidencia a favor de la paz en Colombia

1) Las iglesias entre víctimas y cómplices.

En primer lugar, tenemos que destacar que la posición de las iglesias frente a la violencia en este país es muy diversa. Entre ellas hay algunos sectores que son víctimas y otros sectores que son cómplices. También hay algunos sectores eclesiales que se declaran neutrales para evadir responsabilidades.

Esto se debe a que las iglesias, son un grupo social, que igual que el resto de la población, comparten un mismo contexto, una misma realidad y una misma historia. Es decir, están compuestas por los mismos sujetos que sufren o que son cómplices de la violencia. En las iglesias, hay personas que dicen ser creyentes pero también son agentes causantes de violencia. Por ello decimos que en las iglesias hay sectores que producen violencia. En muchas de ellas hay paramilitares, guerrilleros, narcotraficantes, delincuentes comunes y militares. Quienes dicen que lo hacen en nombre de una causa y para ello hacen violencia y se encomiendan como creyentes piadosos.

De igual manera, en las iglesias podemos encontrar significativos esfuerzos pacificadores, trabajadores por la paz, comprometidos con el trabajo por la justicia. En las iglesias hay ministerios preventivos, sobretodo cuidando que la juventud y la niñez no sean arrastradas a esas malévolas prácticas que obliga la guerra. De la misma manera, se pueden encontrar esfuerzos organizados para sanar heridas, consolar las víctimas y sus familiares, creyentes agrupados jugándose la vida y exponiéndose al riesgo de la violencia. Hay igualmente grupos que se dedican a pregonar la "libertad a los cautivos".

Entre los pacificadores, hacedores de la justicia, hay voces proféticas que denuncian el atropello y la injusticia, como quienes hacen el ministerio de la consolación y el acompañamiento pastoral, se encuentran gran cantidad de víctimas que han tenido que pagar con el martirio, el exilio, el destierro y el desplazamiento forzoso. La lógica y la maquinaria de la guerra confunden a estas personas como sus enemigos.

Sin embargo, existe otro sector que se hace pasar por "apolítico", son quienes ignoran la realidad de la guerra y la violencia, aunque esta también los implique. Esta es una falsa neutralidad, debido a que la guerra es una realidad que aparece en todos los aspectos de la vida nacional. Nadie, ninguna persona puede escapar a tan perversa realidad. Por ello, no hay neutralidad posible, aunque la ignoremos irresponsablemente.

2) Pánico, miedo, desesperanza y silencio.

La perversa maquinaria de la guerra y su lógica envolvente, intenta desencadenar en la población en general, terribles sentimientos de miedo, angustia y desesperación con fines domesticadores. Se proponen convertir la población en una masa sumisa para obligarla a involucrarse y para que se conviertan también en agentes de la guerra.

Es una ideología orientada a producir pánico y miedo en la población, con el objetivo de enviar un mensaje al pueblo en el sentido de hacer creer a los ciudadanos que la única salida posible es la guerra misma. Se trata de convertir a la guerra y las vías de la violencia en la única alternativa posible. Esta es una ideología que ya asumen algunos sectores de la población, los cuales se manifiestan con posiciones claramente beligerantes a favor de la guerra.

Esto significa un desprecio total por otros medios para superar el conflicto colombiano. Se desprecia el diálogo, la concertación, la reconciliación y las demás vías democráticas para encontrar consenso y superar de una vez por todas, tan anacrónico conflicto.

Pero sabemos que el ambiente de pánico creado, el miedo y el terror coartan la libertad, la libre expresión y participación ciudadana. Entonces, el único recurso para mantenerse distante de quienes protagonizan la violencia, es el silencio y el nihilismo. Desde luego que tales actitudes de indiferencia conducen a la desesperanza y a la pérdida de sentido por una vida digna. Sin esperanza no hay futuro y sin futuro no hay presente ni memoria histórica.

Ese parece ser el mensaje que le estamos transmitiendo a la niñez y a la juventud. No tenemos futuro, solo existe la guerra, y esta es nuestro futuro.

3) Otra Colombia es posible.

Sin embargo, aunque esa realidad parece imposible de cambiar, porque la guerra misma es además un negocio muy lucrativo, como cristianos, como iglesias venimos a traer una visión de esperanza, la cual, gracias al mensaje del Evangelio, nos permite trascender el presente, sabiendo que esta realidad tan degradada, corrupta, injusta y tan cruelmente violenta, no es definitiva.

Nosotros apostamos con toda nuestra fe, a reconstruir una Colombia nueva, sin guerra, ni violencia, ni injusticia. Nosotros venimos aquí iluminados por el Maestro de Galilea, quien con su mensaje y vida nos guio a una convivencia entre iguales para todos y todas; tomémosle como ejemplo y seamos pacificadores capaces de superar la violencia y los espíritus de guerra.

Porque la fe nos mueve a soñar una Colombia sin guerra, sin armamentismo, sin violencia, por esa razón, nos unimos a las voces y esfuerzos ya existentes, o a usar de nuestra imaginación y creatividad para contribuir a la reconstrucción de esa nueva Colombia que vivirá en paz como fruto de la justicia. Por lo tanto, queremos sugerir algunas nuevas acciones encaminadas a cumplir con ese objetivo de incidir a favor de la paz, inspirados en la Escritura que dice: "Y vi un cielo nuevo, y una tierra nueva, porque el

primer cielo y la primera tierra habían dejado de ser...y enjugará Dios toda lágrima de los ojos de ellos; y ya no habrá más muerte, ni habrá más llanto, ni clamor ni dolor, porque las primeras cosas han dejado de ser... He aquí yo hago nuevas todas las cosas.” (Ap. 21: 1, 4, 5).

Algunas propuesta para que desde las Iglesias podamos trabajar a favor de la paz

3.1 Incidir en las iglesias mismas. Se requiere con urgencia, ampliar la participación de nuevas y más iglesias en un amplio movimiento a favor de la paz. Podremos comenzar a contactar las iglesias que están en zonas de riesgo, acompañándolas y asistiéndolas para fortalecerlas y capacitarlas para que se conviertan en comunidades de paz. Sabemos que ya hay esfuerzos en ese sentido, pero debemos ampliar tal cobertura.

Se requiere empezar por contactar esas iglesias para dialogar al respecto y conjuntamente con ellas planificar y organizar un proceso de formación y acción; solicitamos al CMI, un acompañamiento permanente por los DH.

3.2 Incidir en las parroquias. El trabajo de información, formación y transformación debe pensarse no solo para la iglesia y el templo, sino para realizar en la parroquia como entorno social. Construir ambientes pacificadores en la misma sociedad civil.

3.3 Incidir en los espacios del Estado. Tendríamos que tener personal capacitado para dialogar con las autoridades de los Corregimientos, municipalidades, escuelas, colegios y centros de salud y otros espacios administrativos, para que participen en las jornadas y procesos formativos.

3.4 Como es la niñez y la juventud quienes se enfrentan a mayores riesgos y tentaciones para involucrarse en la violencia, necesitamos priorizar y promover un movimiento de capacitación entre ellos, tendiente a la prevención y empoderamiento contra la violencia.

3.5 En los procesos de información y formación se debe destacar los muchos beneficios que acarrea una sociedad que vive en paz, no solo en cuanto la canalización de recursos, sino en la creatividad y los ambientes para vivir felizmente.

3.6 Habría que promocionar profundizar las bases bíblico-teológicas para la creación de una cultura de paz, basada en la justicia y el respeto a los DDHH.

3.7 Este será un esfuerzo ecuménico, donde la prioridad es recrear entre todos una sociedad capaz de superar la violencia y recrear una nueva cultura de paz. Por lo tanto, el valor sublime es la vida, la vida de quienes están amenazados por la violencia. En fin, una Colombia nueva, basada en la justicia y el amor.

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- 3.8 Todo esto requiere creación de materiales informativos, formativos e instrumentales para la incidencia, en las iglesias y la sociedad. Sabiendo que hablamos de una paz como la que nos orienta el Evangelio... “Mi paz os dejo, mi paz os doy; yo no os la doy como el mundo la da” (Jn 14: 27).



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Jairo Suarez (Spanish)

El problema de los “falsos positivos”.

Además de la degradación del conflicto armado y la violación sistemática de los derechos humanos, donde se privilegian los intereses políticos, económicos y militares, en contra de los intereses humanitarios, se ha intensificado el problema de los llamados ‘falsos positivos’, que son casos reportados por Unidades de la fuerza pública como resultados positivos en la acción contra grupos armados ilegales, y que son reportados en los informes oficiales como “muertes en combate” de actores insurgentes y otras acciones legítimas de guerra según el DIH, pero que posteriormente debido a las denuncias de organizaciones sociales y defensores de Derechos Humanos, de víctimas directas de los hechos, de familiares de las víctimas y de fuentes de prensa del ámbito regional y

nacional, se han develado como acciones contra la población civil no combatiente, lo cual significarían violaciones contra los Derechos Humanos e infracciones al Derecho Internacional Humanitario. Las acciones clasificadas... tienen varios móviles fundamentales: 1) persecución política, 2) intolerancia social y 3) el abuso o exceso de autoridad. Exigencia de resultados para justificar la política de seguridad democrática/inversión de los EEUU-Plan Colombia fase III y IV. Las modalidades específicas de victimización son, entre otros, las ejecuciones extrajudiciales, el homicidio intencional en persona protegida, la tortura, los heridos, las amenazas individuales y/o colectivas, las desapariciones y la utilización de civiles como escudos humanos.ⁱ

El Profesor Philip Alston, Relator Especial de las Naciones Unidas para las ejecuciones arbitrarias realizó una Misión a Colombia del 8 al 18 de junio de 2009, en su informe preliminar dice: “El fenómeno es muy conocido. Un “reclutador” engaña a la víctima con falsas pretensiones y la lleva a una localidad remota. Allá, al poco tiempo de llegar, miembros del ejército matan al individuo. Luego se manipula el lugar de los hechos para que parezca que la persona fue dada de baja legítimamente en el fragor de un combate. A menudo se hace una fotografía en la que sale vistiendo uniforme de guerrillero con un arma o granada en la mano. Las víctimas suelen ser enterradas de manera anónima en fosas comunes, y los asesinos son premiados por los resultados conseguidos en la lucha contra la guerrilla... Entre los “peligrosos guerrilleros” que fueron dados de baja hay adolescentes de 16 y 17 años, un hombre joven con una edad mental de 9 años, un padre de familia abnegado, cuyos dos cuñados están en servicio militar activo, y un joven soldado de licencia por vacaciones, que visitaba a su familia. No puedo descartar la posibilidad que algunos falsos positivos fueran de hecho, guerrilleros, pero aparte de afirmaciones contundentes, el gobierno no me ha dado prueba alguna en este sentido. Las pruebas que muestran a las víctimas vestidas con ropa de camuflaje recién planchada, o calzando botas de campo 4 tallas más grandes que su tamaño, o zurdos llevando una pistola en su mano derecha, u hombres con una única bala disparada en el cuello, menoscaban aún más la sugerencia de que se trata de guerrilleros muertos en combate.”ⁱⁱ

Todas estas circunstancias generan temor generalizado en la población civil, pero además con el agravante de que, estas estrategias de muerte, se utilizan como forma de control y represión contra los defensores de derechos humanos y constructores de paz.

Aunque este fenómeno no es nuevo en el país, se intensificó mayormente desde el año 2005 cuando el ministro de defensa, expidió la directiva 029 para reglamentar el pago de recompensas por resultados.ⁱⁱⁱ “Desde entonces, según la Unidad de Derechos Humanos de la Fiscalía, se pasó de 73 denuncias en 2005, a 122 en 2006 y 245 en 2007. Aunque las recompensas por la muerte de guerrilleros no pueden, en principio, ser entregadas a miembros activos de la Fuerza Pública, podrían haber suscitado alianzas entre grupos criminales y militares con el fin de cobrar las recompensas (por una parte) y mostrar mejores resultados (por otra). Estas alianzas criminales pueden explicar algunas de las desapariciones que hoy escandalizan al país y al mundo entero. En suma, cabe la posibilidad de que las recompensas (y los mismos incentivos que operan dentro de las Fuerzas Armadas) hayan propiciado alianzas criminales dedicadas a la fabricación de cadáveres.”^{iv} Estas acciones que violan el Derecho Internacional Humanitario deben ser señaladas para que se entienda la contante limitación de los derechos a la libre oposición y a la libre determinación política de los colombianos.

Una situación que aumenta la compleja realidad es la que enfrenta los abogados y organizaciones que asumen la defensa judicial de las víctimas, así como los mismos familiares, que han logrado avanzar en investigaciones de orden judicial, y hoy son amenazados.

El problema de la presencia de minas antipersonales y municiones sin explotar.

Por otro lado, no podemos olvidar, otro fenómeno de guerra que está afectando a más colombianos cada día, y que no solo nos preocupa por su accionar en el presente, sino por las implicaciones que tienen para las futuras cuatro o cinco generaciones. Estoy hablando de la presencia de minas antipersonal y municiones sin explotar que están en casi todo el territorio colombiano.

Por causa del conflicto armado interno que vive el país y la degradación del mismo, los grupos armados han venido utilizando estrategias de guerra que afectan directamente a la población civil, especialmente en las zonas rurales. Una de las estrategias que aún se mantiene por parte de los grupos armados es la siembra indiscriminada de minas antipersonales (MAP) con el objetivo de controlar territorios, detener el avance de las tropas enemigas, y proteger los cultivos ilícitos que sustentan parte de la economía de estos grupos. Las minas por ser armas explosivas, indiscriminadas e inhumanas, generan daños irreparables a las víctimas y por eso se constituyen en una grave violación al Derecho Internacional Humanitario (DIH). Las MAP no sólo afectan a los combatientes, sino también a la población civil. Los campos minados en Colombia no son debidamente señalizados y la situación es más grave ya que la mayoría de minas son construidas por los mismos grupos armados, lo cual dificulta su identificación y posterior destrucción.

Es muy difícil identificar las minas ya que no existen mapeos en la mayoría de las zonas donde se han utilizado, sino también, porque se están utilizando materiales de uso común tales como vidrio, madera, plástico y guadua. Pero para completar este cuadro de degradación, algunos de los accidentes se han dado debido a que los grupos armados han desarrollado mecanismos que camuflan en objetos comunes llamados trampas explosivas. Este tipo de mina lo usan juguetes

como, carros, muñecas, o con latas de gaseosas, cervezas, cigarrillos y todo tipo de aparatos donde se pueden poner explosivos. Las víctimas de este tipo de minas en su mayoría son niños y niñas que inocentemente los manipulan pensando que son juguetes.

Además se suma el problema de las municiones sin explotar (MUSE) que han quedado como remanente de combates o abandonadas en los campamentos de los grupos armados durante las cinco décadas de conflicto. Estos artefactos se constituyen en un peligro latente porque en cualquier momento pueden estallar causando la muerte o daños irreparables en las víctimas.

El número de víctimas, oficialmente se ha registrado desde el año 1990 pero existe un gran número de personas que nunca han sido registrados. Es decir que el número actual, cerca de 8.034 víctimas, es mucho mayor debido a que en las zonas rurales, donde los grupos armados tienen mayor acción, se les prohíbe a las víctimas o su familia hacer la denuncia y cuando las víctimas mueren, la familia no denuncia por miedo a represalias por parte de los actores armados. Según el Monitor de Minas Terrestres¹, Colombia actualmente ocupa el primer lugar del mundo en número de víctimas por año. El número de víctimas del año 2008 fue de 777 de las cuales 156 murieron, durante este año, ha habido 491 accidentes de los cuales han muerto 88 personas. De los 32 departamentos que forman el país, 31 han presentado incidentes con Minas Antipersonales y Municiones sin explotar.

El problema que generan las minas es muy grave debido a que el daño incluye la contaminación del medio ambiente, la inutilización de las tierras, el bloqueo al acceso de agua, y en general la violación de derechos fundamentales y a la vida digna. Recordemos que las minas o las municiones sin explotar, pueden tener una duración de hasta cien años, por lo tanto este no es un problema solo de nuestra generación, sino que es un peligro latente para las siguientes tres o cuatro generaciones. Es urgente el apoyo de las organizaciones internacionales para exigir la adecuada e integral asistencia a las víctimas y su familia, el desminado humanitario, que significa la limpieza de las tierras afectadas para que la gente pueda volver a sembrar, acceder a fuentes de agua y criar animales, y la presión para que los actores armados dejen de instalar nuevas minas.

Necesitamos recursos para poder implementar programas de prevención y de manejo de riesgo de minas. Capacitar líderes, mujeres, hombres, jóvenes y niños para que podamos aprender y aplicar los comportamientos seguros en busca tener un país libre de las minas y donde podamos caminar en paz.

ⁱ <http://www.alboan.org/docs/articulos/canales/alboan/InformeFalsosPos.pdf>

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<http://www.unhchr.ch/hurricane/hurricane.nsf/0/7DDCDEC9249C5EEFC12575D90076B2D5?opendocument>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.mindefensa.gov.co/dayTemplates/images/seguridad_democratica.pdf

^{iv} <http://www.elespectador.com/opinion/editorial/articulo87344-directiva-ministerial-029-de-2005>

¹ El Monitor de Minas es una herramienta que permite hacer el seguimiento al problema de las minas y reporta el progreso de los estados que han firmado el tratado de Ottawa.

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Lilia Solano

UNITED STATES MARK THEIR TERRITORIES BY MEANS OF MILITARY BASES

Let me start by making a brief reference to the military presence and role of the US Army around the world in order to reaffirm the concern that the installation of these bases should cause in Colombia and its neighboring countries. Although the Colombian official discourse says that such military presence is going to be developed or might be taking place as we speak today, in reality the US Army has already been present in Colombia for quite a good number of years.

According to the annual report of the Department of Defense, there are more than 823 US military bases in over 130 countries. This is a deployment that occupies a combined extension of more than 2.5 million hectares in the five continents, to monitor strategically the US interests. These bases permanently house over 250,000 members of the armed forces and provide work to approximately 45,000 local contractors. The report does not include the bases in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait. The Pentagon also indicates that it has 32,327 barracks, hangars, hospitals and other buildings and rents 16,527 facilities in the US bases abroad.

These military bases not only demarcate the confines of the empire but also represent the military power of the US around the world. However, their role goes beyond mere military and warfare tactics and they are felt at the day-to-day level of common life in the countries in which such bases are established. They also respond to the interests of US based companies and businesses that are just as or perhaps much more concerned that the Pentagon itself that this vast military deployment should continue. Whenever the United States signs an agreement with any country anywhere in the world to install a military base, there begins a cloudy relationship of neocolonialism and dependency with the implied country. Crimes and social problems that might be used to justify the establishment of a US military base tend to escalate to despicable violations to human rights, and grow out of control. Ultimately, a foreign military base indicates the presence of an occupying army and it becomes a symbol of subjugation. This single reason should suffice to disown them.

Over the last years the Pentagon has made evident its desire to abandon its military presence in some rich countries such as Germany and move their bases to countries governed by dictatorial regimes. The latter are more likely to provide the Pentagon with a more "tolerant environmental legislation." In general terms, the host countries have to accept clauses that exempt the US from compensating for environmental disasters that its Army might unleash and guarantee impunity to the US Army personnel who are thus accountable only to the US martial courts. These type of provisions means that the more tyrannical the government of the host country, the better the conditions for a military base to operate.

In Colombia, the new facilities are the main Navy and Air Force bases of the Colombian Army, namely: Apiay, Malambo, Palanquero, Cartagena and Malaga Bay. The US is not going to build

new bases but to take control of what is already in place. Thus, the US Army will be in the position to surround the Amazon basin, track more closely legal and illegal trade routes, monitor areas of strategic importance, and keep a closer watch on progressive governments in the region.

The control of these military bases by the US Army constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the country. This agreement militates against the Colombian institutional and legal frameworks and transfers to foreign hands the tasks of overseeing and keeping control of sensitive areas whether purely military but also ideological, political, economic, and so forth.

To William Brownfield, the United States Ambassador to Colombia, the US military presence is one of collaboration. From now on, says Brownfield, US aircrafts and battleships will have access to much needed refueling stations on their routes to more complex operations. However, the reality in Colombia is that the local bases have always played such role of cooperation. Some cases in point are Tres Esquinas and Larandia in the Caqueta province, and Apiay (Meta province). These three bases operate with the presence of Pentagon equipment and personnel that provide technical intelligence to support the fight against subversive groups, to exercise control over the leaders of social and political movements, to monitor the Colombian borders, and to train the military and their paramilitary spinoffs.

This Colombia-US accord on military collaboration whereby the control of Colombian military bases is transferred to the US Army, shows the high level of dependence that the current Colombian Administration keeps in its relationship with the US. The Colombian government is seriously compromised with the illegal activities of paramilitary squads and drug traffickers and it bumps from one scandal to the next on account of criminal infiltration to the highest levels. It has at its disposal a weak Congress (upper and lower houses) and the lack of independence renders the media to functioning as mere antennas that broadcast the official communiqués and speeches.

In terms of geopolitical strategy Colombia is a gem. Its geographic position facilitates quick access to sea and air routes. To make things more favorable to an agreement of military collaboration with the US, it is being administered by a President so seriously compromised that its bargaining power is next to zero.

It is of the utmost importance to immediately advance a frontal resistance against what we should call now “the US military bases” in Colombia. Although this is a very difficult task it must be accomplished. What is at stake is the Colombian sovereignty and autonomy, the destiny of innocent people, the preservation of the environment. In short, life is what is at stake.

The politics of democratic security: neither security nor democratic, but war

Security as a major concern is a card that repeatedly is thrown on the table as Colombia’s policy makers and public administrators make their best to create a climate that is favorable to mega-investments in the context of the so called free market economy.

This drive translates into a military strategy of war that consumes all the resources and infrastructure of the State. It is noteworthy that this strategy of war lumps the social movements and the insurgency together in a common front as enemies the State must combat. It might present itself under different names and packages. Thus the recent history records the implementation of all sort of plans: “Plan Lasso” (1964) designed to achieve the ill-named pacification of the country; “Plan Andes” (1968) that set in motion a counter-guerrilla warfare; “Provisional Manual for the Planning of National Security” (1974); the “National Strategy” against violence, that was implemented under the Presidency of Cesar Gaviria (1991); Andres Pastrana’s well known “Plan Colombia” (1998) that skyrocketed the US military influence and investments to levels unheard of before.

In the 2002 with Alvaro Uribe this militaristic drive takes on the name of “democratic security.” Uribe’s strategy revolves around the so called “total war,” which combines low-intensity warfare (social level) with more conventional warfare strategies (insurgency level). Uribe’s “democratic security” asks for conceptions based on massive deployments of artillery capacity, heavy equipment, large concentrations of troops and the use of the civilian population working alongside the Army in its different bodies, divisions, brigades and battalions.

Reducing the role and presence of the State in the Colombian territory to its military muscle, the politics of “democratic security” is but another chapter of the war that historically has been imposed upon the Colombian population. This policy apparently is being successful, according to the official discourse. However its results are far from being considered indicators of democratic progress. Let us take a closer look at some of them:

* Uribe’s “democratic security” asserts a model of public administration that is seriously compromised with plain criminal activities. The Uribe Administration has set in motion a series of measures aimed at using the instances of the State to pay favors and co-opt potential dissenters.

* This policy protects the interests of European multinationals and North Americans, and powerful local business groups to whom are offered megaprojects and important contracts under the umbrella of free trade treaties.

* This security policy has gone to the extremes of claiming positive results based on cases that fraudulently present the execution of innocent civilians as trophies in its struggle against the insurgency.

* This is a policy that despises humanitarian agreements, rejects any notion of a negotiated solution to the armed conflict, treats with contempt the notions of peace, sovereignty, autonomy, and shows total disregard to the integration of Colombia in the Latin American region.

* Uribe’s “democratic security” criminalizes social and political protest and thus enables law enforcement officers to conduct to arbitrary detention of social and union leaders. This policy tramples with the rights to due process, impartial investigation and fair trial, and it does not uphold principles such as the presumption of innocence.

* This policy ignores the obligations that the Colombian State is bound to as a signatory to international conventions on the promotion and protection of human rights. It enables State agents to violate them with absolute impunity.

* "Democratic security" criminalizes grass roots organizations of peasant, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombian, students, representatives of popular groups, social and feminist movements. It labels politic dissenters as terrorists thus closing the way of legal protest.

* This is a policy with a counter-agrarian reform agenda that legalizes the redrawing of the rural map that was advanced by drug traffickers and right wing illegal paramilitary warlords. The end result of this agrarian policy is the concentration of rural property in the hands of powerful transnational agro-industries.

* This policy fosters an environment that is conducive to harassing and attacking to girls and women, adolescents and LGBT people.

* Uribe's "democratic security" has established a system of collaboration with law enforcement officers that generously rewards trade union leaders murderers and outlaws.

* This is a policy that closes the doors to plain Colombians and sees thousands of them going abroad to live in conditions of vulnerability.

* "Democratic security" persecutes those intellectuals who dare to raise a critical voice and labels them "intellectual terrorists" in a time in which terrorism is a world wide concern. Therefore, rigorous research and academic work are rendered dangerous pursuits.

* This policy of security attacks Human Rights organizations and dismisses them as "agents of terrorism".

* This is a policy that controls the freedom of expression, reducing the media to operate as simple antennas that broadcast the official discourse.

* This is a policy that justifies the breach of the conventions and international agreements on Human Rights that has been ratified by Colombia.

* The current Colombian version of "democratic security" list as sponsors of terrorism those States in the region that do not follow its dictates. It therefore claims and extraterritorial jurisdiction to enforce its regulations.

* This is a policy that promotes the US direct intervention even at the risk of destabilizing the region. By transferring some of its military bases to the US Army, Colombia is becoming a sort of Israel for the region.

* "Democratic security" in its President Uribe's version deletes from the collective memory the hidden history of repression in Colombia and crushes the dignity of Colombians and their efforts to build a real democracy.

What we are witnessing in Colombia is not a *renaissance* of a policy of security, but a war of enormous proportions. The official rhetoric that speaks of a legitimate struggle against terrorism cannot hide the facts that prove it fallacious. Uribe's Administration plays its card on the assumption that Colombians ignore that poverty and unemployment are on the rise, drug traffickers are reinventing themselves, paramilitary groups are regrouping, internally displaced people keep on flooding the already overcrowded urban centers, the political parties that support the government are tangled up in political scandals and organized criminality, public services keep on being privatized, intelligence services resort to mafia-style procedures in order to keep tabs on political dissenters, young people in poor *barrios* are executed by law enforcement officers in order to be reported to the media as guerrillas and terrorists, and the overall decomposition of a State devoted to undermine the lives of countless common citizens.

World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Wednesday November 18, 2010
Colombia Session II
Joseph Donnelly

For the numerous reasons of faith-based partnerships with mutual concerns for the rights and needs of communities around the world, as CARITAS Internationalis representative to the United Nations I am pleased and humbled to share deeply in your collective WCC concerns for our sisters and brothers in COLOMBIA.

COLOMBIA at the United Nations. Where do we see it? Where do we hear about this significant country with exceptional internal human resources caught in quite extraordinary struggles for life? This flag - this is the flag of the COLOMBIA country and communities. Like 191 others it flies in front of UN headquarters each day. How many see it? How many can identify it? When groups come to the UN and the UN Church Center here in this building some will ask: What "color" is Colombia? It's a telling question which deserves some quite specific answers with full explanations.

Some of the background on NGO and faith-based advocacy for Colombia includes the fact that many partners here in New York disturbed by the absence of or invisibility about any Colombian advocacy at the UN gathered together in 2004 in this building where you participate today. Approximately 14 people from 12 organizations sat together quite seriously to face the facts that non-actions around Colombia were locked in the previous status-quo position often held that: "There's no way to do advocacy around Colombian concerns at UN because the US is not interested in the matter being addressed here - especially as it is not on the Security Council agenda, etc... and most simply see it as a drugs and rebels issue period."

The group gathered to identify ways and possible advocacy resources out of the "freeze" from the past. All acknowledged past/present difficulties and/or staffing limitations. However, all agreed the time was ripe to try something new while urging that expectations be kept low and simple. The presbyterian UN Office hosted the gathering while Caritas joined them to push Colombia onto a common table with interested friends and partners.

So it happened. It began to unfold that simply, but with a new determination to break myths around the troubled country, to give voice to countless grave concerns and to identify ways to speak with both the Colombian Mission to the UN - and other member states, some with considerable influence within the Security Council and/or the General Assembly. We began to ask: What about the large IDP populations around the country? How could so many Colombians be internally displaced people and no one seems to know their plight? How could Colombia have the second largest IDP population in the world, second only to Sudan which is always in the news, while deafening silence surrounds Colombia? Today, it is estimated that there are 3.5 million internally displaced Colombians.

Amidst the arguments or strategies around accepting or rejecting statistics addressing human conditions and humanitarian crises, the face-to-face living reality of people who are homeless, displaced, isolated, ignored, abandoned, forgotten is a massive moral challenge for everyone. There are women, children, men, elderly, vulnerable people everywhere you look. While many organizations, churches, faith-based communities and several UN agencies are actively engaged with the needs and rights of Colombians - somehow they are still not on "the agenda" which is another reality we can endure any longer.

We all have to find the links, make the necessary connections - here in New York at the UN, as much as in Bogota, in every part of Colombia - and everywhere we can communicate locally as well as globally. Colombia does not exist in isolation. It is well known, however, not understood it may be.

We all must be more steadfast. We must be present in and to Colombia constantly, and consistently so that there remains a penetrating "reality check" wherever we are.

Part of the challenge is that there are many complex issues within the Colombian questions. The land issues as fierce and devastating as the human issues, justice issues as urgent as basic human, social, pastoral economic and political rights. None of these can be ignored. We too must face these issues amongst ourselves and with our churches, communities, parishes, organizations. We too must be a steadfast presence here, across this one NY street - at United Nations.

At the UN there are thousands of accredited national and international NGOs. Only hundreds are actually around the UN in NY, others are in Geneva, Vienna, Paris and at UNICs around the globe. Do they know us? Do they know Colombia? Do they know the regional impacts and implications from

Colombia? How can we speak to them, educate them about distinctions between universal human rights and internal sovereignty? These can not be mutually exclusive domains. As well we need to say as churches in this regard: Here is our chart of actions/issues. We are responsible representatives. Hold us accountable, as you like, but listen to the truths we live, the daily facts of life we know as stale bread of the poor not as some public relations campaign whose motivation is curious.

A final perspective about the same time as our NY-based efforts around Colombia, another group of NGOs were "seized of the matter" of the extraordinary humanitarian crisis in Northern Uganda. While it was the most child-focused crisis in the world, it was simultaneously considered one of the 10 most underreported crises in the world according to the UN's Department of Public Information. That focus grew slowly, surely through all kinds of myths, roadblocks but carefully revealing considerable international readiness to get beyond just the actions of LRA rebel groups. There was a new appetite

to ask about protection of civilians, IDPS and their decades long lives in IDP Camps. There was a growing partnering sense of Member States, even SC members, could make a difference to expand the dialogue, communicate better with Ugandan leadership, as well with the religious and cultural leaders initiatives for protection as much as peace, for justice as much as development. Many who has lost everything, most notably their own children put the question to NGOs and some

Member States. We have lost all. We work so others do not lose their children. We have the political will to advocate, to change the status quo. That's what they said to us on weary wintry day in NY. They put the strong question, nearly an indictment to us. They left their question on our table, on our consciences. No one was prepared to not answer their question. Suffice it to say today that while life in Northern Uganda is not perfect, far from it - there is peace, there is security to a greater degree.

And - 80% of the 1.6 million IDPS have gone home or at least gone back to farming their family community lands. Some of this is the result of several years of advocacy and partnerships around the UN community so that UN SC Resolution 1653 came into being - alongwith a mandate for the SG to appoint a Special Envoy for LRA affected countries. The awesome damning facts on the ground at the start of this 21st century is now countered by the awesome solidarity with hundreds of thousands of family recovering ever so carefully from 20 years of absolute vulnerability.

None of this happens easily. Like Colombia, Uganda's national flag flies proudly in front of the UN headquarters. Today Uganda is a rotating member of the Security Council, contributing its concerns

and resources for needs of our nations. These are long complex struggles, even when there's much political will, information and negotiations. It is rarely easy, but we must be steadfast. We must be respectfully, professionally, pastorally visible. As such, you do not see a flag for Palestine visible in front of the UN, despite 60 plus years of advocacy. So many NGOs and FBOs carry that hope too, but without forgetting COLOMBIA.

World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Wednesday November 18, 2010
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Gonzalo Vargas Llosa

Recounted my initial experience when I arrived in Panama to take up my post as UNHCR Representative. I had found a very difficult situation, whereby Colombians who had fled the conflict back at home and had arrived in the Darien, in Panama, were not being given adequate protection by the Government. In fact, many of them were being deported. The Church, a key ally of UNHCR and with a substantive presence in the Darien, was providing critical aid and protection to this group of Colombians;

- The reason why Panama had a negative attitude to Colombian refugees was historical and also economic, given the large number of Colombian economic migrants in that country. In the course of the three years that I served in Panama, the Church, the NGOs and UNHCR were fortunately able to convince the Government to improve its policies towards Colombian refugees and asylum-seekers, but a lot more remained to be done;

- As for the situation of IDPs inside Colombia, this was grave. There were more than three million of them, mostly from a rural background, and most of whom had lost their land as a result of the conflict. The Afro-Colombians and the indigenous groups were disproportionately affected by forced displacement. While the legislation and entities responsible for IDPs in Colombia were in theory very comprehensive, in practice many IDPs did not receive enough support, mainly because of lack of resources;

- The humanitarian and the situation of IDPs inside Colombia did not receive the kind of international attention that it deserved, given its magnitude. It was therefore critical that all those actors and entities interested in helping the victims do everything possible to make this problem more visible to the outside world. This was also a major challenge because the Government of Colombia did not want to give too much exposure to the conflict and the forced displacement.

World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Friday November 20, 2010
Closing Keynote
Hyunju Bae

I. It's my great honor to speak for this closing session as a Korean theologian. I would like to convey my heart-felt special thanks to our brothers and sisters who came from the communities of climate displaced peoples, indigenous peoples, and Colombia, the communities now most critically wounded by the complex structures of injustice. Thank you for sharing your stories with us in many sessions. I appreciate your creating a sacred space among us through worships in which we could feel the pain of the Mother Earth and your communities. There we mourned and repented. Many of your stories made me speechless, because the insanity of this civilization just doesn't make any sense, and because I am part of it. At the same time, I also felt a special blessing coming from your presence, as your fierce speech demonstrates your dauntless spirit and passionate love of life, and as the presence of the crucified people opens up the space of the presence of the crucified God among us. We would never fathom thoroughly this dark mystery of the existence of evil powers on earth. I simply pray that the knowledge of faith that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord could somehow strengthen you in your difficult daily struggle (Rom 8:38-39).

My special thanks also go to the family of this Church Center right across the UN. Its geopolitical location speaks volumes. The story of its foundation initiated by Methodist women and the tale of its hospitality to serve as a home for the leaders of the underrepresented communities reminded me of the earliest Christian movement in the first century. The base of earliest Christianity was the house churches often represented by women. Their well-known hospitality to take in the charismatic wandering apostles and prophets was often provided by women. I hope that this Church Center continues to function as a home for the leaders of the underrepresented and the voiceless, and by doing that, persists in working as a powerful testimony to what Christianity is about in its ecumenical solidarity. Last but not least, I appreciate UN Liaison Office and GPTR for offering this advocacy experience to reconfirm our solidarity as the people of God who, despite all kinds of differences, engage in the common journey of faith in the empire.

II. During this advocacy week, all of us were invited to breathe and think in a triangle room created by the three arms. Each arm is felt very precious and very heavy: global-ecumenical, UN, and advocacy in action. As we ponder on this challenge, it becomes clear that ecumenical advocacy is to take place at multiple levels and in multiple ways. It should happen at multiple levels such as global, regional, sub-regional, national, and local levels. It should also take place in multiple ways, both vertically and horizontally. A vertical traffic refers to the two ways, top down and bottom up, which signify a movement with a global initiative and a local response on the one hand, and a movement with a local initiative and a global response on the other hand. A horizontal traffic indicates the WCC dealing with the UN, the member churches and the NCC with their own national government, and the local churches with the local political entity. Ecumenical advocacy requires mutually-interlocking, multi-dimensional dynamics and methodologies. Yet one person or one organization cannot possibly engage in the whole repertoire with the same depth. Therefore we need each other as partners. The sense that we belong to one body with many members,

whose head is Jesus Christ our Lord, makes our burden bearable (1 Cor 12:14; Eph 5:23). How would this complex body work? I don't know. Will our methodologies be successful? We don't know. But trusting God's guidance and drinking of one Spirit, we could travel together until the day our journey on this earth comes to an end.

It is beyond dispute that the prophetic challenge that the WCC poses to the 'principalities and powers' at the global level should continue and become stronger. To offer the discernment of the signs of the times to the power and international communities in season and out of season is an important ministry. We discussed many strategies to put this challenge into practice: lobbying, monitoring legislative process and action, urging the implementation of resolutions, developing a national and multi-national campaign, and making use of media. I hope that all these strategies, that is, political, legislative, judicial, administrative, and public relations strategies, could be employed, as the WCC continues to practice this important prophetic vocation, working together with the international NGOs and the World Social Forum. Otherwise, the arrogance of the empire would get amplified, and the victimization of the poor and the vulnerable would get accelerated.

For the oppressed, the news of the existence and activity of the international group beyond the national boundary is something like the rain to the parched land, or the energizing emergency nutrient to the dying. To make solidarity visits, as 'Living Letters' do, and to invite the victims to give testimony to draw the attention of the international communities are very important prophetic work. The stories I heard here about the Pacific, Papua, Ecuador, Colombia, Congo and other countries, reminded me of the democratization movement in Korea during the 1970s and the 1980s. We Koreans felt isolated, as the military regimes tried to insulate the people from the world, frustrating our communication with the outside society. At that time, some ecumenical activists dared to pay solidarity visits, letting us know that there were international groups of people who cared about us and understood what we were going through. It gave us hope and empowerment. Another occasion to which the international pressure made a visible contribution in my own immediate context was women's ordination in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). The request for women's ordination was continuously denied for more than sixty years. The General Assembly finally passed it in 1995, when the voice for women's ordination became stronger. At that time, the letters from the outside ecumenical partner churches gave pressure to its patriarchal leadership. I hope that ecumenical solidarity and advocacy at an international level would strengthen itself for the sake of all those disfranchised people who are denied human dignity, the speech of freedom, and the right for self-determination.

Yesterday's mission trip was a good exercise of a two-tiered advocacy, both international and national. Our morning group met with the Korean ambassador, and we were glad to hear that Korea had just officialized its will to mitigate the GHGs emission by 30%. He also promised to support the political activities of the leaders of Pacific countries in the UN, and showed his awareness of the ecological ethics that the Korean companies should abide by in Africa. In the meantime, I expressed my personal disagreement to our government's developmental project of the four major rivers in the Korean peninsula, as it would disturb the ecological balance and well-being of both nature and local communities. This advocacy activity was a stimulating experience. I began to entertain an idea that theological schools or seminaries might attempt to make this kind of field activity, that is, real advocacy actions, part of theological curriculum in the area of practical field work, or something like 'public theology in action,' so that the theological students could have some first-hand experiences in the advanced advocacy process as part of their ministry and mission training.

III. My next reflection is about our relationship with the church as our base community which should financially support this kind of prophetic and apostolic mission and continue to reproduce ecumenical activists, just like all of you, of the future generation. Many of us indicated the potential and power of the church. Given the urgency of global situation, the church needs to be mobilized toward this prophetic work of advocacy. On Monday, Mr. Olav Kjørven, Assistant Secretary-General and Director of Bureau for Development Policy at the UN Development Programme, remarked that the present global crisis seems to have happened not just due to the wrong policy making, but because of its deeper origin, as human apathy, greed, and selfishness are its seedbed. He urged that the church should mobilize itself to engage in turning the tide in this global crisis, as from his perspective the church has the most powerful language to make a difference, but underutilizes its power. In passing he also mentioned a reconciliation process which is taking place between the former enemies, that is, the environmentalists and the conservative sectors of the church in the USA. This fence-mending process is underway because of a common understanding of the gravity and urgency of global crisis. When Mr. Kjørven expressed his hope in the local communities and the church, I could resonate with it. I would like to lay stress on two aspects in this connection.

Firstly, our reach-out attempt should be directed toward both outside and inside. We ecumenical Christians engage in 'wider ecumenism' with the vision of the peace and reconciliation of the world. The statistics tells that the 80% of the world population has religious affiliation. Wider ecumenism seeks to reach out to the believers of other religions in order to enhance a mutual understanding and establish solidarity for building the global communities of peace and reconciliation. With the same vision, we ecumenical Christians also need to try to reach out internally or intramurally to 1.4 or 1.5 billion non-ecumenical Christians, who, along with over 560 million ecumenical Christians, would constitute about slightly less than one-third of the planetary total. In order to give shape to my own struggle in my context where I live together with non-ecumenical or conservative Christians, I coined a term, 'intramural ecumenism,' to designate this kind of internal reach-out effort. I often run into conservative Christians who remain so because they have never had a chance to hear the good news of ecumenism and participate in its practice. If ecumenical Christians don't take initiative in building an internal platform for an honest and prayerful dialogue, the religion of Christian majority could lend itself to the status quo uncritically, and legitimate it unwittingly or out of misplaced conviction, as it did in the time of colonization and slavery. Intramural ecumenism might start with opening up a dialogue. We might present factual evidence regarding the overall global crisis such as climate change, the environmental refugees, and the cases of the violation of human rights, explain the ecumenical strategies to respond to it, and ask what their own Christian responses to this situation are. In mutual listening a huge gap would appear, but we could begin from there and move patiently toward a dialogical relationship. Practical insights and wisdom will come up in the process. The basis of patience is the hope that if we recruit more Christians from our own base communities to work for the common good, we can give stronger voice to Christian aspirations for building the alternative world.

Secondly, the church has the power to serve as a vitalizing and organizing core for local communities. In Korea, some of small-size and mid-size churches have attempted to explore this possibility in both urban and rural areas and have proved their viability. In the churches that engage in the life of grassroot communities at various levels, *minjung*^{iv} could reclaim their God-given human dignity as the subjects of history. Christianity also has the potential to build an international local-to-local networking. For instance, some Christian communities in Korea, which practice life-giving agriculture, develop alternative energy, and explore alternative schooling, are

devoted not only to serving the rural villages where the old and the poor constitute the majority, but also to sending their own missionaries to the rural areas of other Asian countries to help the local residents to develop economically autonomous life style. These Christians don't insist upon forming the church itself, but I heard that it often comes later naturally. This kind of attempt can make the grassroot Christian communities the place of hope for *minjung*, and build a networking for an alternative globalization that focuses on fostering the community life in a non-market way. In this vein, it is noteworthy that the church in Korea seems to have the potential of hewing a new path for peace and reunification through a promotion of the sharing and the relationship building between the North and South local communities. For instance, a church in Jeju Island in South Korea played a key role in the local efforts of sending boxes of tangerine to a village of North Korea as a sign of solidarity since the late 1990s. As the church and the related local communities did not stop what they had been doing even after the critical IMF crisis hit the economy of South Korea, the North Korea village was touched by Jeju communities' genuine spirit, and invited 250 local people. They visited North Korea via a direct air route between Jeju (South Korea) and Pyongyang (North Korea) in 2002. All together, these examples of local, local-to-local, and international networking activities among grassroots communities, with the church or Christian groups as their dynamic major servants, are the testimonies to the potential of Christianity to be utilized for sustaining local communities and for envisioning an alternative globalization that is decentralizing.

IV. If our hope for the renewal of the church could come true in reality, a number of awakening methods are to be utilized. We grope for the ways to overcome the reluctance and hesitations of the church to engage in prophetic advocacy. Above all, we need to provide a meaningful and relevant biblical interpretations to help the church understand its own identity and vocation more fully, and to promote its commitment. I am fully aware of the ambivalent function of the Bible. The Bible could function as the 'most dangerous book in the world.' It did function as such sometimes in the past. I agree with the people who pinpoint some negative meaning field in the Bible which perpetuates the exclusion of indigenous people, the collusion of the Bible with the building of the empire, and the role of the Bible to legitimate the rule of masters. At the same time, however, it is also true that history has witnessed to the transforming power of the Bible. We don't have time to explore what kind of hermeneutics it would take to deal with this ambivalence of the Bible. I just would like to revisit a well-known saying that we can't throw out a nursery of babies when throwing out bath water. The Bible is to be constructively engaged for the renewal of the church and its mobilization in the cause of prophetic advocacy.

I think that one of the commonalities of the story of the people of God in the Bible and the story of the people of God in the 21st century is the imperial framework. As you know, the story of the people in the Bible evolves along with the rise and fall of the empires such as Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Hellenistic Kingdoms, and finally the Roman Empire. Jesus was crucified by the Roman soldiers. Although the cross and crucifixion came to be used metaphorically to signify a personal surrender to one's own mission or the transcendence of the old self, the bottom line is that crucifixion was historically the most horrible punishment of those who threatened the status quo of the Roman Empire and resisted against it. The story of the Bible is in a sense about the journey of faith to create an alternative space and culture of life in the empire, and I think that all of us are participating in the 21st century version of the same journey.

Not only the imperial framework, but also many inspiring texts and themes deserve our exploration. Let me visit just one biblical topos which offers a new appreciation of the church's identity and the work of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2 narrates a tale about the birth of the church. We all

know that the first church in Jerusalem was the community of the Holy Spirit. However, it has been customary to focus almost exclusively on the miracle of speaking tongues. Yet to lay exclusive stress on the miraculous workings of the Holy Spirit does not exhaust the rich repertoire of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only grants spiritual gifts and performs miracle, but also energizes the community to live up to the alternative prophetic vision. The first church “had all things in common; they would sell their possession and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44-45). The economic sharing was also practiced internationally when the church in Antioch decided that each would send relief to the believers in Judea, when the latter suffered from a severe famine during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:27-30). These proto-churches, responding to the needs of the others, embodied an economic alternative which stood in stark contrast to the dominant economic norm of limitless individualistic accumulation which disconnects the human relationship. The first faith communities, full of the Holy Spirit, operated on the basis of compassion. Their prophetic spirituality was characterized by the sensitivity to the needs of others. The religion of apathy, greed, and arrogance was simply not there. This kind of a transformed life and practice of the community is the true miracle that the Holy Spirit performs. As a large portion of Christians is nowadays Pentecostal and the contemporary theological emphasis tends to be more given to the importance of the Spirit, the prophetic aspects of the biblical portrait of the church as well as that of the Holy Spirit need to be more explored and disseminated across numerous sectors of Christianity.

One of the crucial conditions for the renewal of the church would be the theological education. Along with relevant biblical interpretations, appropriate theological perspectives and resources as well as platforms of discussion and reflection are to be developed and provided to the church if we want to overcome the stagnant state of the church regarding prophetic advocacy. If ecumenism means unity in action for ‘life,’ it follows that we need to develop the ‘theology of life’ as well as the ‘spirituality of life’ to formulate the relevant theological and spiritual education for the 21st century ecumenical activity. If we understand life as an all-embracing space and a web of interrelated beings, the theology of life and the spirituality of life are to be characterized by an ecological sensibility of relationality which goes beyond anthropocentric obsession and fosters the respect for the rights of other life forms. They should also envision the restoration of relationship and connectedness among all human beings. As the broken human relationship reveals itself most pungently in the voices of victims injured by the social injustice, we need to develop the “theology of victims” which would build on their testimonies, stories and prayers, and to make it indispensable in the process of constructing the theology of life and cultivating the spirituality of life. The Christian traditions would provide rich resources to mold them, but the other cultural and religious traditions are to be consulted to find a broader fertile ground to foster a planetary life. The understanding of life and its expression could differ in each context. Therefore it would be of great help to share and exchange useful theological resources, arising from our immediate contexts, through a networking of theological institutions.

V. Finally, I would like to take some minutes to tell my own personal story in the Korean context. While many churches in Korea are imbued with the gospel of prosperity, Christianity in Korea has a strong tradition of prophetic witness. Firstly, Korean Christianity played a key role in the historic March-First Independence Movement in 1919 against Japanese imperialism. Secondly, during the latter half of the 20th century, Korean Christianity actively participated in the democratization movement and the human right struggles. Thirdly, the prophetic tradition of Korean Christianity manifests itself in diverse trajectories in the contemporary society. An example is life-

fostering movement in both urban and rural areas which is initiated by Christians. A number of former *minjung* church ministers and activists have now settled down in the rural area, doing organic and natural farming and practicing life-giving agriculture. I have an altar-decoration piece, all made of recycled fabric, displayed on the wall of this hall. It was made by a woman minister, Rev. Hooim Park, who used to work for a *minjung* church consisting of the poor women and children in the urban area in the 1980s and the 1990s and now settled down in a rural area, practicing natural farming. She is now preparing for the basis of alternative community of Christian activists who want to join her gradually in the future. We also observe the counterpart attempts in the cities. This kind of life-fostering movement is the expression of Korean Christianity responding to the ecological and economic crisis at both national and global levels, synchronically speaking. It is also the demonstration of a continued prophetic tradition of Korean Christianity in the 21st century, diachronically speaking.

But I found it problematic that the trajectory or the manifestation of this precious prophetic tradition was not cherished by most of the churches in Korea. And I also found it troubling that even though the PCK began to campaign for a Decade of Fostering Life in 2002 as a Korean implementation of the WCC's Decade of Overcoming Violence, it was not fully understood and practiced by local churches and presbyteries. I realized that without raising the awareness among ministers and theological students at first, no paradigm change could happen. As a teacher in a local seminary of the PCK, I felt that it was an imperative to offer a required course to the ministry candidates that would help them to come up with their own philosophy of ministry in tune with this important tradition and movement. The entire faculty agreed to my proposal to offer a required course titled 'Ministry and Mission for Life,' and decided to open this class for the second-year M.Div. students. As a chair of the preparatory committee, I found rich human resources at both local and national levels. We invited activists from diverse sectors such as environmental movement, groups working for migrant workers and multi-cultural family, groups working for peace and reunification, groups working for North Korea refugees, social welfare expert groups working on urban poor and suicidal prevention, special education expert groups working for the disabled, counseling expert groups, alternative local-economy building movement, and alternative life-giving agriculture movement. The preparatory committee also invited local ministers to participation in this process and asked them to give voice to their own field theology of ministry for life, keeping in mind this broad framework of diverse prophetic activities, most of which might be called advocacy work for the marginalized.

It took 2 years to complete the preparatory process, and I was proud of the fact that one of the small schools in the PCK made this transformation of theological curriculum possible. In February this year, I went to see the General Secretary of the PCK to ask him to give a sermon at the worship which would celebrate the launching of the "Ministry and Mission for Life" as a required course for the M.Div. students. On that day, on my way home, full of happiness and thankfulness, I received a call to come to a committee meeting of the board of trustees, and I did. I don't want to go into the details. At that night, I found out that the board meeting decided to reject the extension of my contract. I was fired. Of course they have the right to do that but only with a proper procedure and the appropriate reason. There was no proper procedure to respect my human right, and the reason they presented was a carefully designed scheme which would bring flagrant social disgrace to me and which I couldn't understand nor accept. It happened only one week before the spring semester would begin and my classes were abruptly canceled. They wanted to evict me out of the office. The worst part was their threats and intimidations. I couldn't believe my ears. In shock over this nonsense violation of human right at the university level in the democratized Korea and at the

Christian institution, I lost 5 pounds within only a few days and later suffered from retinal bleeding which blocked my vision. In comparison to the stories I heard here, my experience is merely a tempest in a teacup. But at that time it was very scary. At first, I just didn't want to deal with this kind of local power group and was ready to leave. But soon I realized that it was not a matter of job, but a matter of justice, and that I needed to live up to what I had been teaching to my own students. Gradually I came to find that my case was the beginning of the things to happen later to other members of the faculty. Some of them had been trying to transform the institution at the risk of a confrontation with the bureaucratic minions of the powerful, embedded in the school structure, who prevent a proper communication between the faculty and the board of trustees. Later I learned that I was chosen because they wanted to make an example of me, the sole woman professor in the faculty, because I don't have a local root, and because my voice and activities irritated this tiny undemocratic but very powerful group of local patriarchs.

I decided to fight back. My lawyer and others told me that my case would win 100% legally, but that reinstatement might take three to ten years on the basis of precedents, and especially because this present government supports the return of the conservative ownership of the university which prefers a dismissal of progressive thinkers. I had to make myself ready for that. Then I wrote a letter for my family, friends, students, and those concerned, which explained why my classes were abruptly canceled and why I couldn't accept the decision of the board meeting, and posted it to the school's website. More than two thousand people read it, and I became a beneficiary of unexpected advocacy by my students, colleagues, ministers, the General Assembly of the PCK, and Christian civil society. Even my Korean American friends living in NY wrote for me, and a Korean WCC staff, Rev. JuSeup Keum, wrote for me from Geneva. And a miracle happened. The local, national, and international advocacy posed such a pressure to the board of trustees that they decided to withdraw their decision and reinstated me at the end of April. I heard that this kind of quick reinstatement in two months is unprecedented in what I might jokingly call the history of the reinstatement fight of fired professors in Korea. To speak frankly, I cannot say that I have completely recovered from this trauma, both physically and psychologically. At the same time, it is also my confession that I witnessed to and experienced a miracle performed by people's advocacy. Despite the harsh reality in which I need to practice my own share of 'intramural ecumenism,' I am more optimistic than pessimistic, as I have many reasons of hope because of the solidarity among the people of God.

What is advocacy? From my own experience, advocacy is a sign that God of truth and compassion is still alive and that I am not alone in the wilderness. Advocacy is something that takes place when people who care enough to act exist somewhere. Advocacy is a blessing that comfort those who are mourning and lamenting in the dark night of soul. Advocacy is an energy-giver that enables the victim to take courage to speak and fight a good fight. Advocacy is a bridge-builder that establishes the everlasting relationships among people.

Please allow me to conclude my speech with the words of the Bible: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen"(Heb 11:1); "Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up"(Gal 6:9). I look forward to seeing you in Busan, the venue for the 10th WCC Assembly, in 2013. God bless you. Thank you.

World Council of Churches
Fifth Annual United Nations Advocacy Week
Friday November 20, 2010
Closing Keynote
Paul Divikar

An Advocating Church

1. Dalit reality – 167 million in India (2001 census) facing ‘Hidden Apartheid’ in the largest democracy of the world, through an entrenched system of hierarchy and discrimination. It continues virulently even today as I speak.
 - a. Segregation - housing, dining and marriage
 - b. Discrimination in access – Education, livelihood means, civic amenities and social relationships
 - c. Denial of access – employment, housing, capital and labour markets
 - d. Restrictions in behavior – marriage, dress code, usage of civic amenities
 - e. Violence as backlash on assertion – 24,500 crimes of serious nature per year (conservative estimate by Govt of India) ranging from verbal abuse and extreme humiliation of naked parading, tonsuring, forcing people to eat human excreta, urine to sexual assault, battery, torture, rape, murder and lynching,
2. Apart from this the cultural and economic rights have denied and gross violations like land and housing rights, denial of employment opportunities, demonising the culture, criminalising the youth, denying right to protest and naming them as terrorists continue to day despite the facade of constitutional measures, laws and ‘progressive policies’ in vogue.
3. Church in India is identified as a Dalit Church except in Kerala and North East states and a large proportion of membership from Dalit communities. A Positive aspect. This has resulted in Dalits gaining an ‘inner liberation’, being made in the image of God, accepted fully and eligible for free entrance to ‘heaven’. Church is an inner sanctuary for Dalits in India.
4. A challenge – the institutions which dehumanise Dalits, and the violence against Dalits that is freely unleashed when Dalits gain a descent living, that is not challenged. The theology and the leadership have connived to keep the Dalits from challenging the forces that dehumanise and exclude from communion with the rest of the society and creation is not regarded as the mission of the Church.
5. The Dalit concerns are seen as physical deprivations on the one hand or esoteric and transitory identities which will be resolved in the world to come or the ‘other world’. Therefore a charity approach is taken.
6. There was a shift in perception when an initiative by Christian and non-Christian human activists decided to challenge these external structures which perpetuate contemporary forms of slavery and crimes when they are challenged.

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7. Launching a massive local, national and international action and advocacy we mobilised secular forces. Christian church outside of the country was the first to see this as a mission of the Church and has strengthened this. WCC and LWF extended intense support at the UN bodies. Church in India is still struggling to deal with this internally and to further strengthen this internally.
 8. Within a short time, during the WCAR – Durban conference, it became one of the most visible issue paving way to several UN bodies like CERD having a thematic discussion and a General Recommendation passed, appointment of two Special Rapporteurs, Drafting of UN Principles and guidelines for Elimination of Discrimination based on (Caste) Work and Descent. We are now working towards bringing about a Declaration for Elimination of Discrimination based on Caste.
 9. This is only the beginning! There is lot of work within the states and at the national level apart from within the congregations that needs to be taken up. The Challenge before us is how to make this an institutional priority for Church in India. Do we have a theology which can accompany dalit and IP and other vulnerable communities in India to challenge these institutions and bring peace and justice?
 10. Strategies differ from the religio-cultural settings of each of the countries and the societies we represent. There many of us here who have Christianity as a major cultural setting. There are some others that Christianity and Christian culture is regarded as a minority in other parts of the world that we come from. And here the strategy for Church needs to be different. In both these cultural settings the Churches have critical responsibilities – what are the nuances? Intersectional – a critical focus on the work – IP, Climate Change and extreme conflict and human rights violations. Intersectional and the layers of exclusion that gets caught in the invisibility of the violations that take place.
 11. WCC has an important role in the advocacy. But has limited human resources. So we need to strategise our interventions. The people/representatives who are here may not represent the churches back home. There may be an animosity here, which needs to be addressed between the ecumenical thought and the congregational desire of how mission needs to be shaped. We need to have a new way of partnership so that Churches will have a creative partnership with the communities hurting. There is a human resource crunch which needs to be taken note of. At the same time we need to explore the possibility of volunteers who can be supported during the HR committees at the UN for advocacy preparations in the sessions. Is there a need to revive the ‘urgent action appeals’ going from the WCC. All this will ensure that we have a comprehensive strategic role for human rights interventions for WCC.
 12. What is the member churches’ understanding of the HR Advocacy and the role that WCC should take? Is there a shared understanding of what it should be? Would it have an educative role? *Post-Declaration* strategy for member churches need to be shaped and streamlined. How to get the goals realised. How to translate this into clear advocacy goals both at the UN (NYC, GVA) and also in the missions in the capitals where we are strong.
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- a. NEED TO have three streams flowing –
 - i. Theological stream as to how this can be translated into our teaching, workshop and interpretations within the Churches.
 - ii. Membership education and mobilisation on how to proceed with the churches.
 - iii. Sharp advocacy strategies both for policy implementation and breaking impunity as well as bringing a change in policy to address the challenges we are facing.