

Summary of Proceedings

“GOD OF LIFE ACCOMPANY US IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS A LIFE WITH DIGNITY, PEACE AND JUSTICE”



*Global Ecumenical Network
on Migration Annual Meeting
November 4th – 8th 2012*

Legend Villas, Manila, Philippines



World Council of Churches, 150, route de Ferney, P.O. Box 2100, 211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

The annual Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) Meeting begun on Monday 5 – 8 November 2012 and was held at the Legend Villas Hotel in Manila, Philippines. The GEM was held prior to the Theological Statement on Migration working group's meeting Friday 9-10 November 2012. Dr Gerrit Noort moderated the morning session of the first day and the National Council of Churches of the Philippines Teatro Ekumenikal led the opening worship. The theme for the meeting was: "God of Life, Accompany us in our Journey towards a life with Dignity, Peace and Justice".

The morning session included welcome remarks by representatives of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines and the World Council of Churches

Our connections with you, God of Life, will bind our love in making ourselves the instruments of your work towards justice and peace in the whole world. Accompany us in our journey towards a life with Dignity, Peace and Justice.

respectively and continued with presentations focusing on the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Mr William Gois of Migrant Forum Asia in his presentation reflected on the history of the convention, other relevant United Nations and International Labour Organisation conventions and the important and strategic role the convention plays as an internal tool in the protection of migrant workers and their families. The

presentation was followed with responses by Rev. Cynthia Ca Abdon – Tellez representing Mission for Migrant Workers – Hong Kong, Fr. John Van Deerlin Lawson from the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia and Mr Alfredo Barahona of the Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives and ended with question, answer and discussion session all was held in plenary.

The afternoon session focused on the Biblical reflection on theological, spiritual, ethical, ecclesiological challenges and the tensions between national identity, citizenship and ethnicity on one hand and diversity on the other and Dr Elizabeth M. Mutambara representing African Women Theologians, made the presentation while Dr. Victoria Kamondji Moderator for Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe moderated the session.

This session continued with small group discussion facilitated by a member of the group. The small group discussions focused on indentifying the contextual challenges to Churches and the Ecumenical Movement in their response that are theological, ethical, spiritual and ecclesial. In Plenary a representative of each small group reported back and Rev. Catherine Graham of the Anglican Church – Hong Kong gave the overview summary of the key issues and decisions of the day. Ms Seta Hedashian of the Middle East Council of Churches was the moderator. National Council of Churches of the Philippines Teatro Ekumenikal led the closing worship for the day.

Tuesday 6th November, 2012, the second day of the meeting Rev Nora Colmenares of General Board of Global Ministries was moderator. Rev. Dr. Rommel F. Linatoc of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines Teatro Ekumenikal led the morning worship. The morning session then continued with presentations focusing on the "People Dying on their Journey in search for life with dignity" and Ms Doris Peschke, Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, gave the key note presentation. The responses were made by Ms Seta Hadesian – Middle East Council of Churches, Rev. Keith Briant – National Council of Churches Australia and Mr. Milton Mejia – Latin American Council of Churches.

The session continued with Mr. Garry Martinez of MIGRANTE International who focused on the Labour Export Policy and Migration in the Philippines and Fr. Rex Reyes was moderator.

The afternoon session focused on Theological and Biblical reflection on the tensions between the theme of the assembly: "God of Life" and People dying on their Journey in search for life with dignity. Ms Vivi Akakpo of the All Africa Conference of Churches was moderator.

The session continued with small group discussions again facilitated by a member of the group. The small group discussions focused on indentifying the Churches and the Ecumenical Movement responses that are theological, ethical, spiritual, and ecclesial and identifying the strategized that can strengthen the response. In Plenary a representative of the small group reported back and Rev. Michael Blair of the Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministries gave the overview summary of the key issues and decisions of the day. Rev. Robert Hamd of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut was the moderator. National Council of Churches of the Philippines Teatro Ekumenikal led the closing worship for the day.

Wednesday 7th November 2012, the third day of the meeting was a day of Exposure, the participants divided into seven small groups and each group visited a community of which details will be included in the report. Fr. Rex Reyes of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines gave preparatory orientation to the visits the previous evening. The participants spend most of the day out in the community and the remainder of the afternoon was left open.

Thursday 8th November 2012 Fr. Rex Reyes facilitated the sharing of experiences from the exposure trips and making a synthesis of the experiences. Ms Norma Dallaga, Ecumenical Mission for Development led the bible study on the theme "As a Pilgrim Community".

The morning session continued with presentations by Ms Seta Hadesian – Middle East Council of Churches focusing on Immigration Detention. This was followed by a theological and biblical reflection on the tension between liberty/freedom of movement and detention presented by Bishop Stephen Mwangi of the Anglican Church of Kenya, Apostle Adejare Oyewole of Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe was moderator.

This session was followed by a presentation by Rev. Deenabandhu Manchala, World Council of Churches focusing o the project activities of the Just and Inclusive

Communities and the Tenth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in Busan, South Korea in 2013. Dr Gerrit Noort, Netherlands Mission Council spoke on Religious Diversity Impact of Migration on the Church and the Ecumenical Movement. Rev Andrea Frötchling, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover and Mr Joe Moloney, Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office members of the drafting group presented the draft Theological Statement on Migration. This session, Ms Doris Peschke was the moderator.

The session continued with small group discussion facilitated by a member of the group. The small group discussions focused on how migration related issue, migrants Christian Communities, the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration will be present and participate before, during and after the WCC Assembly. Secondly the small groups discussed the theological statement on migration before, during and after the Assembly.

In Plenary a representative of the small group reported back and Rev. Keith Briant of the National Council of Churches of Australia gave the overview summary of the key issues and decisions of the day, Ms Vivi Akakpo of the All Africa Conference of Churches was the moderator. Rev. Asora Amosa of the Pacific Conference of Churches facilitated the conference evaluation.

The National Council of Churches of the Philippines Teatro Ekumenikal led the closing worship for the meeting. Worship was followed by dinner and later in the evening the solidarity night was held at which all the national delegates, member churches, the cultural performers and invited guests attended.

CONCEPT PAPER

God of Life, Accompany us in our Journey towards a life with dignity, Peace and Justice"

The Just and Inclusive Communities Program (JIC), since the last WCC assembly in Porto Allegro, Brazil in 2006, has been actively promoting the concerns and contributions of people who experience discrimination and marginalization in the church and society with a view to enrich the life and ministry of the World Council of Churches. Migration and the Ecclesial Landscape is one of the concerns addressed under JIC program.

The GEM is a unique ecumenical instrument that bring together Regional Ecumenical Organizations, WCC member churches, Related Ecumenical organizations, activists, theologians and civil society addressing issues related to 'migrants'. This year we are inviting a group of fifty participants the meeting will include a day of encounter when our host the National Council of Churches in the Philippines will organize visits

to activities implemented by their member churches. The GEM meeting will take place at the Legend Villas, Manila November 4 – 11, 2012 including two days for the working group on the theological reflection on migration.

At this meeting we will address three main issues related to 'Migrants': Migrants Workers and their Families, Immigration Detention, and People dying on their Journey to find a Dignified Life. Each issue will be backed by a theological, spiritual, ethical and ecclesiological contextual reflection in order to critically analyze.

The main goal will be to Determine and plan how the GEM will participate at the Tenth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea in 2013 WCC Assembly by addressing:

- How are the churches and the ecumenical movement responding to meeting the needs of migrant workers and their families, immigration detention and people dying on their journey to find life with dignity?
- What are some of the theological, ethical, spiritual, ecclesial and contextual challenges faced by the church and the ecumenical movement?

*Even though I walk
through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will
fear no evil, for you are
with me; your rod and
your staff, they comfort
me*

Psalm 23 vs. 4

- How can the churches and ecumenical movement response be strengthened?
- Strategies and ensure 'Migration' is addressed at the Tenth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea in 2013.

Theological Reflection on Migration: To deepen and strengthen this reflection further, this conference will be followed by the third meeting of a select group of theologians. This working group of theologians will stay for two more days, November 9 -10 2012, to reflect theologically on the issues emerging from the sharing during the first four days, with a view to incorporate the new identify theological, spiritual, ethical challenges and ecclesiological questions into the existing draft in order to:

- Work towards the final version of the theological statement on the phenomenon of migration and its implications to churches and the ecumenical movement.
- Determin how the theological statement will enrich the discussions towards and at the Tenth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea in 2013.

The expected out come of the two meetings are:

A draft theological reflection on migration document that can be handed over to the editing group

Clear decisions that can guide the JIC on activities on migration before the assembly, during and after the assembly.

OPENING REMARKS

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF THE PHILIPPINES

Ephraim Fajutagana

On behalf of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), of which I am the Chairperson, I hereby extend our warm welcome to the delegates of the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration convened by the World Council of Churches. We welcome you as partners in the advocacy, care and ministry to our migrant sisters and brothers.

In October 2008, the NCCP hosted a luncheon for Mr. Jorge Bustamante, who was then the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights for Migrants. Among those in attendance with NCCP and Roman Catholic Church leaders were representatives of the World Council of Churches and the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe. After hearing the sharing from the church representatives, Mr. Bustamante stated his appreciation for the gathering. He said that in his years of research among undocumented migrants, what he observed is the strong faith element among them. They always arm themselves with prayer and one of the first things that they look for in their countries of destination are churches.

This strong faith element among migrant workers emphasizes the significant role played by churches. It also shows the urgency of the need for dialogue, like this gathering, among churches on how to improve their ministry not only to migrants but to their families left at home. Churches in receiving countries serve as sanctuaries and places of fellowship among migrants. Some even provide legal and other material services in addition to spiritual guidance to migrants. On the other hand churches in home countries advocate for migrants' rights and minister to the families that were left behind.

While the NCCP believes that migration should be "an option, not a necessity for survival for millions of families and the Philippines" (Resolution on Migrants, 20th NCCP General Convention, November 2001), the present reality necessitates a very pragmatic action that combines prayers and pastoral care with education, advocacy and direct service. In the context of the Philippines, and many countries in the South, wherein there is widespread poverty, general malaise and lack of opportunities for a better life, what is happening is forced migration and cannot be considered as voluntary. Migration of people today, is more of a new form of slavery than a right. Slavery to feed and support systems and structures that reap huge profits, rely on cheap labour in the powerful host countries and the need for

remittances by governments in the home country in order to keep their economies afloat.

As an ecumenical community, let us continue providing spiritual care for migrants and advocating for their rights and welfare. Let us work alongside other churches and also with the Non-Government Organisations and organizations that are by and for migrants. We have many things to offer to the struggle of migrants and their families: Biblical values on faith community; liberation and hope; material and moral support; widening the ecumenical network or platform; and many other possibilities that support the most affected sector in migrant ministry.

The NCCP stands for and with the vulnerable members of the population. It has been so from the start and by God's grace will remain to be so. It is within this framework that we welcome you all and assure you of our continuing solidarity. Christian faith tells us that a better world is possible. May our gathering today radiate that hope and so kindle the hearts of all for the defence of life and may the Lord God lead us to Justice and Peace.

World Council of Churches

Deenabandhu Manchala

On behalf of the World Council of Churches (WCC) we welcome you all and thank you for being here. The Just and Inclusive Communities of the WCC covers five concerns which are: Solidarity with Indigenous People, Solidarity with Dalits, Churches Overcoming Racism, Changing Ecclesial Context: impact of Migration, and the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network. On behalf of the project we thank the worship team because you have greatly inspired us in relation to the issues that will be addressed in the next five days. We want to say thank you to the NCCP colleagues for the work, time resources and commitment that they have given in the preparations, arrangements and participation in this meeting.

The Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) event this year is very important because it helps us bring together the work of GEM that has taken place between the two assemblies and with the view to take it to the next assembly. The insights and learning's out of this meeting will be used to encourage the assembly to address migration related issues and give voice to migrant Christian Communities and individuals. The WCC 10th Assembly will take place in 2013 Busan.

This meeting will have two parts to it like the last meeting, the GEM to be followed by the Theological Statement Working Group meeting. One of the participants: Bishop George yesterday arrived at Manila airport and was deported back to India on the same plane due to visa related issues. This experience highlights the

particular problem that the rights of certain people from some countries to move freely across boundaries are violated by government laws and regulations.

Migration and the changing ecclesial landscape, the discourse around unity and mission of the church, we are here as people representing the churches, as Christians reflecting on the phenomenon of migration. Please refer to the concept paper what are the diakonial responsibilities of the churches? Are we challenged by the experiences of individuals, families and the communities of migrants? We want to focus on the theological implication of migration to the church, this will be the third meeting for the theological statement working group, and the final theological statement will be taken to the assembly.

The Philippines is the most suitable country to host the GEM as the population is consistently grappling with the implications and impact of migration as shown at the start of this meeting. The church has become a migrant church, they are people within the churches, how does the church become a just and inclusive communities and how to they then promote a just and inclusive voice within the community.

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Sen. Manny Villar

I would like to commend the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) for organizing and hosting the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM) meeting and inviting MIGRANTE International.

Migration is a topic and an issue that is very relevant to our country, as the number of Filipino migrants continues to increase every year. In fact, according to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), some 730,378 Filipinos migrated to 80 countries from 2002 to 2011. Moreover, the CFO cited that from 1980 to 2011, the total number of permanent Filipino migrants was 1,856,455.

Migration is a reality, very commonplace in our society. Almost all Filipinos have a relative who is a migrant worker or what we call Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). These OFWs are hailed as the "Bagong Bayani" or "Modern Day Heroes" of our

country for the millions of dollars they infuse into the Philippine economy, and their heroic sacrifice of living away from their families and loved ones in search of the proverbial 'greener pasture' in some faraway land. The so-called Filipino Diaspora that we are all part of.

Senator Manny Villar and I, as a Congresswoman for 10 years (from 2001 to 2010) representing the Lone District of Las Piñas City and as the Managing Director of the Villar Foundation, are very familiar with issues related to migration and problems faced by migrants including their families.

Our very first house buyer in our Camella Homes Development is an OFW by the name of Mr. Emil Maghirang; he was our "fairy god-father" so to speak who gave us our break in the housing industry. That is why we have a soft-spot for OFWs.

Our Sagip OFW office and program have been helping OFWs deal with various problems: labour, financial, medical etc. We help repatriate distressed OFWs, provide skills training to returnees and other assistance to their families as well.

As a Congresswoman, I was one of the principal authors of Republic Act 9208 or the "Anti – Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003 which promotes human dignity, protect the people from threat of violence and exploitation, eliminate trafficking in persons and mitigate pressures for involuntary migration and servitude of persons. Trafficked persons outside the Philippines fall under the category of "Overseas Filipino in Distress" and as such they are entitled to all legal assistance extended by Philippine laws.

This group WCC, NCCP and GEM--and Senator Villar and I, including our foundation share the same advocacy. Thus, you can count on our support in your worthwhile programs to help, protect and serve the OFWs wherever they are.

We would like to invite you, on November 22, 2012; the Villar Foundation will host the 2nd OFW & Family Summit 2012 at the World Trade Centre. It intends to advocate continuous education as well as skills training as keys to socio – economic improvement for many of the Filipinos especially OFWs.

Almost all Filipinos have a relative who is a migrant worker or what we call Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). These OFWs are hailed as the "Bagong Bayani" or "Modern Day Heroes" of our country for their heroic sacrifice of living away from their families and loved ones.

Moreover, We hope that you would continue advocating migration issues at the United Nations and with other organizations, and deepen understanding of global migration issues and concerns particularly on the focal themes that you have identified: "migrant workers and their families", "immigration detention", and "people dying on their journey to find a dignified life".

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

Migrant Forum Asia

William Gois

International Labour Standards (ILS)

- ILO Conventions and Recommendations
- Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998
 - All ILO Members must respect, promote and realize the principles concerning the fundamental rights that are the subject of the conventions recognized as fundamental even if they have not yet ratified them
 - Special attention to be given to the problems of persons with special social needs, including migrant workers
- Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008
 - Articulates ILO's Decent Work agenda

******* Please note that these are notes from William's presentation, the power point is attached.**

"Three complementary universal instruments provide the necessary legal framework not only for protection of migrants' human rights; include labour rights, but also for national migration policy and international cooperation to regulate migration. These are the:

- 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)
- ILO Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (C-97)
- ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (C-143)

The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) explicitly applies the rights elaborated in the International Bill of Rights (Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 1996 International Covenants on Political and Civil Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) to the specific situation of migrant workers and members of their families. Other instruments have similarly done so for other groups (e.g., women, children persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples). This makes the ICRMW a comprehensive instrument of legal guidance for States in the formulation of migration policy. The complementary ILO Conventions on migration for employment (C-97 and C-143) provide specific standards regarding migrant worker employment.

The fundamental importance of the ICRMW and the complementary ILO Conventions is that they provide a comprehensive normative framework for defining national and international migration policy under the rule of law. They outline a right based approach, but are far more than human rights treaties. They set parameters for a wide range of national policy and regulatory concerns, and they delineate the agenda for inter-State consultation and cooperation on most pertinent issues, including exchange of information, cooperation in combating irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, pre-departure orientation for migrants, orderly return and reintegration in home countries and others.

The ICRMW draws in part from concepts and language in the two ILO Conventions. It extends considerably the legal frame work for migration, treatment of migrants, and prevention of exploitation and irregular migration. It covers the entire migration process of migrant workers and members of their families: preparation, recruitment, departure and transit; stay in States of employment; and their potential return to and reintegration in the home country or States of residence." (Guide on Ratification, ICRMW-The International Steering Committee for the Campaign for Ratification of the Migrants Rights Convention"

It will be very interesting to see what reflections come out of this meeting especially in relation to the following:

The theme of the meeting is asking God to accompany us on our "Journey" what t journey we are asking God to accompany us on.

The Draft Theological Statement on Migration title "The other is my Neighbour" the concept of the other, at no other time in human history has the notion, the image of the other been so polarised.

Neighbour – as Christians we are very familiar with the concept of neighbour – we need to redefine this word, revive the spirit of neighbourhood and strengthen social support networks and communities in welcoming your neighbour.

The International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) 1990 is a convention for workers even though the International Labour Organisation (ILO) had already prescribed the concept on none discrimination included in an older convention. The ILO as an institution has played a key role in developing the ICRMW instrument. The ICRMW convention is not something new, it has a long history and the human community has grappled with these issues in the past and they are still grappling with them now. The issues have become more and more contentious and more polarised. We should list down all the different conventions relevant to the ICRMW identify which ones have already been ratified by different countries and use these as an entry point to lobbying for the ratification of the ICRMW.

The fundamental importance of the ICRMW and the complementary ILO Conventions is that they provide a comprehensive normative framework for defining national and international migration policy under the rule of law.

Two ILO migrant related conventions already existed before ICRMW 1990. The initial discussion for the creation of the ICRMW brought a lot of debate as to whether there was a need to have another convention. Internationally there are two main bodies that deal with setting standards. The United Nations (UN) sets human rights standards and ILO makes labour standards. At the time 1980 it is clear that there was a political will among the international communities and governments. This is clearly demonstrated by the introduction of two conventions on migrant workers and on irregular migration.

Countries that were willing to sign and ratify the different conventions at that time are not able to do the same now because the discussion has become so polarised. There was still a will at UN to push the debate on migration governments created the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) which provides a space for governments to discuss. The need for a space shows that governments recognise the need to come together in a non binding process, there is not enough political will to come together in a binding way, however, we must recognise and make use of the available forums. What about the churches, are the churches, church institutions, related agencies, and Christian communities willing to creating a space that helps them come together in processes that are binding or not?

All previous conventions started from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948 and then all the other conventions informed the ICRMW including the principle of non discrimination. Looking at the ICRMW how much of the Christian concept of loving your neighbour, seeing God in the other, get reflected in the principle that govern the convention.

All the other conventions are important and it is important to see the historical process that has led to the ICRMW so that we can say we are not asking for anything new. There is an international body of law that emphasized that migrants should have the same rights as the citizens of the host country even before the ICRMW.

Of all the 9 human rights conventions the Migrant workers rights convention is the longest with 93 articles. The working group that was formed to develop the ICRMW looked at all the existing conventions and they identified and found articles that could apply to migrants put them together into one, it took them ten years to finish (1980 – 1990).

When more thinking and reflection is done in relation to the mobility patterns that we look at today you will find that there are migration patterns that the convention does not cover. It is a very broad convention and does not single out any one in particular; instead the convention says all migrants and their families including children. It is encompassing because it includes all people with and without documents, irregular and regular migrants all of them would fall under this convention. Refugees are not included under the migrant rights convention because there was a refugee convention already in existence.

This is important from the Christian perspective which sees all human beings as created in the image of God and that all deserve life with dignity. How then will churches and Christians use this principle to shift the world view to be inclusive, because the governments are making distinctions and excluding some people?

Article 16 is a daily encounter for those dealing with advocacy, there is no provision for confiscation of documents and passport and that is why now it is being called new forms of slavery. Embassies and foreign missions are lobbying for shelter for their nationals, because the minute you leave your employer you are identified as a runaway, and you become undocumented and in an irregular state and the government then clamp down on you, and in some countries embassies cannot have shelters.

Part 4 of the convention talks about cooperation and consultation at bilateral and multilateral level but whether enough of this is happening we have to ask ourselves, an article 16 states that we must collaborate to reduce irregular migration there is a mechanism to address this.

46 states that have ratified the ICRMW it is not enough and that is why the campaign but on the other hand it is a big number if you take into account what happened to previous convention. It is a myth that only sending countries have ratified the convention because migration patterns now none of the countries are exclusively sending or destination countries.

There are some obstacles to ratifying the ICRMW, we must make sure we can comply with all the 93 articles in the convention, different line of agencies and coordination is not always easy, e.g. ministry of labour will have different perspective on migration with homeland security who will feel it is a threat. There is fear expressed by governments who think the system would be abused, but there are channels that can be used to reduce the impact of abuse. Canada feels they offer migrants better rights than the ones offered in the convention.

Where does faith come in; in this prevailing world, where is the world we would like to see, or that we see, shifting a political will is changing a mind set, changing the world view, come up with something substantive that would help us move forward.

There is a lack of political will and this is why the churches can play a role because right now the world looks at the other as one to fear, one who is a security threat, one to be detained and migrants are becoming an invisible population in most countries. Where does faith come in; in this prevailing world, where is the world we would like to see, or that we see, shifting a political will is changing a mind set, changing the world view, come up with something substantive that would help us move forward.

RESPONSES

MISSION FOR MIGRANT WORKERS - HONG KONG Cynthia Ca Abdon -Tellez

"We dream of a society where families are not broken up by their urgent need to survive. We dream of and will actively work for a homeland where there is opportunity for everyone to live a decent and humane life."

These words were shared to us by one of the first clients we assisted who eventually became one of the pioneering leaders of a migrant organization in Hong Kong. Powerful and moving, these words encompass the deepest desire of migrant workers the same time as they encapsulate what has been and still are the inhumane nature of the migration design of labor- home and host countries.

These were the words that sustained my faith in the mission I have been a part of since its establishment more than 30 years ago.

These were the words that sustained my faith in the mission I have been a part of since its establishment more than 30 years ago. The Mission for Migrant Workers was established in 1981 in the midst of an upsurge of labor migration and systematization of the labor export program particularly of the Philippines – that is why it used to be called the Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers – and is currently the longest-existing independent and church-based institution that attends to migrant workers in distress.

Due to the increase in migration in within the region coupled with the feedback we get from the commercial media, from our networking activities, from friends, relatives and from stories of families on the condition of migrants in other countries. We established the Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (then Asia Pacific Mission for Migrant Filipinos) to deepen the investigation on issues and concerns of migrants in the Asia Pacific region. We focused on migrants who are in the Middle East region that has been a traditional destination for migrants. We replicated the work of the Mission and established organizations for mutual aid and empowerment.

A product of the cooperation of churches in Hong Kong and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP), the Mission immediately took on the work of understanding and addressing the everyday problems of migrant workers, immersing with the migrants, and developing the already present community spirit of migrants into collective endeavors' for the betterment of their condition. We were very grateful for the initiative of the churches (*e.g. the St. John's Cathedral in Hong Kong which adopted us as one of their outreach programs*) involved heightening its ministry among migrants and open its doors as a sanctuary for migrant works – those who are shunned of their rights, discriminated and oftentimes persecuted.

The Mission's establishment then and its continued existence up to now is an affirmation of the fact that there have been no qualitative fundamental changes in the condition of migrant workers and the root causes of their vulnerability to exploitation and oppression as migrants. The number of migrants especially of women migrants has risen exponentially. The countries exporting workers and countries receiving them have also increased; but the stories are essentially the same, the experiences are real, and the mission for empowerment remains.

*After the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and members of their Family was approved, only then did we know that **DOMESTIC WORKERS AND TRAINEES** were not considered workers! Yet there tens of thousands of women who do domestic work in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, Taiwan hiring trainees and other countries in the Middle East. Thus, the campaign for the recognition of domestic work as work was started and paid off!*

"I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

Acts 3:6 says

In host countries, exclusion of migrants in all spheres is the norm. While their labor is utilized to the hilt and is part of the foundation that drives socio-economic and even civil and political activities move forward. Migrant workers suffer from exclusion especially when such is deemed by governments as necessary to salvage their economic health and political stability. In short, the disposability of the rights of migrant workers is always present and further highlighted when economies come unhinged.

Early this year, the campaign for permanent residency of migrant domestic workers in Hong Kong hogged national headlines. The reaction of the government to the petition for such brought to fore the social exclusion issue of migrants. Politicians desperate for votes from the unknowing public even used the issue to paint doomsday scenarios and drum up xenophobia. Public and online forums, migrants were even called "cockroaches" migrants remained quiet. However when the news came out to the public migrants were made to sleep in toilets and other unsuitable places like laundry rooms due to the mandatory live-in policy.

If social exclusion exists and intensifies in Hong Kong considered by some – sadly misinformed – as a "better" place for migrants, what more for other countries in the region largely acknowledged as notorious in its treatment of foreign laborers?

Governments of sending countries like Philippines and Indonesia, meanwhile, are more content to sit back and let their nationals live through, and die from, the horrors they experience as migrant worker. At times when the governments are hit repeatedly with criticisms, they will resort to suspension of deployment in a particular country like the Philippines with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or Indonesia

with Malaysia. However, this does not last long for the inherent crisis of these countries makes their labor-export program an integral part of their national plans.

For these countries, migrant workers are chattels sold even to the lowest bidder. For as long as remittances continue to flow, for as long as national income is generated through fees and other taxes, and the ever-present social volcano due to unemployment and poverty is averted, they can turn a blind eye to hundreds of their nationals in prison, thousands summarily and violently deported, and the numerous migrant women raped, beaten and even killed. They perfunctorily look into complaints of overcharging of recruitment agencies or irresponsibility of government officials but do not address them effectively and strategically.

"For a long time, others have spoken on our behalf. Now, we speak for ourselves."

Even international initiatives such as the Global Forum for Migration and Development are geared towards perpetuating migration that is utilized for lopsided unsustainable development. For host countries, the current discourse on migration and development is centered on cornering the most skilled but cheap foreign workers. Meanwhile for sending countries, the focus is on how overseas labor market can be further and further expanded to absorb their ever-increasing army of unemployed and underemployed.

Migrant workers were borne out of crisis, work and live in a state of crisis, and are subjected to worsening policies and practices with the intensification of the economic, political and social crisis in the national level and in the world.

With this as the foundation, the Mission for Migrant Workers has developed and continues to develop its work in addressing the immediate needs of migrant workers and building the capacity of the grassroots to collectively address their more strategic concerns.

Crisis intervention and prevention through migrants empowerment: these sum up the lessons from our work, guide our current programs and initiatives, and the goal the Mission wishes to achieve.

Immediate and suitable crisis intervention is very important for migrant workers. In a situation where they are often uninformed, feel alone, and authorities they expect will help fail them, provision of assistance from the likes of the Mission and even of their peers in community organizations is crucial. Every year, the Mission serves from 3,500 to 4,000 migrants in distress with problems that range from contract violations to rape and other forms of violence. They are provided paralegal assistance, psychosocial support, temporary shelter and also referrals to Mission partner organizations in other countries.

These services of the Mission are distinct but not separate from, and actually serve, our aim of empowering the grassroots. Acts 3:6 says *"I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"*

The Mission believes that empowerment of the grassroots migrants is the key to addressing policies with grave impacts to migrant workers, promoting policies that can lessen their vulnerability, and addressing the roots causes of forced migration.

What the formidable force that an empowered rank of migrant workers can do has been witnessed by the Mission throughout our three decades of work. From defeating policies such as the forced remittance rule of the then Marcos regime in the Philippines in the 80's, to the justice movements for migrants who have been wrongly imprisoned or condemned to death, to the Indonesian worker's successful struggles against increasing the already iron-grip hold of recruitment agencies over them resulting to debt bondage, to the successes in economic rights campaigns such as increase in the Minimum Allowable Wage of migrant domestic workers in

Hong Kong – the collective actions of migrants, be they in the streets or in dialogues in the halls of power, have been proven to be pivotal in sustaining and oftentimes winning rights-based advocacies for migrants. The many years and the long road to the UN Conventions and other International Instruments are products of such movements. Even the Philippines' *Magna Carta* for migrant workers only got there after the people's cry when a Filipino domestic worker was unjustly hanged in Singapore.

– the collective actions of migrants, be they in the streets or in dialogues in the halls of power, have been proven to be pivotal in sustaining and oftentimes winning rights-based advocacies for migrants

The principles and practice of migrant empowerment is also a counter to the noticeable bourgeoning of "parachurches" and fundamentalists even of cults who actually prey on the vulnerability of migrants to squeeze contributions from them but are nowhere to be seen in times of immediate crisis or when support for strategic issues of migrants is needed. But perseverance pays. In some parts of the Middle East, in Hong Kong, in South Korea, you will see some para-churches slowly joining campaigns for human rights of migrant workers.

"For a long time, others have spoken on our behalf. Now, we speak for ourselves."

This was stated by the International Migrants Alliance or IMA on its founding assembly in June 2008. *It may interest you to know that the IMA is composed of grassroots migrant's organizations in the Asia Pacific, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, USA and Europe.* As an advocate for migrant workers, the Mission fully supported the establishment of the IMA and continues to support its aim of

strengthening currently existing organizations of migrant workers and replicating the experiences and lessons in countries where migrants are not yet organized.

Here in the Philippines, MIGRANTE International – the global alliance of Filipinos overseas and their families – that was established in 1996 has been at the forefront of every major concern of Filipino migrants and have also lent support to advocacies of migrants of other nationalities. The same way that ATKI, an association of migrant workers from Indonesia had created alliances with other Indonesian migrant associations based on issues and have now established their strategic alliance called PILAR.

The IMA, MIGRANTE International and PILAR have proven that among the grassroots rises a powerful movement. Obstacles and repressive exclusionary measures can be overcome even in the most extreme of situation like what has been exhibited by migrant organizations in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In this empowerment process, organizations such as the Mission and advocates from different sectors of the society including the church have very important role. In our experience, there are skills and resources that are only present among advocates that are useful for the migrant's movement. There are also avenues where involvement of grassroots migrant organizations is limited by the living and working condition of migrants themselves or are internationally closed from the grassroots but can be accessed by advocates.

We have learned in our years of work that there is always the possibility that organizations such as the Mission will project themselves as leading the movement of migrant workers. Such 'messianic' tendency we believe is dangerous and, in the long run, can prove destructive to the strategic goal of migrant workers to resolve the root causes of forced migration and the co modification of migrant workers.

With the establishment of IMA and the existence of numerous grassroots migrant worker's organizations in the national level, it can be said that empowerment of migrants is not a mere slogan but a concrete and dynamic reality.

With an empowered movement of grassroots migrant workers, the Mission believes that words echoed by our client - *"We dream of a society where families are not broken up by their urgent need to survive. We dream of and will actively work for a homeland where there is opportunity for everyone to live a decent and humane life."* – will not be a pipedream but a real aim that can be achieved.

Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia **John Van Deerlin Lawson**

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING – 6 PRINCIPLES

1. Principle of Human Dignity
2. Principles of Association
3. Principle of Participation and Equality
4. 4.Principle of Preferential Option – (Protection)
5. Principle of the Common Good
6. Principle of Solidarity and Subsidiary

Ministry to Migrants in the Arabian Gulf

The Ministry of Accompaniment:

A. The Emmaus Journey (Luke 24:13-25)

As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them.

- B. Like many migrants the hopes of the two disciples have been dashed by the reality of life. Luke describes how Jesus 'comes up to them' and 'walks with them'. Thus any mission, particularly to the most vulnerable, i.e. migrants, involves taking the first step: it is Jesus who approaches them first. As a pilgrim church on mission, we must be ready to go out of our way to reach out and cross the frontiers of language, culture, race and religion so that we can welcome others." (*Fr. Bernard Hyacinth Arputhasamy SJ, Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific*)
- C. We go out to meet migrants in homes and labour camps, in prisons, hospitals, and on ships and workboats. We just don't wait for them to come to us. We visit, share meals, and spend time with them. Our apostolate to migrants has, over the years, become much more than celebrating sacraments and handing out charity. It costs a lot in terms of personal effort. It is easy to give money and verbally proclaim the Gospel but difficult to give oneself in "flesh and blood."

The Dubai based Anglican charity Mission to Seafarers operates the *MV Flying Angel*, the world's first sea going support vessel. Launched in February 2007, the vessel services the crews that call in the United Arab Emirates east coast anchorage of Fujairah (one of the largest anchorages in the world). As crew cannot come to shore for months at a time, the vessel journeys out to waiting crews daily from sun up to sun set. During the last five years it has welcomed over 100, 000 seafarers. In 2011, 25,000 seafarers enjoyed satellite Internet, telecommunications at a low cost, DVD/book library, and a chaplain on board.

D. Secondly, a mission to migrants means recognizing people. The disciples recognized Jesus because he went out to them first and walked with them on a journey, He:

- Listened to them (sharing of faith , hope, wisdom, information, advice, himself)
- Shared a meal with them (God's all embracing, inclusive love and forgiveness).

E. Thirdly, accompaniment gives rise to empowerment ("Did not our hearts burn within us")

"Likewise our own experience with migrants and their families teaches us that welcoming and walking with always leads to empowering, o that as people grow in knowledge and skills, in confidence and in hope they themselves – individually and collectively – are inspired and empowered to reach out to and work for justice for their fellow migrants." (Fr. Bernard Hyacinth Arputhasamy SJ)

There are two ways of accompaniment:

- Going out (pastoral was of walking with migrants)
- Creating space in our premises; a place to hang out, play sports, and celebrate festivals

As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them

Catholic parish compounds in the Arabian Gulf are a world unto themselves and very interesting. These are often quite large in area and crowded with people especially on weekends when disparate linguistic and ethnic groups gather for obligation Masses or bring their children to catechism. During major feasts, some parish compounds can accommodate several thousand people. Surrounded by high walls, the compound provides sacred, psychological, and social space distinct from the dominant cultural milieu surrounding it. Inside the walls, people can be at ease socially. Many migrants feel lonely and cut off at their workplace and so utilize the parish not only for prayer and devotions but to meet their family and friends, speak their native tongue, or just relax. St. Mary's Parish Dubai hosts a fully functioning cafeteria where one can obtain a substantial meal as specified times during the day. Non-Catholics and non Christina (Hindu, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs etc) often frequent the parish compound and are always made to feel welcome. They usually come to "hang out" have a snack, and visit with their friends. Those who come to the compound with a need are attended to. No one is sent away.

ii. Churches in Pots:

- A. Without this journeying, we risk becoming , in words of Rolf Pearson (ex Gulf Liaison, Middle East Council of Churches), "*Churches in Pots*" totally wrapped up in our own dogma, polity, and community concerns oblivious to the struggles outside our gates. This is a huge temptation for those of us who shepherd huge communities in the Arabian Gulf.
- B. "*Our pastoral work, despite the limitation brought about by huge number faithful, should not be reduced to sacramental work only*" (Bishop Paul Hinder, Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia)

iii. Catholic Social Teaching: 6 principles (not mutually exclusive)

1. Principle of Human Dignity

- Everyone is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ
- The human dignity of a migrant is separate from his /her legal status.
- As a church we welcome and serve all people without hidden motives.
- **Catholic Social Services – Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia:** Founded in 2012, to respond to the needs of the ever-increasing number of poor and destitute on the Vicariate (AUE, Oman and Yemen), Catholic Social Services seeks to accompany, support and come to the aid of the most vulnerable persons, work comps, among seafarers, fishermen, housemaids and those whose rights and dignity are violated.

Maritime Ministry (Mission to Seafarers/Stella Maris)

Our ministry of walking /accompaniment, the greatest difficulties entail representing seafarers in disputes with ship owners. Typically, these problems involve contractual disputes such as non-payment of wages, failure to repatriate seafarers at the conclusion of their contract, abandonment, the need for medical attention, concerns about attacks by pirates, poor accommodation or food and bullying and harassment on board.

Ship owners are often greatly surprised by our representing seafarers. We often hear, "Father why do you waste your precious time with such low class, troublesome people (i.e., seafarers). Surely you have a nice church filled with more deserving people who need you more".

2. Principle of Association

3.

- Right to have a family and to be a family.
- Marriage breakdown due to separation.

- **Family Ministry:**

In October 2009, a Family Ministry was initiated patterned on a similar ministry of long duration in Mumbai. Family Ministry with its training of "barefoot counsellors" might prove to be an effective way to use carefully selected volunteers to engage in practical and sustainable care for those migrants, who are experiencing difficulties, A Comboni Sister resident at St. Mary's Parish-Dubai who is a practicing, licensed Psychotherapist and Marriage Counsellor guides this ministry, which also includes:

- Marriage Encounter
- Couples for Christ
- Singles for Christ

"Likewise our own experience with migrants and their families teaches us that welcoming and walking with always leads to empowering"

4. Principle of Participation and Equality:

- Right to participate in society and have access to the economic, social, health and cultural networks that are necessary for human flourishing.
- Poorer migrants are often unable to access institutions and agencies that provide education and ongoing skills acquisition.
- **Social Club**

St. Mary's parish- Dubai is envisioning setting up a "social club" outside the parish proper in a rented facility that can operate as a kind of a migrant centre (as we're all migrants). This facility will kind will contain:

- A soup kitchen
- Paid staff for cleaning, opening and closing.
- No one will be allowed to sleep there.
- Trainers staff that can "sort out" problems quickly, efficiently and legally.
- Avenue offering working and unemployed migrants "Life enrichment/Skills Acquisition courses" now is underway on parish premises.

1. Life Enrichment /Skills Acquisition Courses:

- Financial Literacy Workshop
- Resume and Interview Preparation for Non - Marginal Staff

- Computer Assembly Course (Hardware)
- Excel course
- Survival English/Arabic
- Basic tailoring
- Beautician Course
- Men's Grooming
- Job fair

2. Free Medical Consulting Service

In most parishes, health professionals provide periodic medical checks and advice to people who have neither the money nor the freedom to attend regular doctors. Health checks include:

- BP, cholesterol, sugar, bone dens
- Mammogram test for ladies above the age of 35.
- Diabetes test: free glucometer kits to suffering people.
- Blood donation

3. Pro bono Legal Counsel:

-Lawyers volunteer to give free legal advice to those in need, often resolving many problems without reaching the courts.

4. Principle of Preferential Option (Protection)

- For the poor and the most vulnerable
 - Prisoners
 - Undocumented migrant workers in detention centres.
 - Unpaid labourers, seafarers, domestic workers etc.
 - Abandoned seafarers
 - Trafficked persons
- Samaritan Ministry Charity Outreach:
 - Hospitals
 - Labour camps: ("Box of Hope" food distribution)

- Prison (visits to prisoners, networking with families, financial aid, and follow-up after prisoner release)
- Financial support of AED/-to poor "in country" migrant cancer patients (after verifying all related hospital documents).
- Charity alone not sufficient ; charity and justice

5. Principle of common God:

In our life and struggles as a Migrant

- Witness to the human dignity of all persons.
- Strive to maintain peace, harmony, and social cohesion.
- Don't throw labels at people or use technical language.

Other important Considerations:

-How do we recruit staff

-How can we collaborate more concretely with other faith communities?

- How can we pool resources?

6. Principle of Solidarity and Subsidiary:

- As a human family we are independent. Cooperation and collaboration is necessary to attain our goals (**Solidarity**);

Maritime Ministry1: networking with Government Authorities:

Networking with port police and immigration has grown concomitantly and has often proven to be decisive in successfully resolving problems between seafarers and ship owners, Recently the Director of Immigration for Ras Al Khaimah's Sakr Por(near Strait of Hormuz) suggested that our Chaplaincy form a " Welfare Committee" in conjunction with both immigration and the port administration. We are looking into this.

- Looking to our own resources in areas where government support is limited (**Subsidiary**).

Maritime Ministry 2: MtS/AoS Partnership in the United Arab Emirates (UAE):

Port Ministry as a specific apostolate of the Church of England has operated in the UAE since 1962 with 2012 celebrating 50 years of giving in the Emirates. Although the Mission of Seafarers (Anglican) for most of this period was sole provider for international seafarer's

welfare and pastoral and spiritual support in the UAE, in 2007 the Apostleship of the Sea (Roman Catholic) established a chaplain in Fujairah under Catholic Bishop Paul Hinder, Vicar Apostolic of Southern Arabia, whose jurisdiction extends over the UAE, Oman and Yemen.

In 2010, in response to a request from the then functioning MtS Director in Dubai, Bishop Hinder appointed a fulltime AoS Chaplain to work in *ecumenical collaboration* with MtS. Today the existing ecumenical/institutional/financial collaboration between MtS and AoS is fully integrated and flourishing. The AoS National Director is now Manager of MtS Dubai and the Northern Emirates. A new MtS executive Director, appointed by London, arrived in mid-September.

Other important considerations:

- Networking with Civil Society and Non Government Organisation's?
- What is there, not there; what is needed
- Finding resources for what is lacking.
- Priority of paying attention to migrant issues ecumenically.

Important ecumenical conferences on Gulf Migrants

a) The Gulf Church, Migrant Workers & Muslim Society"

A conference of Gulf Leaders 14-16- September 2009

b) International I Consultation on Ecumenical Advocacy for the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrant Workers in the Arabian Gulf Region. 24 April – 3 May 2012 Alwaye, India

"We have responsibility to respond to the injustice that we see and have a vision that will challenge and enable us to do justice ecumenically."

2008 Report to the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants Itinerant People

(Apostolic Vicariate of Arabia)

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

Alfredo Barahona

KAIROS and Migrant Workers Issues in Canada

Global Ecumenical Network on Migration
November 4 – 11, 2012
Manila, Philippines

Alfredo Barahona
Program Coordinator
Migrant and Indigenous Rights
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives



One side of the story...

"The rate of unemployment and underemployment amongst immigrants is too high, ... We're bringing a lot of newcomers here only to face unemployment or underemployment in an economy with skills shortages which doesn't make much sense." Immigration Minister Jason Kenney.

Since 2008, the Conservatives have carried out major reforms to immigration policy, eradicating backlogs, overhauling the federal skilled worker program and changing the refugee system, among others.

The other side of the story...

"The government must promote positive newcomer contributions and avoid discourse that feeds misconceptions and prejudice against immigrants and refugees."
Canadian Council for Refugees

The Canadian Press October 30, 2012

******* The Power Point presentation is attached please note**

Biblical Reflection

Elizabeth Mutambara

Identity is made in relation to other people, so this identity can be one of inferiority or superiority. When we hear the work ethnicity we think about group identities. This identity is built around what people share their values, histories and it is tied to their roots and where they are coming from and sometimes to the boundaries.

Migrants from other countries in Africa who now live in South Africa have formed groups around their ethnicity. A closer look reveals that it is done in an effort to try and balance what they are and what they have found. Trying to decide on "what to I give up and what do I retain of my ethnic identity"? Sometimes this is a form of rejection to the new values, history for the host community and it is used to fight what they are being forced to become.

There are Christians who migrate some of the challenges they face are constantly reminding us that Christ continues to suffer because migrants are members of the body of Christ, when one part of the body hurts the rest of the body hurts.

Identity is an ethical issue and it is a faith issue. Identity formation is a very important aspect of the life of migrants, when people move example to South Africa some feel vulnerable because they are not getting what they expected so people go to assemble in migrant churches not only to fulfil their spiritual life but to connect with people in a social support network.

There are Christians who migrate some of the challenges they face are constantly reminding us that Christ continues to suffer because migrants are members of the body of Christ, when one part of the body hurts the rest of the body hurts. It may be happening to migrants in Africa, Asia but if we are one body we all suffer – 1 Corinthians 12 – As I prepared for this presentation I kept asking myself, where are you going with this? A biblical reflection on this issue so I went through the bible I found that migration experiences is part of our biblical history and experiences, and the reasons are not so different then if compared to today.

What is the bible saying about some of the things I mentioned, the experiences undermine human dignity and the right to life, people move because you are forced, and is it really a choice when you are forced to move in order to fed for your family.

The church needs to think about some of the things the bible emphasizes like borders – Genesis chapter 1, borders are emphasized and in these situations the government borders are emphasised justifying the need to protect the citizens and

the focus is legalistic and not human centred. Romans 13 vs. 1-7 1, Peter 2 emphasises the importance to obey the law.

Genesis 1 and 2 focusing on the image of God it is understood that all human beings are made in God's image and they are of equal value before God. They have a value just by them being Gods people, human beings are valued by God whether a migrant or not they are of equal value and have the image of God. So people who come from outside our borders are valued by God and have the potential to contribute to the common good if given the opportunity. The othering of migrants or other people we talk about overlook this fundamental principle enshrined in God's love.

God's people created in the image of God with capacity to impact society positively. Joseph is a good example who saved the land of Egypt from starvation and settled his people. Naomi and Ruth, Daniel, Esther' uncle they were resourceful and were faced with challenges, Joseph was thrown in prison. In looking at this we are thinking of the people who move – they bring with them their language, culture and values.

All human beings are made in God's image and they are of equal value before God. They have a value just by them being Gods people, human beings are valued by God whether a migrant or not they are of equal value

In the bible there were Jews who were at home and those in exile, to what extent did they assimilate, acculturation, some had very little and their goal was to return to Israel – Ezra – others adapt but they do not abandon their cultural identity – Naomi – Jeremiah encouraged those who had gone in exile to invest in their new land. Daniel and his friends refused to compromise their faith, Nehemiah returns to his home and served in court. Joseph assimilated very much and took a lot from the Egyptian culture. Ruth accompanied Naomi when she was given an option she relinquished her identity and said she would instead share the norms and customs of her mother in law.

Xenophobia – Naaman consulted the king and recommended that the Jews should be killed because of the fear of the increase in their numbers. The same argument was used for the Jews who were in Egypt and it resulted in fear of diversity by the population and the decisions by the leaders lend to abuse, slavery and violence. Therefore, from these examples what migrants are experiencing today is not new, it all there in the bible. Migrants' who settled in the Jewish society were expected to assimilate that is what we see from the Old Testament. Hospitality was expected to be extended to migrants because Israel had themselves experienced been in exile.

In the New Testament Jesus show that he stood with people who are disadvantaged and oppressed so the churches are expected to do the same.

Some of our pastors we were discussing about migrants, it is like the churches are responding bandaging the wound, challenge the churches prophetic role and seek justice for the disadvantaged.

SMALL GROUP REPORT BACK

GROUP 1

We had migrants in our group and we realised that we as a church are at cross roads. Migration is challenging the churches and we are asked to take decisions. We realise that migrants have evangelised us, there are social movements and organisations who do not necessary have a fait testimonies we confess that is we are no longer angry, human being are created in the image of God and we have to fight the injustices that they experience, we have to read the bible from the migrants perspective we have to be engaged with kindness and mercy and become one with the migrants.

GROUPS 2

We started by asking what is at stake? Human lives and human dignity is at stake every time we deal with migrants. What we felt was needed was a kind of new translation theology, rereading the analogy of Christ who at all times valued the diversity and dignity of persons. The translation of ecclesiology, human rights, economic justice, cooperation, movement would be at the very core and would open up ways towards the bibles application based on the context that we read the bible and human life.

Ecclesiology, what do we want translated from our churches? The church as a just and inclusive and be seen and lived as none discriminating communities. What does it mean to be a prophetic watchdog in the 21st century? It is critical to rediscover the prophetic voice and giving it a spiritual basis that is rooted in human dignity and to carry this principle through into future.

Advocate and fight for economic justice with human rights, how do we do the advocacy in a way that impacts society? Advocacy and solidarity, walking together, sharing a vision, a passion with migrants for something, what are the binding values for the churches that already exist?

Cooperation how can we be church while cooperating together with other non church related organisations and with all people of goodwill? The group noted that it

is actually a bigger challenge for different denominations to cooperate as churches with different backgrounds, liturgy, beliefs practices, culture, languages and the difference in what is emphasised on the gospel.

What kind of ecumenical movement do we have at heart, a shared ecumenical space, that includes immigrant communities and facing the reality that all Christians are migrant, how does an ecumenical movement look like that has processes that are binding, interventions that are binding, the ecumenical space is not a protected space but a shared space, to fill it with life.

GROUP THREE

We saw migration as a human dignity issue and we saw that all persons are migrants and that there is an imbalance that prevails. God is God of abundance but the movement of people is a movement like we have never seen before, people migrant to have a job, livelihood, what can our response be when we see some of the receiving countries exploit migrants because of their own greed. We lost the fundamental values of seeing ourselves as a community, there is need for inviting communities to be hospitable to migrant communities, it is also a theological key is generosity and community building; lastly it takes courage and patience to swim and go against the tide.

GROUP FOUR

If I am asked what do I tell the churches? Churches to be prophetic to fight against marginalization, listen to the person being marginalise, be prophetic in responding to the requirements of migrants. Let us repent so that we can be bolder in our prophetic mission and we will know where we come from. Use theological institutions like seminaries because they too need to address the issue. Students who come from communities who when they come to seminaries forget about where they came from. Can theological education helps address issues of migration. How can we use our power to influence the host countries and raise the issue of human rights, how do we empower ourselves to speak, we know the issues, understand the issues, what are our guiding principles. People are confused because of globalisation, how do we see it as something that it is not and if they are confused they are more exploited, need to be in solidarity, cooperation and collaboratively

PEOPLE DYING ON THIE JOURNEY IN SEARCH FOR LIFE WITH DIGNITY

Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe

Doris Peschke



ccme

People dying on their journey in search for life with dignity

Global Ecumenical Network on Migration,
Manila, Philippines, 6 November 2012



Created in the image of God

Migrants are

- Forced to leave their home
 - Violence and war - refugees
 - Persecution - refugees
 - Drought and famine
 - Environmental degradation, floods, natural disasters
- Seeking secure and sustainable income for their family
- Moving out of choice, e.g. to marry and form a family, or join family members
- Looking for something new in life, or
- called for a mission

RESPONSES

Middle East Council of Churches

Seta Hadesian

The Sinai desert has become a graveyard for African migrants, particularly those coming from Eritrea. Secondly the area is known to have a lot of traffickers operation there and exploiting migrants who are already in vulnerable positions. It is estimated that since the last couple of years 58,000 Africans have been smuggled through the Sinai mostly into Israel and Palestine, Israel estimates that 2,000 trafficked people come to Israel every month.

Interviews conducted by Human Sciences Network of survivors of human trafficking who are mostly from Eritrea reveal that they are held captive and experience mistreatment, and torture. The traffickers extort high amounts of money from the migrants, it is estimated that they demand anything between 15,000-30,000 Dollars for the papers and transport. However, despite the high fees people using them as an alternative and continue dying. They are being tortured, being gang raped and some suffer body burns in order to extort money from them. As a form of torture some are hang from their hands and feet. There are increasing reports of trade in human organs and that they are sold in Egypt. The World Health Organisation has reported Egypt to the United Nations accusing them of trafficking in human organs.

Situation in Eritrea: political persecution, militarisation, forced conscription, most militarized state in the world, high percentage of prisoners, detention without trial, border conflict with Ethiopia, high level of poverty all reasons for migration and mass exodus; Eritrea second highest migrant source country; alarming level of hunger.

Since 1990s women and ex-freedom fighters have gone to the Middle East as labours, often in trafficking like situation. Estimated indicate high levels of working children; 5% of the sex workers are said to be children; trafficking of children for sexual exploitation is done with the support of the Eritrean authorities. There is a visible lack of educational opportunities, fragmented society forcing people to flee to Ethiopia and Sudan as first destinations; previously Libya.

Egypt-Israel is emerging as new human trafficking routes: Involvement of Bedouin and non-Bedouin actors; migrants hold captive and ransom, threat of organ removal if ransom is not paid, families forced to pay ransom money, well established trafficking chain, Eritrean officials involved, Swiss bank account used for depositing the proceeds from trafficking

Multi-actor approach needed. Eritrea needs radical political transition, assisted by international actors. Eritrea has not ratified trafficking protocol. Egyptian government is too busy with internal affairs to bother about the Sinai trafficking route – international combined effort needed to remedy the situation; churches in the region and globally to speak out about the gross human rights violations and atrocities in the Sinai desert

National Council of Churches Australia

Keith Briant

One in four people dies in trying to reach Australia by boat, search and rescue efforts are insufficient in Australia, often also lacking political will – people criminalized as pirates; very late responses to boats in distress.

Dying starts with the deconstruction of dignity and livelihood, many also dying on route to countries that are signatories to the refugee convention. If people made it e.g. to Indonesia there is no chance for refugee status, thus boat transfer is often seen as the only option. In 2010/11, 89% of the people arriving on boats were considered as genuine refugees, compared to 43% arriving on planes. Australia is responding in harmful ways such as mandatory detention, offshore processing to boat people. January 2012 to August 7600 people arrived by boat the Australian government policies will not prevent people from coming if migration is the only survival option. Migration is related to issues of structural and global economic justice. People migrating and dying in the process is a matter of government policies which are based on human decisions.

***** *Attached to this report for your information is some statistic entitled: AUSTRALIAN BORDER DEATHS DATABASE 2000- 25 SEPTEMBER 2012 Known deaths associated with Australian Border Controls*

Latin American Council of Churches

Milton Mejia

The globalization of capital is reconfiguring the profile of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Today the region of Latin America and the Caribbean is considered to be the area that has undergone the greatest rate of urbanization in the world in the past decades. Studies have shown that currently 80% of the population of this area live in cities while in many rural areas there are mega- economic infrastructure development projects and agro-fuel produce that aim at benefitting the international

financial markets. This has been made possible by the migratory processes that have been characterized in Latin America by the phenomena described below.

People migrate to seek better economic conditions. This has led to increased migration from the countryside to cities and then from cities to other countries within and outside the region. Furthermore, there is internal displacement to make way for urban renovation projects in the historical city centres, which result in the displacement of landlords and tenants to the city outskirts.

Owing to socio-economic reasons, Latin America has traditionally been a source of many migrants. The migratory map of the Andean countries indicates that Southern Europe, in particular Spain and to a lesser extent Italy, has been their major destination. There is also a considerable flow of migrant to the United States, despite the increased restrictiveness of its immigration policy. Today new destinations are emerging of Latin Americans are also going to Asia, including countries like China and Japan and to the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East.

Other forms of migration have been the consequences of political violence and the drug trafficking. This is the case of Central America, Peru and particularly Colombia where armed conflict has generated millions of internally displaced persons and refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries.

In the past two decades a major channel for migration and the reconfiguration of territories have been the multimodal's corridors of mega-infrastructure projects such as the building of highways for regional integration, big ports for Pacific ocean trade, large plantations for biodiesel production, territorial concessions for mining and tourism development (Plan Puebla-Panamá, PPP; Initiative for the regional integration of South America, IIRSA).

All the projects are linked to multinational capital and cause the displacement of long-standing communities from their territories. This is followed by the transformation of the territory with the deviation of rivers and new inhabitants coming in as workers at the service of global capital. What is paradoxical about these projects is that they are supported both by the left wing and the right-wing governments. They all support neoliberal policies and the left-wing governments are also interested in occupying a greater space as emerging economies.

This has led to a change in the profile of Latin American migrants, for both men and women, with new characteristics: now it is constituted by a young population with an increasing proportion of women and a great diversity of ethnic groups including Indigenous Peoples, afro-descendants and peasant communities.

The causes of displacement are multiple. Some cases involve personal economic reasons, national economically-related interest groups and violence. In addition to these, recently owing to particular economic and environmental factors, the ecosystem services that had previously provided sustenance for thousands of people are no longer available and therefore these people have been forced to migrate to seek new livelihoods. Such environmental causes of migration include erosion with

the loss of soil fertility, the destruction of fisheries, and often the main problem is disruption of the rain cycle due to climate change.

As a general rule it can be affirmed that the globalization of capital has not only exacerbated inequality, exclusion and the exploitation of citizens, which has led to the increase in poverty, but is also reconfiguring the profile of migrants in Latin America, just as it is transforming its territories to benefit international capital.

This is because extractive industries have poor water management practices, jeopardize the right to water as a public good, and negatively affect food production and agriculture. This provokes migration, with entire communities becoming "environmental refugees" that are victims of the informal economy and in some cases the formal activity of a neoliberal nature, activities firmly based on resource extraction and the sale of raw materials in the global market. This leads to the shattering of the invaluable life projects of communities.

This reality shows us that, not only has there been violation of human rights as many of these groups have been displaced from their territories with violence, but that today it has been demonstrated that these types of projects are not only accompanied by violence, with displacement of human beings, but also the destruction of and violence against nature, which for us is God's Creation.

Another area in which human rights have been violated is the free trade agreements that have been concluded with the United States, Canada and the European Union with certain countries in the region. These give total freedom as regards trade issues and capital and give multinationals free reign to operate without any restrictions whatsoever. Restrictions for most human beings, on the other hand, have increased regarding the granting of visas and the freedom of movement from one country to another.

In this context of abuse, loss of rights and increased violence against Creation, in order to speak of the God of Life we have to expand the notion of the protection of human dignity that we have emphasized and include God's intention to protect and save all of Creation. This affirmation derives from the fact that God is the Creator of life and therefore of all the forms of life existing in nature, including plants, rivers and all its creatures and all must be protected.

To respond to this challenge CLAI has been accompanying displaced communities that are returning to their territories. These communities not only wish to claim their right to their land but also reject the violence against nature and claim rights on behalf of the great diversity of animals, plants, rivers and sources of water dwelling there. These communities include Indigenous, afro-descendant and peasant communities as well as social organizations seeking to build alternatives to the domination of globalized capital. **References:**

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MIGRANTE INTETNATIONAL

Garry Martinez

THE SITUATION OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS: WITNESSING AMIDST OUR PEOPLE’S DIASPORA

I stand before you as a voice of a former Filipino worker in South Korea. For ten years before I finally went home I carried the scars, the pain, the agonizing loneliness and the brutalizing labour of an undocumented worker. I was like the rest of my countrymen unmindful of the distance, the separation, and the dangers that lurk out there in destinations unknown, but armed only with a dream to better the lot of our families.

For ten years before I finally went home I carried the scars, the pain, the agonizing loneliness and the brutalizing labour of an undocumented worker.

I feel honoured that I am with you today. Because you stand there as our true church. Migrants everywhere find solace in your churches. Like shepherds tending to their wounded and embattled sheep, you have provided shelters where there are none, peace where there is violence and warmth where there is only scorn and indifference.

It is in the church that we have found our sense of community. To belong and to be accepted as an equal even in one tiny nook, in a country that despises you and looks upon you as just beasts of burden. How joyful that for a day you can find your own voice, sing your own songs, speak your own languages, and hear the ring of your own laughter. In the church we are free to share our woes, our bitterness and our anger. In the church we can unravel the indignities we have suffered from the hands of our employers, our recruiters, our very own governments. In the church we can touch the hands of migrants who went before us and after us. We can find strength in each other and the church has made this possible in many ways than one.

I brim with hope that this conference, right now, will usher in even more churches – in more countries –to open their doors and take up the plight of migrants. We will fight to keep our dignity and our persons intact despite being treated as commodities, dehumanised, or reduced to becoming like modern-day slaves. We shall cry out for our rights, we want them restored, and we trust that the church will not throw a blind eye, abandon or fail to support us especially in our darkest hour of need.

Contrary to public view migration is not so much of a choice for us.

So let me tell you how as a migrant from the Philippines I finally understood what really drove me to leave the country just like over 4,500 Filipinos that leave daily for foreign employment.

The Situation of Migrant Filipino Workers

Since the '70s, when the Marco regime institutionalized the labour export policy, up to the present more than three decades passed, the number of Filipino workers being forced to work abroad has been increasing in number. Then, as now, massive unemployment, landlessness and depressed wages are the primary push factors for this phenomenon of forced migration.

From several thousands in 1974, there is now an estimated 12 to 15 million overseas Filipino workers (OFW) deployed in more than 230 countries all over the world working as domestic helper, construction workers, entertainers, caregivers, nurses, doctors, teachers, factory workers, waiter, professionals, seafarers and many others.

Rising unemployment in the country contributes greatly to this exodus. According to data from the government, 11.15 million were unemployed by the end of 2010, 9.99 million in the first quarter of 2011. For 2012, 64.3% of the labour force is jobless (IBON Facts and Figures).

Aside from joblessness, those who do have jobs suffer very low wages. This situation is compounded by the devaluation of the peso, rising inflation and prices of basic commodities. In 2009, at least 65 million or 70% of Filipinos were living on Php 104 a day while more than half of our impoverished country men were earning not more than US \$1 a day (IBON Facts and Figures).

The Philippines has no national industries to speak of, it is mainly an import-dependent and export-oriented economy. It is also deeply indebted to rich countries such as the United States and majority, if not all, of its industries are privatized. Over the years, the gap between the poor and the big businessmen, landlords and bureaucrat capitalist widened. To address the crisis the government has resorted to a more systematic labour export policy that continues to bank on our people's desperation and poverty.

The phenomenon of forced migration is precisely rooted on these objective conditions. According to data from the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLW), 4,500 leave the country daily to work abroad. MIGRANTE International estimates that more than 30% of the total Filipino population is now OFW remittance dependent.

It is in the church that we have found our sense of community. To belong and to be and how joyful that for a day you can find your own voice, sing your own songs, speak your own languages, and hear the ring of your own laughter

Labour Export as a Lucrative Business

Labour export has become a major industry in the country. The government aggressively promotes labour export mainly because of the yearly ballooning remittances from OFWs.

In 2009, 2010 and 2011, despite the global economic meltdown, the inflow of remittances continued to surge, from US \$17.3 billion, US \$ 18.7 billion and US \$23 billion respectively – accounting for 9.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009 and 8.7% in 2010. The Philippines is now the fourth biggest labour sending and remittance-receiving country in the world, next only to India, China and Mexico.

Apart from remittances, our government also earns from state exactions. As an aspiring OFW I had to pay fees starting from application, while staying abroad, and after returning to the Philippines. An OFW shells out some P20, 000 (a little less than US \$500) for processing of documents alone before he or she leaves. Multiply this with some 1.5 million workers leaving annually and the amount is staggering.

Indeed, labour export provides a temporary resolution to joblessness and appeases the people's discontent due to wide spread poverty. But it is not sustainable and does not address fundamental problems in the economy, the very root causes of forced migration. Governments past and present continue to uphold and promote labour export because it is a very lucrative business that requires no additional expense but extracts much profit from the commodification of Filipinos cheap labour, at the expense of OFWs' lives and welfare.

Issues and Problems Faced by OFWs

Yet we migrants have to bear the cross. Every single remittance is earned by long hours of work, often in slave-like conditions, amidst race, class and gender discrimination, not to say attacks against our own persons leading to injury, infirmities, insanity, accidents or death.

The problem begins right in our own country, before it gets worse abroad. Illegal recruits prey on the naïve the innocent and the helpless by overcharging us placement fees. So much so that our earnings abroad immediately goes to paying debts before they even get to our families. And the government is no help except to bleed us dry with additional fees and charges.

As we get to our places of work, if we get there at all, we naturally expected bounties. We work as if there is no tomorrow, our bodies tired and weary, our bones almost cracking up and our minds in virtual paralysis. Racism, discrimination and xenophobia accompany us anywhere. The local population treat us with disdain calling us job snatchers, carriers of disease, rabble-rousers or criminals preying upon them. We are made to feel that as migrants we have no rights, no protection, no access to social services. We are not allowed to reap benefits from a system that by our labour we have helped to grow and exist.

True, anyone who has worked abroad has a story of oppression to tell. Many keep it to themselves out of shame. But no tales are more harrowing than those from

victims of human trafficking. I have seen them driven to prostitution or forced labour and others used as a drug mules or couriers as well. Rape has become common, as women are particularly vulnerable because they find themselves living in homes and cultures so distant from their own.

Also vulnerable are the undocumented workers like myself. We have been forced to live like fugitives, operating under our own underground system, yet constantly plagued by thoughts of hunger, homelessness, arrest or deportation. We have braved wars and winters, scorching sun and deserts yet still resisting coming home to a life of daily poverty, hopelessness and doom.

Can we turn to our embassies or consulates for help? Not when these officials are indifferent, dismissive, arrogant, or victim-blamers, which is the norm. And not when the embassy grounds are touted to be places of abuse even for women already in distress.

*We need your prayers,
but we also need a
church in solidarity with
us, a living church, a
true church for the
people*

Each day, six to ten OFWs come home in a box, dead from maltreatment, accidents, illness, crime or suicide. Their families continue to cry out for justice only to be answered by a continuous stream of lifeless bodies coming out of the airplanes.

And what is our government doing about all of this? Protection sounds like an alien word. The government has opened a handful of embassies and missions but are they adequate to cater for ten million Filipinos who live and work abroad? Yet it is praised for having the most organized bureaucracy in labour export. In fact if not for protests, it could have already cut the budget for legal aid for OFWs. Some 7,000 Filipinos are behind bars in different countries, with 108 on death row.

Undeniably these are the worst of times for our OFWs and families but these are also the greatest when migrants organize themselves to help and support each other when nothing is to be expected from the Philippines government. OFWs and their families, with the help of the church sector, are now collectively confronting the struggles and challenges of their plight.

Challenges to the Church

Migration has become a global problem and we as migrant are in search of global links, between nations, regions, sectors, civil society and especially with the church whose personnel, agencies and networks cut across borders, spanning continents, and in touch with multitudes.

We need your prayers, but we also need a church in solidarity with us, a living church, a true church for the people. You can administer to our wounds, give us comfort and solace, and bring light, hope and inspiration to the afflicted.

But above all, take our hands and walk with us in our struggles – for rights and welfare, for social justice, for the equality of all nations and peoples – so that

someday there shall be no more migrants but just working people acting of their own free will, reaping the fruits of their labour for family and country and together working for the peace and prosperity of this only world we know.

**Theological and Biblical Reflection –
National Council of Churches of the
Philippines
Sharon Rose Joy Ruiz - Duremdes**

“MAMA’S A MAID IN LONDON”

There must be something terribly wrong with a society when a child belts out a song like that. The pathos that oozes from her song is unmistakably evident. “...What is to happen to all of us children with mothers who travel so far? I want to know why she had to go. I need her.

I want to be near her. I’ve got to be with her and see to it that we’re together once more...”

*Each day, six to ten
OFWs come home in a
box, dead from
maltreatment, accidents,
illness, crime or suicide.
Their families continue to
cry out for justice*

Homo Sapiens, the first fully modern human, kicked off global migration around 50,000 years ago. Because Homo Sapiens’ lives were dictated by the movement of ice sheets, they crossed huge expanses of water and land. By the end of the Ice Age, humans had migrated farther than any other animal ever known. (Gregory Parker, *The World: An Illustrated History*) And through time, people travelled far from their homelands for multi-various reasons: conquest, trade, jobs, religious conversion, and for some, to get a glimpse of what was on the other side. Today, this age old phenomenon migration has taken on incredibly large proportions and is, for the most part, no longer a voluntary option nor a personal choice. As an Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) in Hong Kong laments, “necessity has driven us away from our families. The difficulties we are facing could have been avoided had we not been forced to flee our land so that our families can survive.” (How interesting that she uses the word, “flee”, and not just “leave”.) And they flee from debilitating poverty, civil strife, environmental crises that plague them.

While migrants leave their country with a hopeful vision for their families and themselves, what they experience is mostly different. No sooner are they settled in the receiving country, when they wake up to a frightening reality that life, as a migrant, is unpredictable after all. And this leaves them with only one thing to say with certainty. And it is this: One cannot say anything with certainty. (Elizabeth Knox-Seith) It is so difficult to live on the edge of not knowing... of temporariness. One cannot let down one’s roots in the host country because one knows that someday, he/she will wend himself/herself back to the land of his/her birth. But coming home is not really coming home. It is a vacation... a fleeting holiday. Even more daunting is that “the uprooting of people from their homes and from their

communities halts life as they know it. It tears the social fabric of their lives and threatens to destroy them as a people. It not only disrupts the present, it jeopardizes the future.” (Lester Edwin Ruiz)

Forced migration that issues in displacement, dislocation, and dispersal heralds the death and destruction of human beings. Listen to Linda, a volunteer at the Mission for Filipino Migrant Workers in Hong Kong:

With the death of one’s fighting spirit, self-respect, self-esteem, family life, the capacity to think – how is the God of life to be understood? If self-hood or identity strikes at the heart of life itself, the question of forced labour migration becomes a profoundly theological question. A church that remains oblivious to this issue surely demonstrates its state of depravity.

Sometime ago, on a flight to Hong Kong, I sat next to an Overseas Filipino Worker. I knew she was an OFW. I didn’t have to ask. Her designer jeans and handbag, her branded shades, her glittering gold bangles and rings, her purple Crocs told it all. But on that haul, I couldn’t take my eyes off her gnarled fingers, her puffy eyes, and her bent back. And were those welts on her arm? I was overcome by indescribable mixed emotions which swung from pity to anger to admiration. I saw in her an act that I was not ready to do myself. Here was a courageous woman who was taking flight and enlarging her space. And as she did, she was exposing the decrepit social system of her home country: the injustice and brazen insensitivity of the rulers. She was making a political statement... a damning indictment against the general situation of her country. Her passport had become a symbol of defiance of the powers and principalities that were making her life miserable, challenging and taking to task their failings.

*Forced migration kills...
It kills your drive to assert,
It kills your fighting spirit,
It kills your self-respect,
It kills your self-esteem,
It kills your family life,
It kills you with homesickness,
It kills even your wisdom to think....”*

Turning to myself, I was confronted with the religious-moral demand for solidarity. And recognizing the need for a much more profound wrestling with the concept and practice of solidarity, this “heroine” nailed down for me a fundamental tenet that solidarity is about confronting, what Lester Edwin Ruiz calls, “cultural homogenization” (read as “creating and re-creating the other in our own image”). That would be the point of departure in my act of solidarity with her and all OFWs/migrants.

The question remains: What does solidarity with migrants mean? How must I concretize this engagement with their plight? I am faced with three challenges.

First: *I must challenge my church to be a locale for life-affirming dialogue that issues in meaningful and direct participation in the hopeful struggle for migrants.* The church must be a site for story telling for it is in lifting up the stories of migrants that we refuse to yield to the temptation of entering the catacombs of hopeless accommodation and deadly scepticism. We need to be reminded over and over through these conversations that to be desensitized by the ordinariness of forced migration because it is a daily occurrence is to altogether lose our humanity. It is in this place where migrants and their families bare their souls to us that we make the unequivocal stance that forced migration is the agenda of Empire. As earlier mentioned, migrants make the unambiguous claim that, for them, migration is not a free option; it is a matter of family survival. And, sadly enough that need to survive impels them to follow the scent of global capitalism.

*How do they make sense
of the God of life when
life slowly ebbs from
their exhausted bodies?
Can they believe in the
God who is on the
margins?*

Second: *I must challenge my church to articulate the meaning and value of the migrants' stories in a "theology" that must be placed at their service.* How do they make sense of the God of life when life slowly ebbs from their exhausted bodies? Can they believe in the God who is on the margins? Can they even believe in a God? A theology of the margins must be made to unfold for despite their overwhelming numbers, migrants are a marginalized lot. The droves of domestic helpers conglomerating in Central Park or in the shade of St. John's Cathedral, for me, herald the reality of marginalization. The pockets of OFWs doing their own thing, so to speak, as mainstream life in Hong Kong rushes on are a screaming portent of a people sidelined economically, politically, socially, culturally. As a church person, I cannot confront marginalization apart from a sense of community. And at this point of confrontation, I am propelled to seriously grapple with the disturbing questions:

- Why are there migrants?
- How do I treat migrants?
- How do migrants transform me?
- Where do migrants take me?

Third: *The last question ushers me into an unmistakable conclusion that may church's response to the plight of migrants is what I call collective transgression.* To my mind, a community of faith that intentionally cares about the plight of migrants must necessarily transgress collectively and creatively. Transgress, because we cannot remain locked in the structures and systems which contain us. That will be suicide. Transgress, because we have to rupture the restricting and constricting parameters that hegemonic power has used to circumscribe our daily lives. Transgress, because struggle and hope are only possible through contesting, undermining and subverting oppressive domination. Unless we collectively

transgress, we will only allow the forces of evil to shape our ministry, to benefit from our inaction. "By default, they become our masters and lords." (A church leader of St. John's Cathedral, Hong Kong) And if I might say, an advocacy for and with migrants; constitutes a ministry of the church which works for that day when airline manifestos will no longer contain the names of migrants.

We started with a Filipino child's pathetic song for her Mama. Let us end with this moving testimony of Connie, a Filipina migrant leader:

"In my life now after years in Diaspora, it is difficult to look back. I have lost so much, but I gained a lot of new insights. It is, however, in looking back that I am able to dare the present; that it is in history that I learn to dream for the future; it is in daringness to tell the truth and in fighting against injustices that I am reborn."

"that it is in history that I learn to dream for the future; it is in daringness to tell the truth and in fighting against injustices that I am reborn."

Question and comments:

Remarks of sympathy were made through which the situation of Filipinas in Geneva and the Filipino congregations there were brought to mind.

Comment was made on how OFW can still believe in a God of life? We need to identify the root causes of marginalization. In reality the theme for the WCC 10th General assembly in Bussan should rather read "God of life, help us to struggle for justice and peace". The problem in most situations is that churches often see the struggles for life as irrelevant to their concept of life. Engaging in the struggle against the forces of marginalization as churches is essential.

People return home in different conditions, and differently, often broken. Return is not easy; often the experiences of returnees are not understood by the family and friends at home and most returnees opt not to share their experiences with family and friends. Often people are afraid to return also because their families have unrealistic expectations about what they would bring home.

The other question is what is happening to the children born and who have grown up outside the Philippines? What is happening to the children in terms of belonging and identity?

Small Group Work and Report Back

GROUP 1

We discussed how we could remember migrant workers in liturgy. An example was given of the Philippines; we thought children should feature more strongly in the doctrine. Issues of identity, belonging, parenting and other general issues of safety should be addressed. Migrant children should specifically be granted safe and user friendly space in our churches to share their experiences. NCCP has educational material that might serve as an example and a beginning. It raises questions on how will churches collaborate, intervene, accompany, take action together, become safe communities? In order to do all this churches need to be sensitized towards issues of migration, affecting migrants and their families and communities. Churches could facilitate the creation of safe spaces for migrants in all the nine regions to share their stories. WCC might help the churches to coordinate themselves along issues of migration – maybe national councils of churches could also be of help. Discrimination and othering needs to be tackled within the church; churches need to name the empire and critique it. The church needs to be engaged in confession and repentance.

GROUP 2

The group noted that the churches response at the current stage is very inadequate. The groups gave the following suggestions for responses by the churches are:

Raise awareness within the Christian community on what is happening to migrants, their families and communities;

Set up organizations similar to Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe in Africa, Middle East, Pacific, Asia, Latin America, United States of America, Canada and Australia for advocacy and support to member churches in order for the response to be coordinated, consistent, well informed, more effective and timely.

Churches should facilitate a conversation on establishing safe and user friendly open spaces for sharing stories and experiences by, for and of migrants.

Advertising using case studies and testimonies while maintaining confidentiality, to point to the realities of migration while cooperating with actors from civil society which was considered essential;

Encourage national councils of churches to speak out against negative government policies and practices on labour migration;

Generally: churches need to put their house in order first and then they can begin sharing positive aspects of migration. Networks between cooperating churches in sending and receiving countries should be established. Churches should be encouraged to lobby for a new definition of e.g. refugees; encourage church leaders to engage more on issues of migration; issues of migrant children need to be taken up – also questions of gender and citizen rights; educating about the respective laws

of a destination country; utilize G20 meetings to raise an awareness about migration issues;

WCC should put migration issues high on the ecumenical agenda, coupled with issues of justice. A statement should go from this meeting stating this fact to WCC.

GROUP 3

Churches response needs to be contextual; accompany migrants in a certain regions; offer support in tangible ways; church to be a broker of new relationships; building alliances between mainline churches, Migrant Christian Communities, Pentecostal churches are important. The church needs to regain the prophetic voice in society.

When government agencies abuse their power; churches should speak to power and churches should stop acting like ambulances to migrants but instead identify and address the root causes. The churches' acts of mercy need to be accompanied by acts of justice; are we ready to give, invest our lives for the sake of justice? Churches must find ways of building alliances that are essential with Non-Government Organisations, Faith Based Organisations; link these relationships and engagement to ideas of universal justice. When we attend meetings like this one it is important to report back to our respective churches.

GROUP 4

Our group discussion has been covered by the above feedbacks. However, we also felt that naming and identifying evil as a start is essential. Churches must begin to be critical of new and old empires; churches should hold governments responsible and take them up on negative migrant labour policies. Churches have to cooperate with broader society groups; migrants should be driving advocacy efforts and not used as subjects of pity; acts of solidarity to cross borders and not to be restricted to an area, country or region.

OVERVIEW SUMMARY OF THE DAY

Michael Blair

"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity." —
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

- People dying on the journey
- God of life – what does it mean?
- Commodification of life
- Normativeness – migration
- Who is the Church
- Borders

(Tensions around theology, ecclesiology)

Key Themes:

1. Solidarity
2. Neighbor - Stranger
3. Dignity of the human Person
4. Importance of Narrative, how do we get the stories out, not just to highlight the sense of despair, but to build hope?

Table Group Discussion - Reports

Group 1.

CCME – Day to remember

March 2nd Philippines

Children not in the draft document (those who were left behind/2nd generation)

Career/education

Socialization

Telling stories – allowing migrant children to tell stories.

Prayer partnership

Motivate the church to become safe places

Sensitize the church to migration issues.

*Decisions by Boris Novak
(tr. Dintinjana)*

*Between two words
choose the quieter one.*

*Between word and
silence
choose listening.*

*Between two books
choose the dustier one.*

*Between the earth and
the sky
choose a bird.*

*Between two animals
choose the one who
needs you more.*

*Between two children
choose both.*

*Between the lesser and
the bigger evil
choose neither.*

*Between hope and
despair
choose hope: it will be
harder to bear.*

WCC helping us to coordinate initiatives in local regions – stories and prayers

Complement each other across regions

Discrimination

Forces of empire

Repentance and confession.

Small group discussion on people dying seeking a life of dignity.

We acknowledge:

In the Philippines the second Sunday of March each year is the day for all NCCP to pray for migrant workers. And that the CCME also have an annual day to remember those who have died seeking dignity and life.

Can we have a global day to recognize/acknowledge/pray for migrant workers/exploited/deceased? Possibility of joining with NCCP or CCME days?

We acknowledge the need to Include substance in relation to children in the draft document

- Some of our Concerns are:
- * Children left behind [without migrant parents]
 - * Children who are born abroad [identity and other struggles]
 - * All migrant children recognizing complex families and other realities like Filipino/Japanese children being bullied and or struggling to fit into community
 - * Choice of career [defaulting to OFW], education challenges,

The need to have migrant children telling their stories. NCCP have education resource for children. A vacation program focusing on migration issues.

How can the Church [which is the largest most significant gifted community] network be connected across regions in functional, practical ways. How do we motivate the church to take action and to create safe communities where migrants can share their struggles, abuse and exploitation so that they may be accompanied or assisted with intervention?

We recognize the need to sensitize the church to migration realities. Perhaps groups/councils can facilitate ways for migrants to tell their stories, face to face, and personally invite a response. How can the local church listen to the stories from the grassroots? This becomes a transformative time of learning, listening and having eyes opened.

Can the WCC help facilitate local/regional/global groupings of our churches to collaborate in these sensitizing forums? We envision that local ngo/church council or others who can take the lead to nature and coordinate this. This would also compliment growing regional cooperation of the church. Why: because we know through experiences of exchange/intern programs bringing transformation and new possibilities

Discrimination by others, self discrimination which was mainly influenced by colonial social systems and or other socialization factors. Calling the church to be prophetic: to name the Empire/forces that play out the distribution and access to resources, determines haves and have not's. Economic forces are real and controlling. How can we all break free? There is need for the church to engage in confession and repentance.

Group 3.

- Churches response has to be contextual. Issues are different in each context.
- For those staying, the church's response should be in assisting in integration.
- For those going back, the church's response is to accompany.
- Solidarity – the church feeling with the pain of the migrant – how do we show this?
- The challenge to imagine something different for humanity.
- Is the church willing to get involved? To make a difference?
- The church could be broker of new relationships with other groups such as Unions to become an advocate.
- For mainline churches to lean to make alliance
- The church's role to be prophetic and teach.
- The churches response could be seen at different levels:
 - Church's role in supporting the families left behind
 - The church's role in advocacy, regarding human rights & legislation
 - The church's role in receiving migrants, to accompany them while they are there, or to help them integrate.
 - The church's role in emergency situation
- For the church to provide free legal counsel to migrant workers through their members lawyers/law student
- Teach against seeing creation as human commodity where anything goes and human life has less value

Group 2

Churches need to raise awareness within the Christian community - awareness of their plight in transition and at their destination.

Strategies to raise awareness:

1. Start by educating at the grass-roots level for example: make possible open space for consultation, sharing of stories as a community of faith, creating an open space should not be a problem.
2. Their initiative could involve other actors in the field e.g. NGOs, Civil society organization. Churches in this way could aim at demystifying the situation that allows for illicit exploitation etc., by potential migrants thinking all is good and glitters.
3. Organizations to mirror commissions like CCME should be facilitated to come into being in other regions by WCC. These groups can exchange information and share such valuable information with other civil society and National Council of Churches.

4. Exploitation/commercialization of citizens by government – what role is the church playing? Does the church support government policy? If not, why don't they criticize such policies openly and voice their concerns of the community
5. At forums/meetings such as GEM we should always explore both the positive and the negative and not too much on the negative
6. Greater cooperation between churches in the sending and receiving countries and also within the civil society organizations
7. UN convention of 1951, in its definition of refugee generalizes and it does not include later forms of displacement such as people displaced due to environmental factors. It is therefore outdated and should be revised/reviewed
8. Ecumenical representatives are often reluctant to get involved in advocacy work and humanitarian initiatives that they feel do not fit with their church's agenda. Church leaders need to make a more concerted effort to engage with their neighbors and even other faith. Examples during the Arab Spring, Muslims were only catering for their own and not anyone from other faith.
9. In most Gulf States the issue of a child born in the region with one being a foreign parent does not automatically gain citizenship especially if it is the mother who is a citizen was discussed. Also other rules/regulations/laws that treat women as less equal or discriminate against women. We concluded that potential migrants need to be made aware of how things work in those countries they are going to before they leave their home country
10. Churches should lobby for Christian people to be given a platform in important meetings such as G20 – churches need to come together to make this possible.
11. WCC need to become more vocal and forceful in speaking up on all of the issues in discussion. WCC cannot afford to take off its feet off the pedal when it comes to the issue of migration. This is definitely not the time to commit fewer resources to this area of work. MIGRATION should remain on top of WCC agenda and we urge WCC to synergize the different sections working on migration in order to eliminate duplication.
12. We recommend that a separate statement from GEM – as a network within the WCC- should be sent to the WCC Secretariat and Central committee to include our affirmation that the life of migrants matter too and WCC should therefore show that they care for life of the migrants and do more about their plight. It is the churches mission to love and to serve all believers in Christ.

Group 4

Government agencies

Don't ask question of the why?

Government policies

Group 5

1. The point of departure for advocacy is naming and identifying the evil that is causing the misery, and when we look at the issues, we see that on the bodies of migrants are inscribed the values and message of – empire
2. In most cases government have created policies detrimental to migrants. Churches should be empowered to hold government accountable to boldly speak truth to power, but first church churches have to crawl out of their fear and be more risk takers because that is what taking up the cross means.
3. Strengthen links and alliances with groups, institution, NGOs without forgetting that our link with the migrants themselves is what gives meaning to our links with the institutions, NGOs etc.
4. Help church people to learn the skills of organizing migrants, because church people are good in theologizing but need help/skills in organizing people at the base.
5. Broaden our linkages/partnership with other NGOs who work on migrant issues but have excluded the church.
6. In our Advocacy with migrants, we should remember that the migrants must be driving policies
7. Strengthen People to people exchanges. Our act of solidarity must cross borders

Closing Prayers

EXPOSURE GROUPS

Exposure Area # 1

SALAM: A TRANSIT POINT FOR OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWS) FROM STRIFE-RIDDEN MINDANAO TO THE MIDDLE EAST

The Salam compound in Barangay Culiati, Quezon City looks like a typical Muslim village in Metro Manila. There's the landmark mosque. The market sells *halal*, the dietary standard of Muslims, as well as traditional dresses for women. Salam (or Salaam, "peace" in Arabic) is more than this, however. For many Muslims hoping to work abroad, Salam is a halfway point between Mindanao, Southern Philippines, and the Gulf Region.

It was during the 70's when the land was purchased by the Libyan government for Muslims in the Philippines. It was awarded to the Islamic Directorate of the Philippines (IDP). Hence, the major street inside the Salam Compound was named Libyan Street while others were named after the provinces in Mindanao. A small, nondescript alley is called Mujahedeen (warrior in Arabic), probably to remind the people inside the compound of their century old struggle for self determination.

The 4.8-hectare compound is home to the Maguindanaons, Tausugs, Maranaos, Yakans, and Iranon tribes – numbering nearly 20,000 - many of whom have fled from the battlefields of Mindanao. Most houses in the compound are built with very light materials. Families are cramped in 4-5 square meter rooms with poor ventilation and do not have their own toilets. Sanitation is also very poor.

Aside from being ambulant vendors, most of the people residing in the community are prospective OFWs who ran away from the militarization in Mindanao. These would-be-migrants were recruited by "agents" who also have the biggest houses in the compound. Usually, these houses have three floors to accommodate "applicants". Sarah Balabagan, a Filipina Muslim sentenced to death by beheading, after she killed her male employer, who attempted to rape her, was also housed by one of these agents in the Salam Compound. She was only 15 years old when she went to the United Arab Emirates to work as a domestic worker. She was barely 18 when she won her case and was acquitted by the UAE Supreme Court.

Dreaming of a better life for their families in Mindanao, many Muslim women are forced to leave their loved ones to work overseas hoping for better wages. For six months to one year, they stay in the houses of their agents while waiting for their documents to be processed. It is during this short period that Migrante International gets in contact with them. The major goal is to provide them the basic knowledge of their rights as migrant workers. Through our "Know Your Rights Program" these women become aware of their rights, how the government should ensure that these rights are protected, how can they as individuals and as a collective force fight for these rights.

REPORT BACK

We received a briefing on the history of the community similar to the one NCCP gave us. There were about 60,000 people we were received warmly and we heard different stories from Muslim women who had migrated to Manila. Most gave the reasons for leaving their home area as political and economical conditions. They are also displaced from their home area because of war and they are forced to flee to Manila only to find that life is not so easy in Manila. They all said that they were promised one thing and given the other upon arrival, there is less pay and harder working conditions.

Coming from Lebanon many would say they are better off in our country something has to change in our situation because it does not acknowledge the dignity of the person. The system justifies the actions taken, done even if negative by saying that it is better than the situation in the home country where the person comes from. This can be situations they know that the conditions are appalling and the migrant workers also fail to fight the system as they are in such a disadvantaged position. This status core has to end, it has to be fought and this has to be done by all the people involved including the migrants themselves and the governments.

What we felt when we were walking throughout the community was warmth. They received us warmly and very hospitable and gave us their food, their time, their smiles, it made us realise we share the spirit that creates in us that community that we all desire a better future for our children. We met a 15 year old girl and she is mixed race because she was born out of rape. The employer raped her mother and sent her away. The employer continued sending money but the mother wrote to say the daughter had died so that the employer stops sending money. The daughter feel so broken because her mother would not acknowledge or receive her daughter we are seeing a broken community, a reality that is challenging to us as religious leaders, our challenge is to help her restore her as a loved person created in the image of God. Women do lead the way in a very powerful manner and we are incomplete without them.

Exposure Area # 2

BARANGAY HOLY SPIRIT:THE PLIGHT OF CHILDREN OF OFWS

Barangay (Village) Holy Spirit is one of the largest barangays in the City of Quezon. With a total land area of 453 hectares and a population of more than 150,000, Barangay Holy Spirit is an epitome of the social divide in the country. There are 4 middle class subdivisions in the Barangay covering more than half of the total residential area where the affluent 30% of the population lives while the rest of the population are sardine packed in remaining half.

It was during the time of the late President Cory Aquino when the Ranario family first came to Holy Spirit. Like many peasant families in the Philippines, they were on the run for their lives as the government unleashed its brutal counter-insurgency program which affected many civilians in the rural areas. For many of these families living in peace and a better chance in life for their children seem within reach. But life in Holy Spirit was never easy. As the government poised to utilize the lands in the Barangay, one by one their shanties were demolished.

This made Marilou Ranario decide to work as a domestic helper in Kuwait, the eldest of her 4 children; Janjan was only 8 years old then. She was sentenced to death for killing her employer who attempted to sell her to another Kuwaiti. The community people faced with losing their homes immediately launched a campaign with Migrante International to call for the saving Marilou Ranario. The entire community celebrated when Marilou's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on 2007. The struggle for everyday life continued for the people of Barangay Holy Spirit. Wives have to contend with their husband's meager earnings. Children have to go to school with no food in their stomachs. But life was extra hard for Janjan. His mother is still in jail in a country whose name he can barely spell.

The story of Janjan who is now in his last year in high school and haven't seen his mother for almost 10 years holds true for many OFW children in the community. More and more children grow up without their parents. Most are unaware of the living and working conditions of their parents, particularly the difficulties their parents face abroad. Some are even under the illusion that their parents live luxurious lives abroad. This and the lack of parental guidance due to living with surrogate families have pushed them to drug addiction and dropping out of school.

This led to the formation of Migrante Youth in the community that encouraged the youth like Janjan and many others to participate in activities which enhanced their talents and diverted their skills to more productive things. Now, Janjan is one of the most active members of Migrante Youth in Holy Spirit who do not only dream but work to be reunited with their family members in a society that truly nurtures its people.

REPORT BACK

There was a spirit among the people representing hope, and their condition was not as bad as the community is close to the city and it is about people who have built stable housing and also temporal shelter. They live under threat that the authority can erase the community. We met a migrant woman Norma who has been out of the country for twenty years and her story was one of the ordinary ones never the less she also said it has been a sacrifice and she would not want her children to do the same. She was grateful for her experiences but at the same time she felt the loss of not being able to be with her family, these are things that should be changed so that separation should not be the norm.

We met Janjan the son of Marilou Ranario and it was not so easy for him to talk but eventually he did. The interesting part was that he himself would want to go outside the country. So even with the stories of his mother and the experiences people have in the Middle East he still said he would go somewhere else because there are other countries. But also within the families they do not get the stories because the women do not talk about the most negative experiences. How do we respect human dignity and how do we go about addressing the issues? The children left behind when they talk to their mother she would say, I am fine and it is not necessary that she is fine, but she would not tell her children what she is really going through. The children therefore grow up thinking things are not so bad. Maybe we can talk to the churches in the host country to do something. We also met with some school going children the majority said they would immigrate. One needs to find ways of communication because it is not us who would be able to tell them not to go. A good example is like that of the garden project that teaches the community that you can do gardening regardless of where you are and it is a good sign of hope we hope it can be duplicated in other places.

Exposure Area # 3

BAGONG BARRIO:A COMMUNITY DEPENDENT ON OFW REMITTANCES

Bagong Barrio is an urban poor community in Caloocan City which is divided into three zones and consists of 26 barangays. According to the 2010 Census of Population and Housing, Bagong Barrio has an estimated population of about 900,000. The general livelihood of its residents come from the following sources: 35.8% of people depend on remittances. 30.6% rely on salaries from regular employment, 23.3% are self-employed, 5.4% are unemployed and 5% are students. Most of the families are remittance dependents which makes it the largest sector in the community. While some have regular employment, the measly monthly salary workers receive is not enough to sustain the basic needs of the whole family. Those who are considered self-employed are those who manages small scale livelihood such as sari-sari stores, food selling, rag-making; and there are also those who scavenge and sell plastics or metal scraps (all sorts of scraps), from nearby factories.

The size of the population and the small living space has also contributed to health issues. According to health workers in the community, malnourishment and tuberculosis are major problems in the area. There are four health centres serving the entire community and they all have designated times and days for consultations, vaccinations, family planning and de-worming.

REPORT BACK

Means new village and is subdivided into smaller unity, these are government strategies to delay justice for migrant workers and governments fail to protect migrants and civil society and churches step in to assist, these are survivor instincts

of people, there is high level of unemployment and parents cannot afford to support the children attend school, there are fees for every activity to be done in school. There are issues of prostitution because people are under employed or unemployed and there are issues of vandalism, there are factories owned by Korean company whose aim is to make profits but not invest in the community, resilience of people collect scrap metal and make something, people have capacity to create life out of nothing, in order to create an income which is dignity. Story of Eden went to work in Taiwan for a couple the wife was bed ridden within the first week the male tried to rape her and she jumped from third floor and broke her ankle and leg and she is now back without any support from the government and other civil society stepped in to help.

Back to the notion of the wounded healer providing help for others people who have had they negative experiences as migrants but still taking care of others and the importance to take care of ourselves. They received us and made us part of the community we did not feel outsiders and not as migrants showed us the traditional way of eating we had a lot to learn they taught us to use the hands and it tasted delicious

Exposure Area # 4

BAGONG SILANG:A COMMUNITY DEPENDENT ON OFW REMITTANCES 2

Barangay 176, more commonly known as Bagong Silang is located in District 1 North of Caloocan. It is subdivided into phases and packages. Based on the 2012 government census, it has a total population of 243,890, making it the largest Barangay in the Philippines in terms of population. It is the top 2 area of origin of OFWs in Caloocan. Similar to Bagong Barrio, most of its households are remittance dependents. The local economy in the community is also similar.

Although the cost of living here is higher since prices of basic goods and commodities are also higher. Transportation expenses are also a problem for those who are working in Quezon City or Manila where there are more job opportunities. The community started out as a relocation site for families whose houses were demolished in other parts of the metro. Despite its huge land area and large population, Bagong Silang is administered by only one local Barangay council. It only has 6 Barangay health centers located in different phases in the community.

The visit put faces to some of the stories we have heard with Migrant International we got to see the impact on children and women left behind one story was a grandmother is raising seven children because her daughter had gone overseas, we experienced a combination in what Milton had shared that it is not only human life but a combination of creation, it is a situation where there had been flooding and people were forced to move in after three days, it is a reflection how

those who govern do not care for the people, there is mobilisation and empowerment of people, and one of the requests is that the OFW should have an opportunity to vote and how do we who come from receiving countries help to ensure that they do vote because there is an important need to engage the political system.

Exposure Area # 5

PAYATAS: THE MOUNTAIN OF GARBAGE SYNONYMOUS TO POVERTY

Barangay (Village) Payatas is a typical urban poor community located in the North Eastern part of the densely-populated and highly-urbanized Quezon City. It is part of the vast Payatas Estate (about 5,295 hectares) nestled beside the La Mesa Dam Reservation Area and bounded by the Marikina-Montalban River and the municipalities of Rodriguez (formerly Montalban) and San Mateo in Rizal province. The Payatas dumpsite, started in 1975, is one of the, if not the biggest among the dumpsites found in Metro Manila. From 1992-2002, when former President Fidel Ramos ordered the closure of another dumpsite called Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila, the Payatas dumpsite has become the main dumpsite receiving about 6,500 tons of garbage daily from several cities and municipalities. Thus, it became the main source of income of about 4,000 scavengers, majority of them were migrants from neighbouring municipalities.

In 2000, close to 300 individuals died when the mountain of garbage collapsed due to heavy rains. Despite the tragedy, people still rely on the dumpsite for their livelihood. Residents around the dumpsite continue to face the problems of “pocket demolitions”, aided by some police and military elements, to give way to private infrastructure and other land development projects. Payatas is a mission area of the Task Force on Urban Conscientization a mission partner of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (TFUC – AMRSP) chaired by Fr. Charlie Ricafort, MI.

REPORT BACK

I thought I saw, looked, evil in the face that which puts humanity against each other and treat people like trash is evil. They move them when they want without any consideration. Then we went to the catholic church we met the people and the y have a fighting spirit, they offered us their hospitality and showing us that they wanted to live life in and with dignity. Then we saw and met with the priest who lives with the people and this is ministry incarnation. I am still processing and I do not understand what I experienced. But I can say that once we stop to look at someone as our neighbour; that is when the evil starts. Then we stop seeing the other as beloved and we stop seeing them as human beings. I am glad I went it is a life changing experience.

Exposure Area # 6

SMOKEY MOUNTAIN: ANOTHER MONUMENT TO POVERTY

The Smokey Mountain dumpsite, located beside the Manila North Harbour and about 3 kilometres away from UCCP Tondo, is an urban poor community of about 1,700 families; majority of them came to Manila from various depressed rural areas in search of a better life in the city. Residents of the community depend on scavenging junk materials as their primary source of livelihood despite the harsh working and living conditions in the dumpsite.

In 2007, the UCCP Evangelical Church in Tondo, Manila has adopted the Smokey Mountain 2 community as its mission area with the goal of serving the poorest of the poor children by providing them free, quality education. Thus, the local church established the first day-care centre at the heart of the poorest area in urban Manila - Smokey Mountain - a dumpsite that was opened in 1998. The Sunbeam day-care centre is a single-classroom school that provides basic education to about 50 pupils ages 3-6. Students in the day-care centre are also given free school supplies, textbooks, uniform and meals.

REPORT BACK

Our experiences are similar to the first two groups, very privileged to see the work that UCCP was doing there conditions are quite horrible it is hard to believe that people live there and seeing children sorting out rubbish, the road is just black and this is where the children play and live and we were wondering why people go there and live this way. It is people who were living in the rural areas and mining companies bought their land and forced people to live this way, the land is near the harbour and the government can decide to sale the land and again the community will get displaced again. Kinder garden so they can get into the public school count up to 30 which is important for them because they need to count to be able to negotiate their sale of their pick. I think after why would people have children and I have seen the answer you see the joy the children bring to the community, it changes people's perspectives and it changes people's lives

Exposure Area # 7

SAN DIONISIO, PARANAQUE: A FLOATING COMMUNITY



More than 80 families of fisher folks in Paranaque live afloat the remaining coast of the Manila Bay in this Southern part of Manila. They were first displaced during the 1980's Coastal Road project and relocated in Freedom Island (an abandoned land bridge project that would have connected Manila to the export processing zone in Cavite City). They were displaced again in the 1990's as part of government's clearing operations of the island prior to the scandalous planned sale to a foreign corporation (popularly known as the PEA-Amari scam). They were relocated in far flung Cavite province but they returned to Paranaque because of the dire situation in the relocation area.

These families live in make-shift houses built on top of the rafts (piles of bamboos) whose "floors" are adorned with styropores, empty plastic containers and other materials to keep them afloat. Their houses are either tied to nearby remaining trees or any "anchoring device".

They are small fishermen who barely survive each day with less and less catch using only small boats around the lagoon fronting the Freedom Island (now declared a critical habitat and ecotourism area) Two to three families of 4-6 members each usually occupy a single room house. The women and children also

help out economically as vendors, delivery boys, cleaners at the nearby fisherman's wharf/fresh seafood market. Others are fishers of a different kind...fishing for garbage (scavengers).

Now, they are again threatened with demolition as the government plans to expand its reclamation program hitting their habitats, the fisherman's wharf and the only mangrove forest and bird sanctuary in Manila Bay (the Freedom Island).



REPORT BACK

To cut to the heart of the story of the family into whose home we were invited into, when we arrived at the floating community we were made aware that there is more than 81 households. Households impacted by dislocation two times already and they face another possible dislocation again. Driven by the local government's desires, the story of this family is that they live in very difficult circumstances. We met people who come to trade fish and sea food that they catch from the sea. Now they have difficulties because the shore line was moved through reclamation. Now for them to catch fish they have to go further into the sea and to do this safely they need boats with engines, and boat engines require fuel and they do not have the money to buy the boat nor the fuel. The family lives in one small bedroom, the house floats so that it withstands storm surge that come their way. The husband works long hours every day, but at the end of the day he earns 800 and he spends 700 on fuels and he remains with 100 and that 100 is what the family depends on. For many in the community they cannot continue fishing, they will be forced to stop and others have gone into other forms of vending. I heard of an effort that was supporting the community to help them live a life with dignity and rebuild their lives. The project was also advocating for the environmental concerns for the habitant island so as to be able to recreate some of the fisheries, the connectedness between the land and environment. Noted two things situations of death and secondly great signs of hope, if part of our system as Christians is to always get out of our comfort zones to reach out to those out there who we want not to exist, we will be more like Christ.

IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Middle East Council of Churches

Ms Seta Hadeshian

Introduction

It is now twenty two years since the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) was passed but only a few governments have signed and ratified it. The pioneers and engineers of Human Rights conventions like Europe and the United States of America are ironically, reluctant to sign and ratify the ICRMW. The Middle East countries have not ratified either and the reason given for not doing it is more or less the same with slight differences depending on their political or economic status.

Migrant Workers in the Middle East

The oil business in the Arab Gulf witnessed an unprecedented construction boom attracting large numbers of Western expatriates and increased the demand for cheap migrant labour. There are 35 million people living in the six member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council-GCC, (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain) and in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 17 million are migrants. Of these countries Qatar, Kuwait and UAE have the highest percentage of foreigners. The largest sector of the population comprise of Westerners who dominate the white collar jobs and Asians, then comes the Arab and Iranian nationals, less than 20% are Emirati citizens, headed by sheikhs and the powerful elite. Then comes the migrant labourers from Africa, Asia, and Middle East who comprise about 95% of the workforce and are recruited in the construction industry and for domestic work.

In Lebanon the estimated number of Asian migrant workers, according to the Ministry of Labour, is 200,000, but only 100,000 work permits were issued by the end of 2010, of which 90% were issued to female domestic workers. Migrant workers mainly come from Sri Lanka; Philippines; India; Thailand; Ethiopia; Ghana; Cameroon and Madagascar.

Employment Regulations

Policy guidelines governing the migrant workers presence or their lives have not been formulated by any of the Arab Gulf countries nor Lebanese authorities ⁽¹⁾. Migrant workers are not covered therefore under existing labour Law. All of the countries in the Middle East region use the Kafala system from 1950.

¹ Because of a number of reasons: A) the presence of 1 million Syrian workers and 400,000 Egyptian workers, whereby if UN Convention ratified these groups will automatically benefit from social benefits which the Lebanese government is not ready to provide as that will be a political tool in the hands of the Syrian government to pressure even more on the Lebanese government, B) the laissez faire system and the lethargy of the government in formulating a policy guideline framework and their principle in looking at the Western influence to avoid granting migrants their rights. C) No sufficient network of NGOs, and The emergence of newly growing CSO, in Lebanon that will curtail the "new slavery".

The Kafala or sponsorship system, states that women migrant domestic workers must attain a legal local sponsor for the duration of their contracts, making them subject to restrictive immigration rules based on employer-specific sponsorship that puts workers at risk of exploitation and makes it difficult for them to leave abusive employers.

Migrant Workers Plight in the Middle Eastern Countries

There are a few churches and Non-Government Organisations (NGOS), in Lebanon which bring migrant workers together around which they can form communities, like the Caritas Migrant, Evangelical Church Philemon project for the Sudanese. Fr. Mac Dermott USJ Lawyers St Vincent , The Afro Asian Migrant Centre-Laksehta; Pastoral Care of afro Asian Migrants; Insan, Lebanese Center for Human Rights-; Frontiers, Ruwad Association- FRA, Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, KAFA-Violence & Discrimination, Anti Racism Movement Lebanese; NGO Forum The Migrant Network; Migrant Legal Research Group- these NGOs aim at providing social, psychological, and legal assistance rather than building or strengthening migrant communities.

Strengthen links and alliances with groups, institution, NGOs without forgetting that our link with the migrants themselves is what gives meaning to our links with the institutions, NGOs etc

Migrant workers in the Gulf countries

Evidence on the conditions of migrant labour in the UAE is very scarce and closely related to the conditions in the respective countries. Most of the information we have are from Human Rights Watch, International Labour Organisation, United Nations, and American Centre for International Policy Studies, Amnesty international, Anti Slavery International, US State Department and media reports.

Migrant workers in the Gulf countries serve the construction industry, USD 350 billion worth of active construction projects are going on. Living luxuriously has become a daily living system both for nationals and the Western communities based in the Gulf countries. In Dubai alone, Government projects such as the Burj Khalifa (world's tallest building), Dubai World Central International Airport (which, when completed, will be the most expensive airport ever built), the three Palm Islands (the largest artificial islands in the world), and Dubai Mall (the world's largest shopping mall) have attracted hundreds of thousands of construction workers from various countries. Also in the entertainment sector is the construction of Dubai land, which is expected to be twice the size of Disney World, and of Dubai Sports City which will not only provide homes for local sports teams but may be part of future Olympic bids.

Detention in the Middle East

Although most of the Middle Eastern and North African countries, (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Somalia, Saudi Arabia Syria, Tunisia, Yemen 22 in whole) have ratified the International covenant on civil rights, which includes important provisions on standards related to arrest, detention, and fair trials or have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, however ratification of these international standards, demonstrates the will of states to the international community but these initiatives are inconsistent. While internationally they show a commitment, States continue to practice actions that result in gross human rights violations such as: abuse, violence, arbitrary detention and deportations in their home countries.

Migrant workers who are in detention are stripped of many of the rights that are guaranteed to other detainees. They often do not understand the language spoken or used in the host country and they do not know the legal system, they do not understand the charges brought against them, or how to defend themselves and these situations makes them become much more vulnerable. They often do not have family members in the country to support them; they are kept in isolation without access to the outside world, and often, they do not have access to their consulates or to lawyers. People at the consulate or embassies do not visit the prisons to look out for their people. They are kept in separate cells, in isolation, and thus do not have the benefits of having another detainees who might help them to explain the process. While in interrogation, they are often subjected to ill treatment, abuse, humiliation and torture.

Their isolation from the outside world, particularly from their family and legal counselling, increases the risk of being subjected to cruel forms of torture, and suffering.

Detained women are often subjected to rape by state officials, acting individually or collectively, or to threat of rape. All the ill treatment endured by migrant women prisoners in the Middle East are facilitated by the fact that police stations are staffed by male officers and interrogation is carried in the absence of female officers, who lack proper training and awareness of gender sensitive issues.

Detention in Lebanon

Detention and imprisonment of migrant domestic workers, asylum seekers and refugees are common practices in Lebanon. 40% of the prison population in Lebanon are migrants or refugees and 95% of them are confined on the grounds of illegal entry, expiration of work permit or passport or over stays, falsified papers, killing, thefts and drug dealing. Upon arrest or detention, they often find themselves

The oil business in the Arab Gulf witnessed an unprecedented construction boom attracting large numbers of Western expatriates and increased the demand for cheap migrant labour.

subject to double discrimination, first as “criminals” or offenders and secondly as migrants or foreigners.

Authorities transfer foreign detainees upon completion of their sentences to the underground General Security detention centre, pending release or deportation.

Detention centres are located in the undergrounds or ground floor flats in residential buildings or in governmental buildings of the police stations; with no adequate facilities of lighting, ventilation, windows, sleeping or bathroom facilities, (a corridor holding 90 detainees is equipped with one toilet!)

All detainees convicted or not, are confined together in one place. However children and women are in separate buildings. There is practically no difference between detention, and imprisonment, they are in many ways treated in the same ways like prisoners.

According to Amnesty International when arrested migrant domestic workers are the most vulnerable and the most abused ⁽²⁾, they are held separately from Lebanese women, they are vulnerable because they do not speak the language nor is there anyone to help them. They are held on charges of: prostitution, drug dealing and illegal residence. Those detained on the former charges have a higher risk of torture than the latter. They also find it difficult to hire a lawyer because they do not have the financial means and the legal fees are high and most are not aware of the provision which allow them for a lawyer to be appointed by the Bar association. They are usually held for months after which they are brought before a judge. Sometimes they may not be released after serving their sentences. While those detained for illegal residence are held for longer period until contact is made with the relevant foreign country to secure proper documents for their return home. Sometimes these detainees may stay for months because they cannot afford the price for a ticket to home.

Their isolation from the outside world, particularly from their family and legal counselling, increases the risk of being subjected to cruel forms of torture, and suffering.

Detention Policy and Detention Infrastructure Grounds for Detention

Non-citizens who enter Lebanon without proper authorization or overstay visas can be placed in administrative detention or charged with crimes leading to criminal incarceration. And can face three distinct stages of incarceration: pre-trial detention; imprisonment to serve a criminal sentence; and administrative detention while awaiting removal from the country after the completion of criminal sentences (HRW 2007, p.28,32). (Article 32 of the [Law of Entry and Exit](#))

² According to Amnesty International a report issued “Lebanon Torture and ill treatment of women in Pre-Trial Detention: a Culture of acquiescence”

"No one may be arrested or detained except as provided for by law." and any deprivation of liberty that occurs without legal justification should be considered arbitrary. Nevertheless, Lebanon arbitrarily confines foreign nationals in administrative detention. (The Law Regulating the Entry and Stay of Foreigners in Lebanon and their Exit from the Country 1962, Article 8 of the [Lebanese Constitution](#))

Grounds for Deportation

"A foreigner against whom a deportation order has been issued must leave Lebanese territory by his own means within 15 days. Any breach of a judicial or administrative deportation measure shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of between one and six months". (Article 89 of the [Lebanese Criminal Code](#) (FRA 2006, p.31)

They also find it difficult to hire a lawyer because they do not have the financial means and the legal fees are high and most are not aware of the provision which allow them for a lawyer to be appointed by the Bar association.

Immigration Detention Centre There is only one immigration detention centre, located in the centre of Beirut, Lebanon, called the General Security Retention Centre, used uniquely to hold "criminal aliens" after they have completed prison sentences and are awaiting expulsion from the country (Circular n. 4662/2004). However there are 22 penal centres all over Lebanon all of which used for detention of migrants or criminals regardless of the charges brought against them.

In the official detention centre up to 800 people can be held at the facility at a given time (in 2006), cramped into 13 cells, and each 40m² and each detainee has roughly one square metre. There is no yard for outside recreation, water is available no more than two hours per day, detainees are handcuffed when they leave their cells, and there is little or no contact with the outside world. Three of the holding cells are used to hold women and one is used to detain families, including children (CLDH, p. 46-47).

Detaining authorities

The Immigration authority: The General Security Office (GSO) decides on matters related to entry, residency and exit of foreigners. The GSO takes the decision to arrest a foreigner to be deported only on the basis of Article 17 of the Law of Entry and Exit. The Public Prosecution instruction (No. 4662/m/2004 of 16/12/2004) orders the transfer of all foreigners regardless of whether or not they hold proper documentation to GSO after receipt of their decision of release on bail or after expiry of the period of their prison term, in order for the latter to take appropriate decision regarding their legal status. (Double Jeopardy, Recourse before the Administrative Judge, p49)

The Judiciary: Lebanon's judiciary has the potential and the obligation to play an important role in protecting the basic rights of Migrant Domestic Workers (MDW) but albeit with exceptions it is largely inaccessible and unresponsive. MDW end up suffering lengthy pre-trial detentions, extended trials, overloaded courts, and obstacle to accessing the justice system. MDWs face the legal system without adequate legal representation or translation of

84 criminal cases against MDWs, 37 did not have defence lawyer (Report of HRW, September, 2010). 114 judicial decisions involving migrant domestic workers found that not a single employer faced charges for locking workers inside homes, confiscating their passports or denying them food.

"No one may be arrested or detained except as provided for by law." and any deprivation of liberty that occurs without legal justification should be considered arbitrary"

A review of 13 criminal cases found that it took an average of 24 months to resolve them and that the prosecutions resulted in light sentences. The most severe sentence for beating a domestic worker, of which Human Rights Watch is aware, is one month in prison, imposed by criminal court on June 26, 2010, against an employer who repeatedly beat a Sri Lankan domestic worker. ⁽³⁾

Length of Detention: The length of time a person remains in detention and/or incarceration can vary depending on whether a non-citizen is criminally charged. According to the Criminal Procedure Code, detention should **not exceed 48 hours**, which is renewable once prior to a hearing before a magistrate (CLDH 2010, p. 53). However, rights groups claim that police do not always respect these limits and that migrants are detained for unauthorized entry or presence in the country for an average initial period of 16 days (CLDH 2010, p.55).

Criminal sentences for unauthorized entry and stay in the country (including for people seeking asylum) is between one and three months, and includes a fine and deportation (Law of Entry and Exit, Article 32).

Fines are set arbitrarily by judges, but can be as high as 300.000LL (or roughly US\$200). Some detainees opt to serve extra prison time instead of paying the fines (HRW 2007, p.28).

³. A 2010 Human rights Watch report "Without protection: How the Lebanese Justice system fails migrant domestic workers".

There is no limit to the amount of time a person can spend in administrative detention. In some cases, migrants have been detained for years (CLDH 2010, p.44). They remain in detention until deported, either at the prison where they served their criminal sentence or at the General Security Retention Centre (HRW 2010b).

A government Circular: (n. 4662) issued in 2004 stated that a foreigner incarcerated in Lebanon must be transferred to an administrative detention centre run by the General Security at the end of his/her sentence in order to regularize his/her situation or carry out removal orders. However, the lengthy judicial process migrants are subject to before deportation has led to acute overcrowding of most detention centre and this prevents many non-citizens from being transferred there. Thus, large numbers of non-citizens who have completed their prison sentences remain in prisons (CLDH 2010, p.44).

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Access to Detainees: In 2002, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Lebanese authorities and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC was allowed to visit all Lebanese prisons except the Ministry of Defence Detention Centre. In February 2007, a new protocol was signed allowing ICRC to work in all Lebanese prisons (CLDH 2010, p.43). A unique MOU was signed between Caritas Lebanon (CL) and the Lebanese General Security (GS) allowing Caritas Lebanon to provide social, medical, and legal assistance to all non-citizen detainees in Lebanese (CL 2009, pp. 6-7). As well as allowing victims to stay at Caritas shelter house for 2 months, by September 2010, there were 35 maids at the shelter transferred from the General Security. (HRW Sept. 2010 ⁽⁴⁾).

According to various reports, Lebanon has used 22 penal institutions for the detention of irregular migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, who are held alongside regular criminals (CLDH 2010, p.15-17). Prisons generally do not segregate administrative and criminal detainees; however, Lebanon abides by international standards with respect to separating men and women, and minors and adults (HO 2006, p.19, HRW 2007, p.28, IRIN 2007, CLDH 2010, p.38).

Lebanon has the highest number of detained refugees and asylum seekers among countries in the region (UNHCR 2007). In November 2007, there were 1,378

⁴ According to an **MOU between UNHCR** and Lebanese authorities, the latter is to notify UNHCR of asylum seekers detained at its premises (USCRI 2008). UNHCR and nongovernmental organizations have access to detained refugees and asylum seekers (CLDH 2010, p.44; USCRI 2008; HRW 2007, p. 28, 66).

foreigners detained beyond their sentences, about 820 in Roumieh prison and 441 by the General Directorate of General Security (Aliq 2007). Prison sentences for violating immigration laws are between one to three months. However, non-citizens have been held in administrative custody for several years (CLDH 2010, p.63).

Detention Policy Examples in the Arab Countries

Detention Policy in Bahrain

Bahrain as well issues work permit by Bahraini sponsor the Kafala system with the same conditions mentioned above, where Migrant Domestic Workers and are subject to administrative detention prior to deportation according to Bahraini Labor Law, 23/ 1976 known as AMIRI Decree.

Bahrain as well is accused of arrests, prolonged administrative detention and deportations by United Nations Office of The High Commissioner of Human Rights, Human Rights Watch 2009.

International Labor Organization reports that Bahraini constitution Art. 18 "does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of race or color and does not appear to protect non- nationals from discrimination, leaving foreigners without legal protection from discriminatory treatment.

Migrants are detained on the grounds that they are not able to pay their debts owed to sponsors and anyone sentenced to pay a fine may be imprisoned for up to one year, deportation and sometimes indefinitely until paid the debts or being deported.

Bahrain has one dedicated immigration detention facility: the Hidd Detention Center (WCAD 2008), but the Asry Detention Centre also frequently detains foreigners (Del Rosario 2007). While the Isa Town Prison for Women hold irregular migrant women. The Ministry of Interior is responsible for immigration detention.

Detention Policy in Israel

The "Prevention of Infiltration Law of 1954 and Law of Entry in to Israel 1952", authorizes the Ministry of Defence to detain and deport anyone who enters Israel without permission or is in Israel unlawfully is deemed to be an infiltrator and can face criminal charges 5 years and to 7 **years** if they return back to the county after being deported. A person who assists an infiltrator may be imprisoned from 5-15 years (Art. 6, 8).

The law does not put any limit on the Length of detention for non citizen. A detainee can be released after 60 days if the they cooperative. The average imprisonment of foreign citizens is estimated at 521 days.

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In 2009 according to media report there were 280,000 foreigners living illegally in Israel of this 228,000 were migrant workers who entered the country legally and ended losing their status or overstayed their five year work permits.

Women migrant workers lose their status because of pregnancy and both men and women are not allowed to have romantic relations with non Israelis, which can be grounds for revoking work permits. According to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, states that the policy that stipulates that female migrant workers who give birth must leave the country with their babies within 3 months of giving birth or send the baby out of the State of Israel to safeguard their work permit is discriminative against women. Furthermore marriage and intimate relationship between migrant workers under existing State Policy constitute an offense and can lead to the couples work permit being revoked. (CEDAW 2011)

According to Hot Line Migrant Workers, In Israel between 1998-2008 71,500 people were forcibly deported and between 2003-2004 38,000 were deported and in 2005 100, 000 migrant workers were deported and in 2006 3,500 migrant workers were deported from the State of Israel.

A study revealed that the deportations were designed to lower the cost of the labour by creating a large class of indentured (binding agreement) workers and to deny the grant of civic status to non Jewish migrant workers (Dahan and Gill 2006 p.1) . All detention facilities are operated by the Israel Prison Service. According to Hotline for Migrant Workers Berman 2011, by February 2011 Israel had a total detention capacity for 2,500 within six detention facilities that were in use: three prisons, two migrant facilities and one airport transit facility.

According to Immigration authority 11, 000 illegal migrants entered Israel between January and November 2010. An estimated 300,000 migrant workers now reside in Israel coming largely from Philippines, Thailand, China, India Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Policy Reforms

At State level

As the Civil Society Organisations and the Non-Government Organisations grew more out spoken and the naming & shaming of several incidents by the Human Rights Watch, the pressure from the media publishing daily reports of abuse and exploitation mean that the Lebanese authorities could not turn a deaf ear to the

As the Civil Society Organisations and the Non-Government Organisations grew more out spoken and the naming & shaming of several incidentsof abuse and exploitation mean that the Lebanese authorities could not turn a deaf ear to the complaints raised in relation to the growing injustices in the country.

complaints raised in relation to the growing injustices in the country. The Lebanese authorities responded by the Prime Minister appointing a special commission called "Unified Committee" to the Higher Council to design a National Plan of Action that would address issues of migrant workers in a thorough manner with the participation of other key government agencies, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Social Affairs, Internal Security Forces, the Lebanese Bar Association, the International Labour Organisation, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Non-Government Organisations and representatives from the sending countries embassies and syndicates. The committee was tasked to study:

- The understanding of the national application of international conventions ratified by Lebanon on the rights of women migrant domestic workers,
- The gaps in the laws and regulations administrative, civil, and criminal, which hamper the implementation of women migrant domestic rights
- Proposed legislation guidelines in line with the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

With the appointment of the National Steering Committee in 2006 an initial step was taken by the Lebanese authorities. The committee studied and proposed new legislation based on the convention excluding those provisions which they considered or thought would create problems for Lebanon.

The process has, to a modest extent, already begun by putting limitations on the behaviour and power of employment agencies. Limiting the amount of power the agencies have through the reinforcement of the introduced laws compelling agencies to alter their behaviour. (In 2007 an employer was sentenced to 15 days imprisonment for beating and burning her maid, another was made to pay 1500\$ fine for damages and repatriation fees. However these are exceptional cases, usually disputes are settled by rendering the maid her papers and sending her home without drawing the attention of the authorities.

At the judicial Level, authorities are backed by the government, to see that migrant domestic workers are properly treated, given freedom of action, monitoring hiring processes, writing of contracts, adequate salaries, giving them free time, freedom of movement, protected against corporal punishment, rape, and enforced sequestration are all carefully studied.

Though the proposed policy on Migrant Workers Rights had been carefully studied and engineered within the framework of United Nations Conventions on Migrant Workers and their Families Rights and the final recommendations submitted to Parliament for ratification in 2006, unfortunately to date it is still pending.

Efforts to introduce a new law to regulate the presence and work of migrant domestic workers have failed to gain momentum. In February 2011, labour Minister Boutros Harb proposed a draft law to regulate the work of migrant domestic workers but would still keep the current sponsorship "kafala" system in place, but his draft was abandoned as a change in the government took place. At the beginning of the year, when a new labour minister came in office by the name of Charbel Nahhas, he announced to the public that he would look at abolishing the "kafala" system, but he resigned over a matters unrelated to the issue a month later. The newly appointed minister of labour, Salim Jreissati, who took over has yet to announce any plans to put an end to the widespread abuse against domestic workers.

Lebanon voted in favour of the International Labour Organization's convention No. 189 on decent Work for domestic workers, adopted in June 2011, but has yet to take steps to ratify the treaty or bring itself in compliance.

Lebanon voted in favour of the International Labour Organization's convention No. 189 on decent Work for domestic workers, adopted in June 2011, but has yet to take steps to ratify the treaty or bring itself in compliance. The ILO Convention requires governments to provide domestic workers with labour protections equivalent to those of other workers, to monitor recruitment agencies rigorously, and to provide protection against any form of violence.

{The latest decree issued by the ministry of Labour in practice is however, the one in July 17, 2004 N0 1/70, which regulates the relation between recruitment agencies employers and domestic worker specifying:

- The employer or agency must place a specified amount of money - L£1,500,000 - at the Housing Loan Bank as a guarantee that the agency will pay the required government taxes, be able to buy an air ticket to enable the Migrant Domestic Workers to return home. In practice this money is never used to buy the return ticket and is refundable to the agency when the contract ends.
- A specified sum - around L£500,000 must be paid annually to the Labour ministry for a work permit,
- Health insurance policy to be presented to the Ministry of Labour for issuing work permit,
- A sum (200 USD) paid to the General Security service for a residency permit.
- A notarized contract between the parties is necessary for a work permit. However, there is no specific format imposed by the authorities.

- Life insurance, in case of death of domestic worker, 7500USD to be delivered to the family, after cutting the expenses of the transfer of the corps.
- Compensation for a permanent or partial damage of the foreign worker, due to an accident, for a sum of 2500USD.
- Expenses of hospitalization from an accident of work or outside work for each case for a sum of 2500USD and yearly 7500USD.
- Payment of transportation fees, ticket to home country, if the employer dies, or if he or she gets infected by incurable disease.

On June 1 2010, the Ministry of Labour Butros Harb announced that the Ministry had introduced a hot line, on July 7th The Human Rights Watch contacted the hot line and they were told that they had not received a single call from the Migrant Domestic Workers. This is very probably due to the fact that the ministry had not disseminated information about the existence of the hot line within the communities of the Migrant Domestic Workers. }

While Labour legislation reforms in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have been very slow, as national security issues have priority in regard to the human rights issues of migrant workers.

While Labour legislation reforms in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have been very slow, as national security issues have priority in regard to the human rights issues of migrant workers.

Bahrain: "The greatest reform to date in the region was the Bahrain government's decision in 2009 to scrap the kafeel sponsorship system. Having given proper notice, a worker can now change jobs without his employer's permission and without allegations of abuse or non-payment of salary. Unsurprisingly, the new law drew a mixed response and it does not include domestic workers. The reform's full impact is yet to be seen:

A written unified contract for domestic workers was introduced which took effect in April 2007. Its provisions include: duration of contract, salary and other benefits, accommodation, healthcare, working hours, paid leave, repatriation ticket, dispute settlement, recruitment fees, and coordination with concerned embassies. " (The human rights of migrant workers in the Arabian Gulf Region WCC- ICM report 2011)

United Arab Emirates (U.A.E): In August 2009, a Wages Protection System was introduced by the Labour Ministry which stipulates that all private sector companies are obliged to open an account with the Central Bank which can be monitored by the Ministry. Each worker is then given an ATM card drawn on a local bank chosen by the employer whereby a worker's monthly salary is automatically deposited electronically. A private sector company that falters in payment of monthly wages to employees incurs heavy fines.

In September 2009 the Inspection Department of the U.A.E. Labour Ministry issued "Guidelines for Temporary Labour in the U.A.E. " designed to protect temporary migrant workers from contract fraud and illegal recruitment fees from employment agencies in labour sending countries.

In June 2010 the U.A.E. Labour Ministry published "Recent Initiatives Furthering Protection of Workers in the United Arab Emirates" which in addition to insuring monthly remuneration of construction workers, stipulates on the job health and safety regulations as well as new administration procedures designed to insure the equitable treatment of contract workers.

Other policy reforms instituted in the last few years include: a 24-hour hotline and website for lodging complaints in the Dubai police force; imposition of stiff penalties for sponsors who facilitate hiring of domestic workers illegally which is considered as a trafficking crime and translates jail sentence of up to 10 years and a fine of Dh50,000. Labour inspections are conducted more rigorously to ensure that the work places meet national and international standards.

Churches in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries: Churches from various congregations in the GCC countries are very much involved in supporting and providing care to migrant workers. They try to reach out directly to the hundreds of migrant workers, irrespective of faith, accompany them in their daily struggles, and provide them with support, counselling and shelter if possible. They conduct prayers, celebrate holidays, and undertake bible studies as well. They provide spiritual counselling, donate food and clothing. Most of them have a 24 hours hotline that migrant workers can call anytime. They also provide financial assistance to migrant workers: for payment of visa penalties, or assistance if facing non-payment of salaries for several months, for medical expenses, they also provide legal aid in cases of illegal status when migrant worker has absconded, counselling for broken business contracts. (Human rights of migrant workers WCC-CCIA 2011 Report)

THE ROLE of the Middle East Council of Churches UNIT ON Diakonia and Social Justice Plays: The Unit organizes and implements activities that tackle the challenges of migration and detention and justice, and opens new horizons of cooperation in a renewed manner with national institutions and authorities such as the Human Rights Bar association, the Interior Security forces, General Security, International humanitarian organizations, building bridges, constructive dialogue and fruitful cooperation, where the promotion of hope as the essence of Christian mission enhance the witness of the council and Unit on Diakonia and Social Justice.

The Unit challenges the State, International Organizations, Non-Government Organisations, Individual Citizens, Civil Society and Government Officials:

To bring together the key stakeholders to develop awareness raising strategies through provision of alternatives to detention, improving detention conditions,

Advocating to the government to adopt a comprehensive policy framework which has already been developed by International Detention Coalition, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Non-Government Organisations,

Providing training to government officials on international standards,

Providing training to immigration and police on refugee law and introducing international good practices,

Preventing of arrest through training of government officials enhances policy and legal environment to promote release and propose alternative to detention.

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Through the established projects the Unit implements the following activities:

Gulf Liaison Office: this network with churches, embassies, governments and international organizations. Does research and produces information on living and working conditions of migrant workers. Initiates justice based activities like visits to the lobar camps, safe houses for runaway maids

Repatriation of Stranded Migrant Workers Gulf Countries: assists migrant workers stranded and detained, to repatriate back home

Awareness Activities: Material Promotional Activities; produces publications on refugee and migrant workers, stories and books, human rights illustrated booklets, brochures, calendar and posters.

Under this activity we also organize awareness raising workshops on issues of detention, torture prevention, migrants rights, Radio broadcasting on Human trafficking, detention, racial discrimination, abuse, exploitation and domestic slavery. Produced a documentary film on migrant communities living in Lebanon

Advanced Training in Prison Ministry: Under this activity we organizes two training workshops in a year for the members of staff for the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, government offices, prison administration & staff, Interior Security forces, police, other concerned people.

Participation in International Coalition on Detention and Interregional

Collaboration: Staff members participate in meetings and workshops organised by the International Detention Coalition which addresses immigration detention. Provides the possibility to share resources and information to tackle the global picture and cross regional impacts of government policies and practices.

To promote and collaborate with other organizations and churches while building networking initiatives between the churches, and organizations serving refugees in the Middle East, region, Asia, Africa and Europe around common refugee and migration issues and concerns.

Conclusion:

Churches, civil society groups, Non-Government Organisations, human rights groups, and international organizations jointly and individually have a major role to play in their respective contexts in solidarity with migrant people, to develop human resources on issues of migration-detention and labour laws.

Does research and produces information on living and working conditions of migrant workers. Initiates justice based activities like visits to the labor camps, safe houses for runaway maids

To develop a more coordinated action to advocate in policy makers of governments, and legislatures; to develop a new philosophy, to improve the conditions of detention and promote human rights based response to prisoners. Greater public opinion should be mobilized and networks to be created at national level to ensure the responsibility of the state in awareness of detention conditions and involvement in measures and planning.

Give and show greater support action when governments and parliaments show a willingness to ratify the ICRMW and C189. A greater cooperation between different organisations addressing issues related to migrants and to encourage these organizations to build networking relations which include and involve the media especially as related to the advocacy initiatives.

Diakonia involves speaking to power and confronting those in authority which at times is risky. It also requires an attitude of love, humility, courage and commitment. "Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right you are blessed, be ready to make the defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence (Peter.3 :13-16). This is the prophetic voice of my church that needs to be focused towards directions which will aim at protection of the rights and dignity of millions of migrant workers in this world.

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Anglican Church of Kenya

Bishop Stephen Mwangi

Introduction

Back in the late seventies (1978) when I was doing my theological studies, a student joined the college. Very excited for joining other brothers and sisters, he greeted one seminarian with these words, "How are you brother? The other seminarian

answered him with a question: Do I look like you?" This student was taken aback and wondered whether he was in the right place.

The Draft theological statement on migration entitled, the "other" is my neighbour has shed a lot of light on the question of **migration**. It has informed us on who is on the move, reasons for migration, tensions caused by migrations, the impact of migration to families, exploitation of migrants and the life patterns, style of the migrants among other things. I have drawn many insights from these notes which have helped me to be able to look at the theological and biblical reflection on the tension between freedom of movement and detention of migrants.

Migrations in the Bible

The Bible is full of people migrating for different reasons, to cite a few among others I have chosen the following:

Genesis 12:1-9 Abraham leaves his home in Haran to the land of the Canaanites at **Gods command**. In verses 10-20 Abraham leaves Bethel in the land of the Canaanites to Egypt because of **famine**.

Genesis 37: Joseph is **sold** by his brothers (v.27) and ends up in Egypt.

Genesis 25: 1 Isaac goes to Gerar the land of the Philistines because of **Famine**.

Genesis 19: Lot flees to Zoar for **safety** because Sodom and Gomorrah were to be destroyed. (Vv.17-24)

Genesis 28: Jacob leaves his father's land to Paddam Aram for two reasons:

- a) to **marry** from his kin's people (v.2)
- b) Fleeing from his brothers Esau's wrath as can be seen in the previous chapter 27.42. **Refuge**.

Genesis 31: Jacob flees from Laban because of bad attitude towards him, especially **envy** out of his hard work and prosperity (VV. 1-2)

New Testament the early Christians (including some Apostles) are driven out of Jerusalem to go out for Mission through **persecution** (Acts 8)

Matthew – Our Lord was taken to Egypt after birth for **security** reasons (2.13-15) He was in exile for political reasons.

Philippians - The greatest of these migrations is Jesus' **divestiture as God's** Mission (Philippians 2:5-11)

These portions remind us that human beings were on the move for various reasons from time immemorial.

Liberty/Freedom of movement and detentions in accordance to the universal declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

Article 1 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

The right to liberty and the freedom of movement are enshrined in Article 3 and 13 (i) of the UDHR and they are both interrelated.

The right to liberty is a basic right for freedom to which all human beings are entitled and in whose exercise a government may not interfere. From a scholar's perspective, liberty comes up in the form of restrictions or absolute deprivation. The difference between restrictions on liberty and deprivation of liberty is one of degree or intensity and depends on the type of measure imposed, its duration and effects and how it is implemented.

A person can only be lawfully deprived of their liberty when this is done in accordance with law, proportionate and carried out in established circumstances; for instance, detention following court conviction; arrest or detention or remand so the arrested can be presented before courts if reasonably suspected of having *committed* an offence and within established time; detention which is lawful, necessary and proportionate to prevent, as a matter of last resort; the spread of infectious diseases, lawful detention on mental health grounds among others. Imprisonment or forced detention would compromise absolute deprivation of liberty.

*"Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right you are blessed, be ready to make the defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence
(Peter.3 :13-16).*

The freedom of movement asserts that a citizen of a state in which that citizen belongs has the liberty to travel, reside in, and/or work in any part of the state where one pleases within the limits of respect for the liberty and rights of others, and to leave that state and return at any time. Applied beyond the limits of a state, this right entails that human beings have a fundamental human right to mobility not only within a state but between states. Scholars have tried to base a universal "right to move" on several philosophical grounds, including the idea of common ownership of the earth, a natural right of movement existing prior to the advent of nation states, an ethics of cosmopolitanism and utilitarian notions to both receiving countries and immigrants themselves.

Detention: Protection against arbitrary arrest, detention or exile is contained in article 9 of the UDHR. However, according to Amnesty International, 2012, there are various aspects of detention and imprisonment including the prisoners of conscience, arbitrary, incommunicado and secret detention and solitary confinement, unfair trial, torture and other forms of ill treatment. It reports that in countries throughout the world people are being detained and imprisoned arbitrarily without a fair trial. They report that in these circumstances many of these people face torture or other forms of ill-treatment or being held in conditions that are so poor that they amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

Israelis and their attitude to aliens (foreigners, strangers and sojourns)

Besides the free citizens of Israel who formed "the people of the land" part of the population consisted of resident foreigners, known as the 'gerim'.

The 'ger' is essentially a foreigner who lives more or less permanently in the midst of another community, where he is accepted and enjoys certain rights. The word was used of individuals or groups (Roland de Vaux p. 74) Examples, Abraham was a gerim in Hebron (Ge.23:4), Moses was a ger in Midian(Ex.2.22;18.3) and so was Elimelech of Bethlehem in Moab (Ruth 1:1). The Israelites were also gerim in Egypt (Ex.22:20; 23:9 Deut 10:19)

*From a social point of view, the resident aliens were **free men**, not slaves but they did not process full rights like the Israelite citizens. They had the freedom and could own property, but had no political rights.*

(R.de Vaux p 74)

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Because all landed property was on Israelite hands, the 'gerim' were reduced to hiring out their services(Deut,24;14,15) As a rule they were considered poor and were grouped with the poor, the widows and the orphans, all the "economically weak" who were recommended to Israelites charity. (See Lev. 19:10, 23:22, Deut.24:19-21 etc.

The Israelites were to help them, remembering that they themselves had once been gerim in Egypt (Ex 22:20, 23:9; Deut; 24:18; 22)

For the same reason they were charged to love aliens as themselves. (Lev.19:34; Deut.10:19)

They were to share in the tithe collected every third year (Deut. 14:28-29)

They would produce of the Sabbatical year (Lev.25:6). The cities of refugee were open to them (Numbers 35.15) this reminds me of what one person said, "We are all potential refugees".

In legal actions they were entitled to justice just like the Israelites (Deut.1:16), and were liable to the same penalties. (Lev.20:2, 24:16, 22)

In everyday life there was no barrier between gerim as well as to Israelites.

Current trend of Human Migration and our attitudes to them

As I am representing All African conference of Churches, I wish to quote from the General Secretary of AACC, Dr Andre Karamanga's presentation in this subject:

The AACC as a whole are aware of the dehumanizing reality of young Africans who perish everyday trying to leave the continent and go overseas. This phenomenon has never captured the attention of Human Rights, and sometimes one wonders if it is appropriate to talk about an 'International community' because within the community, one expects that people

care for their fellow human beings. A human community, with the minimum humanity and moral standard is expected to never accept what is not acceptable.

From time immemorial, humans and communities have been moving from one part of the world to the other and Europe is in a better position to testify that this freedom of movement is not to be considered as a crime.

Dr. Karamanga laments as he asks," How long are we going to continue to witness the lack of humanity in human beings? How long are African people going to suffer from dehumanization and victimization? Whose power is leading the human community to new destinies? Which values preside over the configuration of situations and determine the present and future while the weak and the powerless are continuously denied their dignity and the minimum respect and protection? Are we consistent and fair when we tend to consider migration as a crime?

Dr. Karamanga concludes, "Africa and Europe have been made closest neighbours by God. This neighbourhood is to be orientated towards a determination to care for each other. We do not want a situation where one can respond to God, "Am I my brothers/neighbours keeper? We are each other's keepers. One of the French philosophers said that there is no one who has the right to be happy alone when others are suffering. Our conviction is that we are one human family and we need to include each other in the struggle for life".

Jesus attitude to the 'other'

Philippians** - The greatest of these migrations is Jesus' **divestiture as God's Mission

(Philippians 2:5-11)

These portions remind us that human beings were on the move for various reasons from time immemorial.

In Luke 4:18 & 19 Jesus declares His mission on earth, that of bringing **hope and dignity** to the oppressed, marginalized, dehumanized and underprivileged. This passage seems to summarize His mission to those who were in the periphery.

A close look at the ministry of Jesus as narrated in the Gospels was to make life meaningful to those oppressed in all categories of life (John 10:10). His interaction with those marginalized in the society of his time attests to this: the sick (Mtt.9:35); tax collectors e.g. Matthews in Mtt.9:9 and Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1, 2; Women (John4:- the Samaritan woman)

His teachings were clear on His mission breaking down the barriers. A good example is his parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-36) in which Jesus elaborated on "who is your neighbour". He helped His hearers to see through another window outside their religious, ethnic and social cocoons.

Before I conclude, I wish to share some insights on Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman in John 4 which to me illustrates Jesus' attitude to the "other". Jacob's well was there, and Jesus tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. When the Samaritan woman came to draw water Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan Woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans)(4:6-9)

This encounter shows that Jesus came to break down barriers. The quarrel between the Jews and the Samaritans was old. It was more than 400 years old. It was a wonder to the Samaritan Woman that Jesus, a Jew should speak to her, a Samaritan.

Jesus further broke the barriers by talking not only to the Samaritan but to **woman**. Strict Rabbis forbade a Rabbi to greet a woman in public. A Rabbi might not even speak to his own wife or daughter in public. For a Rabbi to be seen speaking to a woman in public was the end of his reputation - and yet Jesus spoke to this woman.

This encounter shows Jesus' concern for human beings irrespective of their condition and status. It shows the warmth of sympathy with those outside our circle, 'the other'. Meeting with Jesus, this woman had at last met someone who was not a critic but a friend, one who **did not condemn** but who **understood**.

CONCLUSION:

As I conclude I wish to join Dr. Karamaga as he says, "The church in Africa and beyond strongly believes that every person is made in God's image and deserves to enjoy life, love, respect and dignity. Therefore, the dignity of everyone is not something offered by the powerful to the weak, but a fundamental right and a gift from God.

The Impact of Migration on the Churches and the Ecumenical Movement

Netherlands Mission Council

Gerrit Noort

This presentation will focus specifically on the consequences of religious and cultural diversity in relation to the life of our churches and congregations. The presentation will not focus on migration as such, or on the experiences of refugees or overseas workers, but on implications of migration for local churches and the ecumenical ecclesial landscape. Given from the perspective of a Dutchman, serving with the Netherlands Mission Council, and also as a member of the steering group of the Ecumenical Network for Multicultural Ministries (ENFORMM) and as a friend of SKIN, the Dutch platform of migrant churches.

In the draft of the Just and Inclusive Communities – theological statement on migration it says in paragraph 35:

“Migration is greatly impacting churches across the globe and altering ecclesial landscapes in a number of ways — by increasing local denominational numbers, increasing ethnic diversity in membership, through the formulation of so-called ‘migrant churches’ and introducing challenges relating to theological hermeneutics and ecclesiology. It is also increasing cultural, theological and linguistic pluralism within Christian practice.”

The changes are indeed immense, but that we have hardly started to realize its significance at a local level and that necessary change, in many respects, are only slowly implemented. These days the focus is on the hardships of migration, even on death of those who embark on their journeys. In this presentation I would like to shift the perspective somewhat.

Migration may justifiably be called Empire, especially where it concerns its life-denying aspects, but migration also brings life-affirming perspectives. In the congregational life of migrant communities stories of dignity, of strength and empowerment, of worship and mission in multicultural perspective are shared and offer great inspiration. It is fair to say that these newly emerging congregations are a blessing to many, not only migrants, but also ‘locals’, who learn to shift their perspective, and who learn to worship and witness with others to the local community. So there is both Empire and Kingdom of God, when it concerns migration. That is a complex ambiguity.

The question addressed in this presentation is: Does religious and cultural diversity impact our churches and the ecclesial landscape? Let us say, *yes*, it has tremendous impact. And at the same time: *no*, with concern that it has little impact.

Let us start with the ‘yes’. Yes, of course, in Europe, where I live, people realize that the population has changed and that the number of immigrants has risen significantly over the past decades. People are aware of the fact that the social context has changed. In many European countries there is a public discourse on the changes and it is hard to overlook that. Especially in the Netherlands, where far right

wing politicians seized upon popular sentiments about the perceived threat to Dutch identity.

But then 'no', its impact somehow isn't great. Many Christians and local congregations live as they have always lived. Speaking again of the Dutch context and of the Protestant Church of the Netherlands, of which I am an ordained minister: while about 20% of the Dutch population is labeled as immigrants (including so-called 'Western immigrants', such as Italian or U.S. citizens), church membership of my church — a mainline church that used to be the state church — is 'white' (except some Moluccan and Surinamese members).

It cannot even be called a white majority church, as the number of members who were born elsewhere is very, very small indeed. Church thinking is and remains white, church diakonia is offered to migrants but not with migrants. Chaplains in prisons are predominantly white, although 55% percent of the inmates are first or second generation migrants. Theology is white and during the six years of theological training it is the Western academic standards that are leading, while there is very little emphasis on practical ministerial formation and contextual learning by experience in the community.

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So, is the glass half empty in this presentation? No, but I am concerned. Some in my church will no doubt argue that the PCN has established a migration desk and that the Protestant Theological University assigns its students to do research in migrant churches. So we have made progress. Yet the migration desk doesn't have fulltime staff. PCN funding for SKIN, the platform of migrant churches, is considered a project and not an issue of being church together. Projects can be terminated, they have to be evaluated. But working side by side with migrant churches requires a relationship, not a donor relationship.

And when it concerns the theological research done by the theological students: these assignments run the risk of making migrants the subject of research, rather than preparing future pastors for the ministry in a religiously and culturally diverse society. As it doesn't immerse the students in issues of migration and in migrant communities, the focus remains on observing, on acquiring knowledge, whereas the focus should also be on participation and learning to serve together. Moreover, theological lecturers are white and their courses are offered in Dutch. As entry qualifications are in accordance with Dutch law, migrant leaders and pastors have a hard time getting access to theological institutions. So they opt for online theological course, such as are offered by Ray Bekke University and Global University. Because this is the case, theological students up to a large extend continue to live in their own theological and denominational environment and do not need to engage with the cultural and religious diversity.

Some will argue that this theological 'segregation' is good. It makes life a whole lot easier, both for native Dutch and for the new Dutch citizens. Nigerian Pentecostal pastors are not happy with the 'missional' attitude of white theologians who feel that Christians from Africa need to understand that mission and evangelism (the call for conversion to Christ) is no longer desirable, that they need to understand that the Bible is certainly not inerrant or infallible, that the historical-critical reading of the Bible is the only possible way to read the Scriptures in a post-Enlightenment time. Dutch lecturers on the other hand are often not happy when they are critiqued for being scientists rather than active church members or that they have lapsed from Christian faith altogether. There is a serious hermeneutical issue here. 'Segregation' appears to be an easy way out.

So what about the impact of cultural diversity on churches and the ecclesial landscape? It is fair to say that the impact of migration on churches is indeed visible and has implications for all aspects of congregational life and theological education. Yet we are only at the beginning of seeing, acknowledging and implementing the changes. Specifics vary with the context, of course. For sure European society has changed. Once it was a continent from which millions immigrated to the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Now millions from other continents have immigrated and they are there to stay.

Congregations of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands are only marginally touched by migration, even though the number of urban migrants that go to church by far exceeds the number of native Dutch who do so. 'White' Dutch go to 'white' Dutch churches, where we sing solemn Dutch songs and speak and pray in Dutch.

Somebody who comes from Ghana will much rather visit a worship service where Ghanaians meet and where people converse in Twi. In practice there is segregation. Not as a conscious or intentional ecclesial policy, but as a matter of fact. A migrant who visits a Dutch worship service will probably be welcomed — also recent research (2012) has shown that this is not always the case — but he or she may be frowned upon as well. It even happens that people will say, 'I get it, you are probably looking for the Ghanaian church down the street!' Intentions are often good, but there is a lot of ignorance involved and also there is a lack of ability by some church members to communicate in other languages. Often it is not so much conscious exclusion, but much rather a lack of intentional inclusive hospitality that goes beyond the question 'What is your country of origin?'

So what about the impact of cultural diversity on churches and the ecclesial landscape? In the end, the ecclesial life and landscape do not seem to be affected by migration, at least not in a deep and visible way. What are the implications of this for multicultural perspectives on congregational life and theological education?

In the main cities of the Netherlands migrant churches were already established in the 1600s. English-speaking Scots churches, for the seafarers and traders, were instituted in the port cities; Reformed Huguenots from France fled to our country in the 1700s and shaped their own French-speaking congregations. The Reformed Church embraced both migrant communities and provided space in their ecclesial structures while respecting the cultural and linguistic identities. Moluccans, from the Eastern part of Indonesia who arrived in the Netherlands in the fifties, preferred to institute independent churches for two reasons: they wanted to maintain their cultural identity, but they also had a problematic relationship with the Dutch government. They felt they were betrayed, as promises (concerning the creation of an independent state of the Moluccas) were not kept.

Sometimes the established congregation is only a temporary place of residence for migrant Christians. Recently many Congolese Christians in The Hague moved on to Brussels (Belgium) when they were confronted with serious second generation issues and with a political climate that doesn't provide a safe space for migrants.

There is a certain logic in segregation. I don't favor it at all, as it is not the Christian ideal of living together and neighborly love. Moreover, the term 'segregation' has strong connotations that remind us of discrimination and Apartheid. But having your own church, without the complexities of having to dialogue with representatives of a given majority culture, certainly provides a safe place, a space for new identity construction in the midst of the migration experience. We should recognize that in the process of migration such spaces may be needed, either temporarily or for a longer period of time, depending on the context and the process of integration.

In recent years the emergence of international or multicultural churches is prominent. This development started much earlier in Anglophone countries, such as Australia or Canada. A remarkable debate is going on about this type of church. While it is exactly this type of church that signals that Christians start realizing the impact of migration, some people feel that congregational life in multicultural churches is too complicated: emerging cultural differences, leadership issues, hermeneutical issues, issues of gender and sexual orientation and so on.

The impact of religious diversity also regards the presence of Islam and Muslims in Europe. The issues involved are serious. So is the widespread 'othering' of Muslims in European societies and the far right-wing political discourse in some countries. In our churches we should make sure that, when we speak of and with a migrant, we address him/her as a fellow human being, a person in the image of God. Too often people are labeled as being an irregular or undocumented migrant and forget that people have a name. While acknowledging this, we also realize that people movement brings about a process of acculturation, in which adaptation from both sides is negotiated. Values and convictions are at stake. I don't want to view this too lightly.

In this process of negotiating values in a changing society the 'other' is perceived as a threat, an imminent threat to our lifestyles and convictions. We all do that, even — or especially — Christians who profess that their values are from heaven, have eternal value. The higher the percentage of 'others', the higher the perceived threat

and the view that the 'out-group' is not part of 'our' society prevails. We shouldn't make the mistake to trivialize or disregard the feeling of being threatened. This is an identity issue, and not taking this seriously may very well lead to the rise of far right wing politicians, as we have experienced in the Netherlands. The Dutch were not very sure about their identity; actually we often joked about it and didn't take it too serious. We prided ourselves in being pragmatic. Christians, in the post-Christendom era also had some identity problems, as the tenets of faith were increasingly under pressure. Princess Maxima, married to the Dutch crown prince, said that she, an immigrant from Argentina, hadn't been able to identify Dutch identity, only to find out that the Dutch responded furiously and started looking for their lost identity.

I submit to you that we shouldn't make the mistake to opt for nice ecumenical statements and a high level dialogue, without taking into account the dialogue of daily life in the big cities, where people of different ethnicities live in the same block of flats, where conflicting cultural and ethical values are visible and felt.

Back to diversity and its impact: I want to celebrate diversity. I attended the 15th anniversary of SKIN two weeks ago: a Pentecostal Nigerian pastor danced in worship, a Syrian orthodox choir sang ancient liturgical songs, and a Moluccan choir evoked emotions with their slow and lyric song.

Diversity however is also a concern. It is a fact of human existence, but sometimes it reminds me more of the Tower of Babel than of the diverse gifts of the Body of Christ that Paul writes about. Was the Tower of Babel God's wisdom to frustrate our arrogance? Was it a curse? It is difference — linguistically, socially or ethnically — that creates the 'other'. The 'other' contributes equally; it is the wealth of the nations that contributes to the makeup of our societies and churches.

We know that the 'other' defines me as much as I define the 'other'. As our Lord, the ultimate other, is our counterpart and partner, so is the human 'other'. He enriches and challenges me. Sadly enough at the same time the 'other' invokes me, by nature, to create an in-group and an out-group. When the perceived threat is presented as increasing, so does the labeling increase, criminalization of the other increases resulting in an out-group and seeking my own safe place.

When we talk about the impact of migration on our churches, this process should be kept in mind. We want to respond to migration, to contribute to wellbeing of our neighbors, but addressing the issues of migration and lobbying with governments cannot be separated from developing intervention strategies in our own churches and congregations at the same time.

In recent years the emergence of international or multicultural churches is prominent. This development started much earlier in Anglophone countries, such as Australia or Canada. A remarkable debate is going on about this type of church.

We realize, of course, that it doesn't go without saying that we love our neighbor. In fact we don't love the one who is different. It goes against our very nature and up to a certain extent it is even logical to opt for the in-group. It is a survival mechanism. That is what family, clan and tribe seems to be all about, at least in an evolutionary perspective. You take care of the ones closest to you. Survival urges us to distinguish between our own and the other.

It also goes without saying that we can't stop here. We know the contextual realities, we know about the impact of sin (selfishness) and we know about Kingdom values. So we need faith from above and intervention strategies from below. At the most practical level, where it concerns the apparent segregation of the life of migrants and native population, we need to find ways to make sure that people establish bridges between the communities. For one thing, social scientists tell us that increased contact leads to a decrease of perceived threat. So an increase of contact is necessary.

But then, what should the contact be about? SKIN, the Dutch platform of migrant churches, prioritized three issues, all very practical. They seek contact and cooperation with churches and the Dutch ecumenical movement in order to find places of worship, in order to develop contextually relevant theological training for migrant leaders and pastors, and (thirdly) to develop a dialogue between the churches on second generation issues.

Native Dutch churches sell their church buildings rapidly, because of diminishing financial means and decreasing church membership. Protestant churches tend to sell to the highest bidder, be it contractors who remodel the churches and sell them as high level apartments, or Muslims who need places of worship as well and who make the churches into mosques. Or the church buildings are demolished and the parcel of land is sold. Migrant churches want to enter into a dialogue on this issue. They need places of worship.

It is practical things like this that make the impact of migration felt and that helps to break through existing walls between native Dutch and migrant Dutch population, but is just a beginning.

As you have noticed, I am ambivalent about diversity in relation to migration. Diversity brings both Empire and Kingdom of God, sin and holiness, both creation of life and commodification of life. But in the end we want to celebrate diversity and we want to be faithfully optimistic about the impact of migration on churches and the ecumenical movement. The glass is half full. Diversity is a chance and a gift.

*Back to the river side, from its
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Theological Statement on Migration

Drea Frötchling and Joseph Moloney

The 'Other' is my Neighbour Developing an Ecumenical Response to Migration

Preamble

1 Between December 5 and December 7, 2011, a group of 30 representatives from churches and church-related organisations as well as several migration networks met to consider the theme '*Who is my neighbour?: Migration and the ecclesial landscape – an ecumenical response to migration*' at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, Lebanon. The consultation was organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) as a regional conference of the Global Ecumenical Network on Migration (GEM). It was carried out in partnership with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), and hosted by the latter. The conference aimed at "assist[ing] the churches and the ecumenical organisations in their calling to be the church amidst the phenomenon of increasing diversity of people, language, cultures, ethnicity and religions".⁵ The initial three day conference explored responses to migration issues from regional contexts including the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, Africa, Australia, the Pacific, and Asia and was followed by a second smaller gathering between December 7-9, 2011 that dealt specifically with theological and ecclesiological consequences of the findings of the various regions.

2 The next meeting was held in May 7-9, 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland. Issues that provided structure and focus for our theological debate included;

"the ways in which we view or understand ourselves and 'others'; the moral imperative of holding powers accountable for the present economic policies that thrive on the abuse of human beings and the creation; and

⁵ 'Who is my neighbour?' Migration and the ecclesial landscape: An ecumenical response to migration, WCC concept paper, 2012, 1.

practical steps to encourage and equip congregations to become just and inclusive communities”⁶

3 This document is the result of the deliberations of both meetings. It is written from the joint perspective of migrant churches and established historic congregations.

4 In the first section, we introduce the migration phenomenon and discuss its facets and ambivalences. The second section explores biblical and theological perspectives, while the third section identifies the subsequent implications for the nature and mission of the Church. The document concludes with a call for a renewed ecumenical response to migration in the light of the WCC 2013 Assembly theme, ‘God of life lead us to Justice and Peace’.

A. MIGRATION TODAY

Migration: Constant and Changing

5 While migration has always been a feature of human existence, the eruption of the migration phenomena over the last 60 years has been one of the most influential forces shaping the demographic, social, cultural, religious and economic landscapes of nations throughout the world. Today the movement of people occurs in multiple directions across the globe. Each person on the move has her or his own story and reasons for the journey and each person takes with him or her sorrows, hopes and aspirations. Migration is bringing people from all over the world closer together, and this is causing both tension and joy. While the cultural exchange of people on the move offers many opportunities and blessings, it also presents challenges in navigating changing cultural, social and economic spaces and norms.

6 Nation-states are becoming increasingly diverse. National and regional immigration policies often tend to label and criminalize migrants as ‘problems’ and populist media debates exacerbate such notions of superiority and inferiority. Migrant groups are divided into those who are ‘wanted’ and those who are not, and sophisticated and complex mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion have been developed. In other words, notions of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ and ‘we’ versus ‘others’ are frequently implied in migration-related debates and policy-making. Since 9/11, vulnerable migrants are also being criminalized in the name of ‘national security’ due to their religious, ethnic and/or national identity.

7 For Christians who strive for justice and peace, these developments present a range of challenges. To confront the complexities of migration, we believe that it is vital to start by affirming that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). Every individual – whether on the move or settled – is deserving of life, love and dignity.

⁶ ‘Who is my neighbour?’ Migration and the ecclesial landscape: An ecumenical response to migration, WCC concept paper, 2012, 2.

Who is on the move?

8 Migration is a global phenomenon involving an increasing array of ethnic and cultural groups. The term 'migrant' comprises categories such as migrant workers and their families, professionals, international students, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and victims of human trafficking.

9 There are many reasons why people migrate. For some the decision to migrate is made voluntarily, while for others often horrific events compel them to move. Some migrants may feel their motivation lies somewhere between these two points. Disparities in living conditions and other various factors between nations impact on the decision to migrate. These factors include a range of both positive and negative aspects concerning the decision to leave and the choice of destination. Often when migration flows are started there is a tendency for the movement to perpetuate and continue.

10 Today, more than 215 million people live outside their countries of origin or citizenship. The majority of international migrants (about 90%) are migrant workers and their families.⁷ Of the total number of international migrants, 72% are of working age (20 to 64) and around half (49%) are women⁸; 105 million men and women are economically active and a similar number are children and other dependents accompanying working migrants.⁹ The majority (96 million) of working age international migrants resides in developed countries. For migrants seeking employment, strong demand encourages many to migrate to the developed world. This can be mutually beneficial as developed countries struggle with ageing populations and compete for highly skilled workers and international students. International migrants comprise 3% of the global population and this trend is expected to continue, meaning that migrant numbers will increase as the world population does.

Mixed Reasons

11 Not all migrants choose to move voluntarily. Many people are compelled to migrate for mere survival or to obtain sufficient living conditions elsewhere. They are often forced to leave their homes due to state or group violence, war and conflict, political instability, poverty, human rights violations, gender violence, lack of freedom (including religious freedom) and rights of participation. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are currently approximately 15 million refugees worldwide, and almost one million asylum seekers are awaiting the outcome of their claim for refugee status. In addition to the 215 million international migrants, a further 12 million people are stateless and another 26.4 million are displaced internally due to conflict.¹⁰

⁷ International Labour Organization 2010. *International Labour Migration: A Rights Based Approach*. International Labour Organization: Geneva, p 4.

⁸ UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs, Population Division 2010, *Population Facts* 6, 1.

⁹ International Labour Organization (ILO) 2010. *International Labour Migration: A Rights Based Approach*. ILO: Geneva, 4.

¹⁰ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2011. *Global Trends 2011*. UNHCR: Geneva, 2-5.

12 Whether the decision to migrate is made voluntarily or compelled is a question of degree which largely depends on a range of personal and external factors. For some migrants the decision to migrate is made with great uncertainty about their current circumstances and ability to remain. For example, severe environmental factors such as drought create great uncertainty. People may feel their decision is made voluntarily but are strongly motivated to move rather than remain and endure intolerable conditions.

13 As these statistics indicate, migrants are often categorized. While categories cannot capture all the complexities of a constantly evolving phenomenon and the unique nature of each migrant experience – people often fit into more than one type – categorizations can be helpful in pointing to particular experiences and situations:

14 *International Migrants (215 million):* An international migrant is any person who moves across an international border. Internal migrants who move within their own country are far more numerous.

15 *Migrant workers (105 million):* A migrant worker is any person engaged in a remunerated activity in a nation-state other than the nation-state of his or her nationality.

16 *Economic Migrants:* Economic migrants are people who move to a new country because living conditions or job opportunities are not good in their own country or better in another. This term is often used to distinguish between forced and voluntary migrants. In contrast to refugees, economic migrants can normally return home if they choose to, will not face the threat of persecution and can generally seek the protection of their national government.

17 *International Students (3.6 million):* International students travel to a country different from their own for the purpose of tertiary study. The definition of international students varies in each country according to the particular national education system. This category also includes *Student Over stayers* who are foreign students who remain in the country longer than their visas permit them to.

18 *Environmentally-Displaced Migrants:* The United Nations stated that in 2008, 20 million people worldwide were forced to migrate due to extreme climate-related weather events, environmental deterioration, natural disasters, rising sea level, and severe weather patterns such as drought.¹¹ Several reports predict that rising sea levels, desertification, soil erosion and shrinking freshwater supplies – all made worse by climate change – could displace up to 50 million people within the next 10 years. Although these migrants may be forced permanently from their homelands, they do not meet the criteria for refugee status established by the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees and are not recognised under any other international agreement. For the indigenous people, who share a special connection to their home land, the impact of environmental degradation is devastating. When they are expelled from the land of their ancestors, they lose their sacred places and many are condemned to migrate to the slums of large cities. To address these environmental

¹¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) 2009. *Monitoring disaster displacement in the context of climate change*. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC): Geneva, 12.

issues we need to address the social injustices which cause people to degrade the environment. Pollution produced by industrial pursuit, consumerism, greed, exploitation of the land and resources with uncapped pollution and no liability of the polluter have resulted in environmental destruction. As a result many people have been forced from their homes and even from their nations.

19 Refugees (15.2 million): A refugee is someone, according to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country".¹²

20 Asylum seekers (895,000) are people who move across nation-state borders in search of protection, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been assessed or accepted. Many asylum seekers are detained and deported after a short asylum procedure, while others wait for months or years in over-crowded detention centres or in the community for their claims to be processed. Asylum seekers are afforded few rights, including the right to work, and thus often experience harsh living conditions and survive on meagre resources and food.

21 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) (26.4 million): Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find sanctuary but have remained inside their home countries. Often they have fled for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations). However, IDPs remain legally subject to their own government, even though that government might have been a significant reason for their flight.

22 Stateless People (12 million): Nationality is a legal bond between a state and an individual. Statelessness refers to the condition of an individual who is not considered as a national by any state. Stateless people face numerous difficulties in their daily lives: they can lack access to health care, education, property rights and the ability to move freely. They are also vulnerable to arbitrary treatment and crimes like trafficking. Their marginalization can create tensions in society and lead to instability at an international level, including, in extreme cases, conflict and displacement.

23 The migration phenomenon: has increased exponentially in the last 60 years largely due to technological advances supporting transport and communication. Most migrants reach their destination in full accordance with the laws and regulations of the origin and destination countries and make their journey safely and easily. The journeys of other migrants will be much more perilous. Often people on the move will switch categories from regular to irregular status and vice versa as they juggle the demands of international movement and the necessities of life.

24 Irregular migration: Migration that takes place outside the norms and procedures established by nation-states to manage the orderly flow of migrants into, through, and out of their territories. Those who gained documented or

¹² Article 1A(2) of the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951).

undocumented access into a country of their choice often begin their new life indebted and are facing a life of inhospitality, uncertainty, and inhumane conditions. Often upon arrival the vast majority of migrants with irregular status get detained and deported after a short asylum procedure.

25 *Trafficking in Human Beings:* “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”¹³ The majority of trafficked migrants are exposed to violence and abuse along their journey. Victims of trafficking are prone to exploitation, particularly sexual and labour exploitation. Female migrants and migrant children are particularly vulnerable.

26 *People smuggling:* A form of cross-border movement that is facilitated with the agreement of the migrant who usually pays for the smuggling services. Smuggling can be exploitative and dangerous, and sometimes fatal, but it has been chosen rather than coerced. The Palermo Protocols which govern international law on people smuggling define these services as felonious when an organized criminal group is in the lead role.

Migration and Development

27 The role of migration in development is somewhat mixed. Poverty has become a leading factor in the decision to migrate and also allows for the introduction of remittances which can raise living standards of family members left at home. On the other hand, poverty also makes migration less feasible and often separates many families leading to much pain and suffering.

28 However, the phenomenon of migration is not the problem itself, but rather the inequality of wealth and power under which much migration takes place which has led to exploitation and marginalisation of many groups.¹⁴ The underlying issue is the ability of all humans to live life in dignity; an achievement left wanting in the face of extreme poverty. In concurrence, greater equality achieved through development will make the option to migrate more available as a voluntary choice instead of been forced or compelled.

29 The growth of capitalism and globalisation has raised the living standards of some while at the same time increasing inequality and the number of working poor. Greater equality can be achieved through pursuing migration policies which do not exclude the poor and low skilled. As new labour markets open up, the participation of the poor can lead to higher incomes and higher remittances sent back to poorer origin counties. In 2010, the World Bank estimated the value of remittances to be around \$US440 billion dollars and \$US325 billions went directly to developing

¹³ Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

¹⁴ Castles, S 2008. *Understanding Global Migration: A Social Transformation Perspective*. Conference on Theories of Migration and Social Change, St Anne’s College, Woodstock Road, Oxford, July 1-3, 2008.

nations.¹⁵ However, for more liberal labour markets which include the poor to actually translate into greater equality it is essential for work rights of immigrants to be equal and protected by destination countries.

Social Tension and Exclusion

30 When migrants begin to settle in a new country, identity differences – national, religious, ethnic or cultural – can be one of the most serious causes of tensions between migrants and receiving communities. Migrant communities often express their own practices, languages, dress and moral codes in a desire to hold onto what is important to them from home. Sometimes, in response, receiving communities resist or mistreat outsiders for the fear of the impact an ‘intrusion’ of other identities may have upon their own identities. Above all, religious and national identities have been the source of tensions and xenophobia in many contexts. Some right-wing groups aspiring to gain political power capitalise on these tensions by nurturing suspicion, hatred and distance between communities.

31 ‘Othering’ of migrants happens when we emphasize differences negatively over and above valuing commonalities or mutuality positively. ‘Othering’ or stereotyping is a process in which mental, psychological and physical fences are constructed to keep out what and who appears to be ‘strange’. The ‘other’ is seen as a ‘non-fit’, as ‘strange(r)’ and as not meeting the requirements or nature of the ‘in-group’. In a search for clear-cut identities ‘othering’ excludes, inferiorizes and very often hurts and violates those who are not admitted to the ‘in-group’ and into the dominant players, culture(s) and discourses. As such, ‘othering’ can pave the way towards racist attitudes and practices. Racism can range from cultural superiority/inferiority debates to hate speech, physical attacks and sociocides or genocides. Structural racism bars equal access to work, education and services and hinders equal participation, involvement in decision-making and freedom of expression in pluralistic societies. The frequently-esteemed global village is in fact fenced off for many, as the number of ‘gated communities’ globally increases and national and international laws are becoming less and less ‘migration-friendly’.

Family Concerns

32 The migration regime poses multiple challenges to family as the core cultural, social, and economic unit in society, and to preparing the next generations for the world of work. Many migrant workers have to leave husbands or wives and children in order to work abroad to provide for them. In some cases, both parents must go abroad to work and have no choice but to leave the care of children in the hands of others. Many families start their respective journeys by selling belongings and property or by taking out loans, leading them into considerable debt. Intergenerational tension between older and younger family members can occur as they adapt with more or less ease to the new cultural context.

¹⁵ *World Bank's Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011*, <http://go.worldbank.org/QGUCPJTOR0>.

Exploitation

33 Migrants can be vulnerable to exploitation in receiving countries whenever they are perceived as 'other' or of lesser value, and where such attitudes have been structurally embedded through lack of labour/employment and other laws to protect those with or without authorization to be there. In July 2010, the GEM Regional Meeting in Bangkok reports:

"Having heard stories of blatant exploitation and abuse of migrant workers in many of our regions and countries and also by making ourselves aware of such situations around the world, we reflected on the human tendency to exploit the vulnerability of the weak and the disempowered that goes on at various levels. Governments, structures, systems, communities, families and persons are tainted by this tendency which unfortunately stands out as the most shameful trait of our human civilization. Abuse, rape, trafficking, and new forms of slavery, etc, all have their roots in this trait and we as churches must recognize that we are a part of this sinful ethos and must seek forgiveness from God for our complicity and begin to rectify by standing in solidarity with those who are thus denied of the opportunity of life with dignity and basic necessities."

34 In their search for better living conditions, migrants are often treated and traded as commodities, be that in individual homes as domestic workers or factories, multi-national corporations or nation-states. Trafficking for labour or sexual exploitation and for human organ removal is perhaps the most extreme violation of the dignity of the person and sanctity of life given by God.

Migration and the Ecclesial Landscape

35 Migration is greatly impacting churches across the globe and altering ecclesial landscapes in a number of ways – by increasing local denominational numbers, increasing ethnic diversity in membership, through the formation of so-called 'migrant-churches' and introducing challenges relating to theological hermeneutics and ecclesiology. It is also increasing cultural, theological and linguistic pluralism within Christian practice. By the end of 2007, Geneva (Switzerland) alone had over 90 worshipping communities of foreign origin, usually small Pentecostal Churches, African Independent churches, Charismatic and Evangelical communities. Ireland, by the end of 2008, had 361 migrant-led churches and chaplaincies. The largest group, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, operated 70 different centres for worship. The platform of migrant churches in Rotterdam (the Netherlands) recorded over 110 migrant churches in 2007. The majority of these worshipped in a language other than Dutch and ranged in membership from 40 groups with less than 50 members to five groups with over 500 members.¹⁶ In 2006, the slowing rate of decline in church attendance in the United Kingdom was largely attributed to the influx of Christians from Africa and Europe, while in Norwich's Catholic Cathedral

¹⁶ Calvert, R 2007. *Gids voor Christelijke Migranten Gemeenschappen in Rotterdam*. SKIN: Rotterdam.

hundreds of people from the Philippines, India and Africa have boosted the average weekend attendance from 800 up to 1200.¹⁷

36 Migrant newcomers can challenge a mono-cultural denomination long established in a particular nation-state to interact with and sometimes adopt different ways of being church, expressing faith, worshipping, praying and relating to one another. For example in many parts of the world, members of 'national churches' and mainline denominations now worship alongside migrating Christians who have established multicultural or ethnic-majority congregations. In these newly emerging churches, many languages are used, often different from the languages used by established ('national') churches. A German Lutheran could find herself rubbing up alongside a Korean one, or a Latin American Catholic with an Irish one. The scene of these churches is fluid, as is the process of migration itself: church mergers and separations occur, as well as an increasing oscillation between 'national' identities and internationalism, and between a re-denominationalism and post-denominational Christian globalism.

Emerging Questions

37 Migration poses a number of challenges and opportunities for Christian communities looking to God to lead us towards justice and peace today. How will migration change the relationship we have with our neighbours, and indeed, who we see as our neighbours? What is the nature of the global and local communities that we as Christians want to bring into being? What principles will guide us to justice, peace and the integrity of creation as we face the challenges of migration? How can the 'other' be fully included? How might we understand and re-imagine the very nature and mission of the Church in the light of the migration context we have outlined? What does the Christian tradition offer in terms of ethical guidelines and experiences with migration?

B. BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

38 The previous section identified key questions that churches should consider in the contemporary migration context. We will now explore the biblical themes concerning migration, the 'other' and the Church.

'Strangers' on the move

¹⁷ Archbishop Silvano M. Tomasi, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations and Other International Organisations in Geneva, appears in *Thinking Migration* No 1, 2011,16.

39 Existence as a 'stranger on the move' is part of the condition of the people of God. Quite a number of biblical writings go back to times of exile and migration, and biblical stories as well as biblical guidelines for individual and community behavior reflect hardships as well as challenges and chances of migration.

40 For example, Genesis 1-11 highlights a range of archetypal human migratory experiences. Adam and Eve move away from God and are expelled from Paradise, forcing them to fend for themselves through hard labour. Cain became a displaced person and people migrate to the cities as the centres of power. Noah and his family were forced to leave the place of their origin due to a natural disaster. Abraham and Sarah, ancestors of the faith, are described as people who are 'called out'. They left their home for a new unknown place that God claimed he would show them in time (Genesis 12:1), while Abraham and Lot realized that the land they lived on was insufficient to meet the needs of different extended families (Genesis 13:1-18). Neighbouring countries became a destination for survival in periods of crop failure and famine (e.g. Genesis 12:10; 26:1; 41:57).

41 Foundational stories of faith such as the story about the Israelites who escaped slavery in Egypt, worshipped God in a portable sanctuary (Exodus 26) and migrated to the Promised Land refer to experiences of migration (Exodus 12ff.). The reference to a God who supports the migrants in their plight and who sees to an end of their exploitation became the core of the covenant relation (Exodus 3:7-8; 22:21). At the same time it became the ethical challenge for the Israelites, as they were expected to also reach out to those most vulnerable in a society, e.g. the oft quoted triad of widows, migrants and orphans (Exodus 23:9; Deuteronomy 24:18).

42 Turning to the New Testament, movement, travel and exile are shown to be central aspects of the life of Jesus. Jesus is often referred to as an outsider – for example, the one for whom there is no room in the inn (Luke 2:7), the refugee and immigrant in Egypt (Matthew 2:13), the man with no 'place to lay his head' (Luke 9:57). As the Word Incarnate, God in human flesh, Jesus can be described as a divine migrant who crossed borders between heaven and earth. During his life, while travelling from town to town, he challenged the validity of ethnic and cultural barriers, as is visible in his encounters with Samaritans. Movement from one place to the other also characterized the life of Jesus' disciples. They were called to leave their homes (e.g. Matthew 4:19) and according to tradition they travelled to distant lands to proclaim the gospel. In light of the Book of Acts, it is not perhaps then surprising that the early Christians are referred to as those on/of the way (Acts 9:2) and that movement and concepts of exile also featured prominently in the emerging church. Christians are described by the author of 1 Peter as 'aliens and exiles' (1 Peter 2:11). Alienation and migration thus are identity marks of God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9). Theologically speaking migration as being dispersed (*diaspora*) and alienated therefore is a mark of the church (*nota ecclesiae*). This culminates in the Letter to the Hebrews, which underlines that believers are pilgrims who "have no lasting city but seek the one that is to come" (Hebrews 13:14).

43 From this perspective, we are all 'foreigners', residents with a migration and residents without a migration background in their families alike. Being on the move does not allow room for fenced-in identities nor does it leave space for 'othering'.

Identities are constructed in the in-between: in-between Paradise lost and the Heavenly Jerusalem, in-between cross, resurrection and the second coming of Christ, in-between national, ethnic, gender, and other forms of identity and the larger body of Christ as a whole, in-between despair and hope, doubt and faith. In the local Christian communities pilgrims find temporary residence, home for the homeless, where they experience comfort, share hope and struggle together while trusting in the promise of a new creation.

The 'other' as the image of God

44 The eschatological perspective of journeying with the nations to the Messianic banquet in the heavenly Jerusalem (Isaiah 25:6), provides an ethical mandate for the way we perceive and respond to the presence of the other. It is 'with' the nations that we sojourn and will sit at the banquet table. It is also with the other that we hope for justice and deliverance from forces of death (Isaiah 25:8; 26:9). The other is included in the eschatological perspective and in the cry that God will raise the hand against the power of violent and unjust oppressors.

45 While expressions of exclusion and racism can be found in biblical narratives, especially in the stories of the land conquest and the exilic period, many passages admonish the Israelite people to care for and support the 'alien'. The alien should not just be tolerated but loved (Leviticus 19:34). Food and clothing should be provided, wages of the poor and needy should not be withheld (Deuteronomy 24:14). In the prophetic writings, religious leaders were admonished to uphold justice, especially in relation to those who were vulnerable – the poor, the foreigners, the widows and the children (e.g. Jeremiah 7:6) while e.g. Psalm 146:9, a Psalm with an exilic background, exemplifies that God watches over the foreigners.

46 Such ethical guidelines are motivated by the people of Israel's own experience as 'aliens' in Egypt. The exodus was God's response to the exploitation of the people. This liberation could not be followed by treating others differently.

47 The ethical mandate "love your neighbour as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 19:19) reflects that all were created in God's image. Being the image of God is a relational issue, particularly so in the light of the Trinity. Human beings and the world are God's (Genesis 1:26). We are related to God, but also to others. We do not exist apart from God. Nor do we exist apart from each other, as all of us, as God's people and creation, mirror God's being. In the context of migration, this notion of *imago Dei* affirms the unbreakable interrelatedness of God, human beings and the world. Theologically, it has generally been used to emphasize the essential equality, value and the unbreakable relationship between human beings, other human beings and God. On the other hand it pointed to the richness, the unity and the diversity of God's creation – and the subsequently required respect for it.

48 The notion of being the image of God empowers us to relate respectfully and in an embracing manner to all sojourners, to all people who migrate. It enables us to relate to creation and act respectfully and in humility. The so-called 'Golden Rule' – "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31) – implies that we need to uphold each and every person's dignity. Furthermore, the divine command,

“Love your neighbour as yourself”, reminds us of the fact that the inclusive kingdom of God knows no human-made barriers, no foreigners and no ‘others’. It provides a place for people who are ‘neighbours’ to one another, equally part of the kingdom-community, equally gifted with talents.

The ‘other’ and the community

49 As Christians we affirm that the Church, the communion of the believers, is one through the redemptive work of Christ (Galatians 3:28). Therefore those who are baptized are joined together as brothers and sisters. We acknowledge that no part of the body can be rejected and no part can claim to be the most important. As the apostle Paul wrote to the multi-ethnic congregation in the city of Corinth: “For we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we are all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13). The one constant and unchangeable reality for the Church is the oneness of the body of Christ of whom all followers of Christ are members.

50 While we affirm this unity of the Church, we also recognize its great diversity. Though the Church is grounded in the one Word of God, it has become manifest in diverse ways.¹⁸ It is indeed fair to say that cultural and theological diversity has been a characteristic of Christ’s church from its very inception. Thus, “In Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile” (Galatians 3:28) does not mean that the Church rejects distinct religious or ethnic identities as members of the wider society. Rather it embodies them within the vision of a new creation in which diversity is celebrated and unity experienced, while mutuality and interdependence of life is affirmed. In other words, the Church is the promise of a new eschatological community, sojourning with the nations to the heavenly Jerusalem for the Messianic banquet (Isaiah 2:2; 25:6). It lives by Paul’s word, “For He is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14).

51 Cultural differences may be experienced as a threat to one’s own values. Indeed the presence of the ‘other’ questions our way of living and our world view. Yet we may remember that the ‘other’ also defines us. It is in relation to the other that we clarify our identity and value as well as evaluate our convictions. Christians, as pilgrims on the way to the Messianic banquet, view identity and otherness in the light of the Kingdom that is to come. Our identity is determined by our communion with Christ and being part of the Kingdom-community. This identity embraces diversity as much as it celebrates unity.¹⁹

52 Unity and diversity is not only visible in the church, but it can also be found in God, in God’s Trinitarian way of being and inter-acting. The Father is different from the Son, as much as the Son is different from the Father and the Spirit, and yet they are united in a life-enhancing difference and in loving relationship. As a pilgrim community we “believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer and

¹⁸ World Council of Churches 2005: *The Nature and Mission of the Church. A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper 198. Geneva: WCC, 4.

¹⁹ ‘The dialogue between faith and culture’, talk given by John Paul II at Sogang University, Seoul, South Korea, May 5, 1985. Text in *Origins* Vol 14, No 2, 21.

sustainer of life. God created the whole *oikoumene* in God's image and constantly works in the world to affirm and safeguard life. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Life of the world, the incarnation of God's love for the world (John 3:16). Affirming life in all its fullness is Jesus Christ's ultimate concern and mission (John 10:10). We believe in God, the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver, who sustains and empowers life and renews the whole creation (Genesis 2:7; John 3:8)."²⁰

The 'other' and God-given resources

53 While we hold that God empowers life and renews creation, we acknowledge that the earth pays the price of the sinfulness of people (Romans 8:22, Isaiah 24:4-13). Instead of the renewal of creation, the earth that was entrusted to us is often misused and human beings are exploited. We need to recognise that the God-given resources of the earth are to be used for the benefit of all. God's gift is not exclusively meant for a privileged minority. The earth is God's creation and treasured 'possession'. All that exists was created by God and it was good (Genesis 1:31, Psalm 24:1). The earth and its resources are not ours, and certainly not the exclusive property of the wealthy. God created human beings and blessed them to enjoy the earth and care for her (Genesis 1:28). This calls us to acknowledge that we live in interdependence with creation and with 'others', including migrants. Stewardship of the earth and concrete steps towards eco-justice are nothing less than the recognition that creation is God's and the resources are for all to be enjoyed.

The 'other' as a member

54 The 'other' is not just tolerated in the Kingdom of God, but has an active role to play and a unique contribution to make. In the prophetic writings, we find that the nations are drawn to Zion by God's light and bring their wealth as a tribute to God's reign (Isaiah 60: 5-11). Foreigners will rebuild the city walls; their kings will serve the new Kingdom (Isaiah 60:10). In the description of the future of Zion, the tribute by the nations is mentioned in parallel with peace that flows to the city (Isaiah 66:10). All nations and all tongues will come to see God's glory (Isaiah 66:18), not just the children of Abraham.

55 The Gospels remind us as well that the 'other' contributes. In the Lukan account of the people who were cured from leprosy, it was the excluded Samaritan who came back to bring tribute to Jesus and who was saved by his faith (Luke 17:16-19). The Syro-Phoenician woman challenged Jesus to reckon with the Gentiles and include them in his ministry (John 4). The Roman soldier, a foreigner who understood that Jesus did not have to travel in order to heal his slave, contributed greatly by becoming an exemplary believer who was almost 'obviously' included in the Kingdom of Heaven and the eschatological meal (Matthew 8:8-11). Recognizing the contributions of the 'other' to the life of the community creates space for inclusion and mutuality.

²⁰ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism 2012. *Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes*, par. 1.

C. IMPLICATIONS

Nature and Mission of the Church

56 The Faith and Order Paper 'The Nature and Mission of the Church' of 2005 affirms that:

*"it is God's design, to gather all creation under the Lordship of Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:10) and to bring humanity and all creation into all communion [...] As persons who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and savior, Christians are called to proclaim the gospel in word and deed [...] They are called to live the values of the reign of God and to be a foretaste of the reign in the world. Mission, thus belongs to the very being of the church [...] In exercising its mission, the church cannot be true to itself without giving witness (martyria) to God's will for the salvation and transformation of the world."*²¹

57 Thus, mission constitutes a "response in love to the call of the triune God for a journey in faith and hope for a new world of justice, peace and life for all".²² It is about "the Church embodying God's salvation in this world."²³ Mission is transformative, inclusive and justice-oriented and is grounded in the Trinity. The prime actors in mission are not human beings, the church or a missionary organization, but the Triune God. God in God's own self is a life of communion, and God's mission draws humanity and creation into the communion with God's life (cf. John 21).²⁴ God's mission is aimed at communion, at a life of fullness, justice and peace in conjunction with the source of all creation.

58 Migration profoundly impacts both the *nature* of the church and the *mission* of the church, given that the nature and the mission of the church are inextricably bound together. We believe the role of the church is to be a place for all and a welcoming community for all peoples and nations. This has been the nature of the *ecclesia* since its very inception. This is part and parcel of the *missio Dei*.

59 The following paragraphs will take up essential notions from the previous section such as 'pilgrim community', 'Kingdom community' and 'inclusive community'. They will define the nature as well as the mission of the church in the light of migration and will highlight the implications for a *missio Dei* that takes its lead from a saviour who was once considered a refugee in Egypt.

²¹ World Council of Churches 2005: *The Nature and Mission of the Church. A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper 198. Geneva: WCC, 9-10.

²² Commission on World Mission and Evangelism 2012. *Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes*, par. 107.

²³ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism 2012. *Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes*, par. 103.

²⁴ Commission on World Mission and Evangelism 2012. *Together towards life: Mission and Evangelism in changing landscapes*, par.. 19.

The church as a pilgrim community: Called to be on the move and to transgress boundaries

60 The Early Church, living in a multi-religious and multicultural context, clearly defined itself as a 'pilgrim church'. Clement, bishop of Rome used this definition in his famous letter to the congregation in Corinth.²⁵ It is the journey of faith that all pilgrims have in common. Pilgrims are *en route*, are 'sojourners and pilgrims' (1 Peter 2:11). Those who seek to follow Christ are on the move, as the incarnated Christ himself had no place to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). They have their citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20), knowing that their true treasure is not to be found on earth (Luke 18:22).

61 In our times this notion that the one Church is by nature a pilgrim community, needs to be rediscovered in order to gain a new self-understanding of Christian (communal) identity. The ecclesial landscape has changed rapidly. The co-existence of migration-shaped congregations and local churches challenges the Church to rethink its nature in the light of migration and pilgrimage. The Church is one, yet diverse; it is local yet in pilgrimage; it provides comfort for those who seek shelter yet it moves people to act prophetically. A Church that is in pilgrimage is not static, but dynamic and 'becoming' in nature.

62 Not only the nature of the Church is impacted by migration (one yet diverse), but also its *mission*. The notion of being a pilgrim community in nature needs to be reclaimed as the theological and practical basis for the mission of the church as well. The boundaries of the Church need to be reframed in terms of nationhood, language, ethnicity, status and leadership. A church in pilgrimage is, for example, aware of fellow-travellers who have equal right to finding shelter, justice, job opportunities, participation rights, access to places of worship, education, residence and contextual identity.

63 While we affirm that the mission is God's, we understand that it is God who calls us, pilgrims in this world, to participate in mission. We do so by announcing the coming of the kingdom, by inviting all peoples - regardless of who they are - to come and follow, by seeking *koinonia* (fellowship) with others to shape visible pilgrim communities by pursuing justice and peace. Authentic mission looks for 'partners in pilgrimage', not 'objects' of mission.

The church as a Kingdom community: Called to challenge injustice

64 The Kingdom of God is a space beyond any human-made geographical boundaries where justice and peace flows like a never ending stream, where kinship of the whole *oikoumene* is lived and where the Cross of the Incarnate One encourages a life in mutual relationships, on a vertical as well as on a horizontal level. Kingdom communities are communities in which there are "no longer strangers and aliens, but [...] members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

²⁵ George, K M 1996. *The early church. Defending the faith, witness and proclamation: patristic perspectives*. Geneva: WCC, 23-24.

65 In the New Testament, we find that Jesus included the other and invites his followers to act accordingly by loving their neighbours. In the Gospels Jesus, is described as the one who showed openness towards the gentiles and who interacted with the Syrophenician woman (Matthew 15:21-18). He shared the table and its gifts with the marginalized, reminding us of the eschatological banquet. God's Kingdom provides a space that is larger than any national, ethnic or gender confines. It is a space characterized by the loving Trinitarian relationship and the interaction of Father, Son and Spirit (Revelation 22). This spiritual space, symbolized in the image of the New Jerusalem with its emphasis on God's dwelling among the people, is a relational space as well. The Kingdom of God is a kin-dom, in which all people are related to each other in God and where there is space at the table for all.

66 As a Kingdom community the church aims at the humanization of society by transforming the cosmos in all its dimensions, structures and manifestations. Our common concern is living peacefully and striving together towards the development of human dignity and well-being.

67 The Church that lives in the perspective of the Kingdom of God is called to develop a migration-shaped mission. As migration is intrinsically linked to issues of injustice, missional work of the churches needs to involve itself in the struggle against social injustice. The pilgrim Church is, both in nature and mission, revolutionary and reconciliatory. It calls for conversion and repentance; it invites to discipleship and calls to worship. It goes beyond the programs of aid and relief and challenges structures of societies that perpetuate injustice, oppression, and alienation. In the midst of human suffering, and unjust socio-political orders the church is called to exercise the revolution of Christ: to replace the power of the world with the vulnerable power of the Cross.

68 A migration-shaped mission that takes the migrant character of the church as well as its inclusive kingdom character seriously is based on an ecclesiological approach 'from below'. Thus, migration-shaped mission that aims to be inclusive and that effectively mirrors the characteristics of a pilgrim community seeks fellow-travellers at the margins. Mission starts from the margins, with those who were excluded and uprooted.

69 Such an ecclesiological and missiological understanding necessitates the need for the churches to reclaim their origins in their response to the call to be the signs and symbols of the coming reign of God. In other words, it is not the inherited identities of nationalism, language and tradition but the embraced vision of God's reign and concrete actions and faithfulness to that calling that brings the church into being. It is the commitment to the values of justice, peace, dignity and life for all that gives the church its distinct identity as a called community. It was essentially this commitment that brought the Jesus community into being.

The Church as an inclusive community: Called to be 'others' to one another

70 As Christians we hold that the church is *one in nature*. It has therefore been at the heart of the World Council of Churches "to proclaim the oneness of the

Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe."²⁶

71 This oneness of the body of Christ does not imply absence of difference in the church, but much rather maintaining and celebrating it. Diversity characterized already the inception of the church, with inclusive practices being devised at an early stage. For example, throughout the Book of Acts the multicultural and multilingual nature of God's people is clearly shown (Acts 6; 10:35-36; 15:16-17). Diversity was understood as a fact of life, and was theologically embraced as an enriching gift.

72 As sojourners who follow Christ we respect that we are called from many nations and constitute a diverse multi-ethnic communion, a safe space for encounter of fellow-travellers, for mutual enrichment and critique where gifts to the ministry can flourish. The Church – that forever shapes local contextual faith communities with members from all nations and all peoples – offers worship, fellowship (*koinonia*) and witness (mission and *diakonia*). In doing so it responds eschatologically to issues of injustice, exclusion and ethnic divisions. In the pilgrim-community of Christ, the crossing of boundaries, openness to cultural encounters, courage to face inevitable complexities and appreciation of differences are valued as sources of strength. This makes hospitality, solidarity and humility central characteristics of being church and undertaking ministry.

73 Local churches are therefore called to embrace the commission of sending and receiving all peoples from and to all over the world. The local congregation, where pilgrims are gathered around Word and Sacrament, is the place and space where people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds meet in the name of Christ and where burdens and challenges are shared. Migration-shaped mission and ministry, to all who are in need of God's promises of life in fullness, can be developed in these ecclesial spaces.

74 In this context a new ecclesial space is needed that provides a framework for inclusive and collaborative multi- and intercultural partnership.²⁷ This place should aim to further the growth of a migration-shaped mission that lays the foundations for a common understanding of the context and content of multicultural mission. It should address where and in what ways migrants have a voice in a migration-shaped Church and in its mission; what their role is in shaping a new ecclesial landscape that transcends traditional patterns of ecumenical cooperation of well-established local churches.

75 In carrying out its migration-shaped mission, the Church has no choice but to transcend its confessional, national and cultural boundaries. Ecclesial identities are important sources of faith and ministry. However, these identities should also be subject to transformation in the light of Christ who migrated from heaven to earth and who crossed human divides. The Church as a pilgrim Church knows that failing

²⁶ World Council of Churches 2005: *The Nature and Mission of the Church. A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement*, Faith and Order Paper 198. Geneva: WCC, 1.

²⁷ See the report of the WCC consultation on the mission and ecclesiology of migrant/Multicultural churches, Utrecht, November 2010, in: *IRM*, April 2011, 100.1 (392), 104-107.

to humbly transcend given boundaries and divides, will result in a failure to shape a welcoming space for all sojourners.

76 As a divine migrant, the incarnate Christ crossed the boundary from eternity into the 'broken territory of human life'.²⁸ During his life on earth he constantly crossed boundaries and called people to cross boundaries in order to have a foretaste of the reign of God and to overcome otherness. He called every human to partake in the celebration of love, affirmation of dignity and realization of justice. This is God's call to the Church as well. Pilgrims – local residents and migrants alike – share responsibility to partake in this mission to shape inclusive communities that can transform human lives into God's restored image.

D. Ecumenical Responses

77 Defining the very being of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church as a Church in pilgrimage and migration, impacts the way(s) in which the church carries out its faith, ministry and mission. The Church in pilgrimage will have to find and to define its way in being followers of the One who said: "I am the way, the truth and the life" and who "came so that all may have life and have it in abundance" (John 10:10).

78 Being the church in different geographical, socio-political, cultural and economic settings requires a critical analysis of the situation the migrant Church finds itself in so that ecclesial responses can be developed that are context- and justice-sensitive. The following suggestions for ecclesial responses are therefore of a rather general character, are inconclusive and incomplete in nature and more in line of an invitation to develop specific regional responses. They are laid out utilizing the classical notion of the Church unfolding its nature and mission in *koinonia*, *martyria*, *leitourgia* and *diakonia*.

Koinonia: The church in inclusive communion

79 The church as a community of pilgrims is inclusive and embracing in nature and mission. The *oikonomia*, the household of God, is all-embracing in nature and draws into a committed communion that transcends geographical and human-made barriers. Living out unity and diversity as an inclusive community calls for:

- Churches to be culturally, socially and ethnically inclusive communities.
- The readiness as migrant and established congregations alike to strife towards the larger unity as the one Body of Christ.
- The valuing of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.
- A practical realization of ecumenism that refrains from 'othering' and seeks mutuality, justice and shalom.
- The setting-up of parishes or congregations as safe places where sanctuary as well as inclusive, justice-oriented community can be found.

²⁸ D.G. Groody, 'Crossing the divide', p. 651.

- the recognition that the ecclesial structures, be they in migrant or in established congregations, or in the ecumenical movement at large, may therefore need to change – to give shape to inclusive, participatory and equal communities on and under way.

Leituorgia: The church in service

80 A Church as a celebrating community that seeks to serve God, humanity and creation is called in for worship and send out to perform the 'liturgy after the liturgy'. Being an inclusive church in service calls for:

- a move beyond the mono-cultural paradigm that often characterizes worship services.
- a liturgy that is sensitive of being the church on and under way.
- an understanding of worship that exceeds a Sunday-celebration gathering.
- texts, sermons, Bible studies and prayers that address migration-related issues of justice and shalom.

Martyria: The church in challenging witness

81 The Church as a witnessing community is testifying to the challenging character of the inclusive Kingdom of God. In word and deed it announces the good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19). Witnessing to the challenging character of the Kingdom of God, the community of migrants and non-migrants alike, calls for:

- a stronger involvement in advocacy on migration issues.
- an affirmation of migrant agency.
- a public critique of structures and practices that further and contribute to the 'othering', of human beings, particularly of those on the move.
- a need to strengthen pastoral as well as political responses with regard to migration and justice.
- a strengthening of training in migrant and multicultural ministries as part of the theological education and formation of pastors.

Diakonia: The church in transformative action

82 The Church as a diaconal community is characterized by transformative action. Feeding the hungry, quenching the thirst of the thirsty, receiving the 'stranger', clothing the naked, taking care of the sick and visiting the prisoner (Matthew 25:35-40) is as much part and parcel of the diaconal work of the church as is the search for structures and practices in which justice prevails, human potential can be developed, and where human, individual and communitarian rights, mutuality and equality are essentially grounded. Being a church in transformative action calls migrant and established communities and congregations to jointly

- address the root causes of migration – war, poverty and climate changes.
- work towards a redressing of structures and practices that disadvantage, exclude and endanger people's lives.
- set up structures of an international *diakonia* that is strongly geared towards issues of migration and justice.
- foster local initiatives and support services for migrants.
- express special solidarity with the migrants whose status is 'unauthorized' by a nation-state.

83 In re-affirming our nature and mission as a pilgrim church, we continue as those 'on the way'.

CLOSING WORSHIP

Leader: Let us continually turn towards God and away from all that compete with God in our lives.

People: Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream

Community Singing: The Great Amen

(Everyone will stand and express their greetings as we sing Masithi)

Masithi – Men Siyakudumisa, (X2)

Masithi – Amen, Bawo, Amen Bawo,

Amen, Siyakudumisa

Sing Amen – Amen we praise Your Name O God (X2)

Sing Amen – Amen Father, Amen Father

Amen we praise Your Name O God

Scripture Reading

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal to us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. *(2 Corinthians 5:17-20)*

For himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of two, thus making peace and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.... *(Vs. 14-16)*
Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household. *(Ephesians 2:14-16; 19)*

The Continuing Mission: "The fullness of life" Teatro Ekyumenikal

"The prayer of Hope and Solidarity"

Leader: God of life, we come to you from our fragmented works and divided thoughts, for you are the source of our reconciliation and wholeness. Help us to be

at peace with ourselves by remembering your gift of reconciliation through Christ Jesus.

People: make us reconcilers and healers, O Parent God, as you have reconciled us to you and as you continually heal our lands. Help us reconcile our words with our actions by doing what you have commanded.

Leader: Parent God, we pray for the communities and the families caught up in very difficult situations cause by forced migration. Let our churches and our organizations become strong instruments of your will to ease and erase the pain of our marginalised brothers and sisters.

People: Make us prophets of this generation, O Parent God, as we denounce the systemic root of human trafficking, as we expose the global unfair labour practices. Strengthen our ranks as we challenge the inability of those we who are supposed to protect the rights and welfare of the migrant communities. Empower our works as we announce the hopes you have given to us.

Leader: help us to bring peace and justice to our brothers and sisters experiencing discrimination and racism. Strengthen our ranks to be more discerning in facing various new forms of slavery.

People: Help us prophesy, O God of Life, as you have commanded us.

Leader: help us to stand with the marginalised migrant communities of all parts of the world. Bless us with clear vision, direction and firm stand point on how our written statements will become sanctuaries for the least of our brothers and sisters.

People: Make us healers, O Parent God, as you healed us. Help us to bring justice where the weak and helpless are beaten by the mighty, and where people look down on others as lower to them in status.

Leader: Help us defend people who are arrested, detained or even killed as they actively work for the marginalized migrant communities and asylum seekers.

People: Make us reconcilers, O God of Life, as you have reconciled us to you.

Leader: help us to bring freedom to the detentions caused by the global structures that favour the few

People: Make us prophets of this generation, O Parent God, as you have commanded us to do.

Leader: Help us advocate and defend the rights of the migrant workers and their families. Fortify our works to address the plight of children and women

People: Strengthen us your love to bring care and connectedness to your creation so that we can be stronger in facing the greed and abuses which have caused lots of destruction and forced migration. Empower us to denounce the global structures that promote new forms of slavery. Help us consolidate all forms of our works to announce the fullness of life.

All Together: Our connections with you, God of Life, will bind our love in making ourselves the instruments of your work towards justice and peace in the whole world. Accompany us in our journey towards a life with Dignity, Peace and Justice.

Silence

The Sound of Jubilation

The Dedication of our Works

Leader: God has told you, O mortal; what is good and what does the Lord require of you?"

People: "To do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8b)

Leader: We have come to this conference as delegates and participants and what does God expect from us?

People: To respond in faithfulness and with eagerness to Gods call to work for abundant life for all. May God help and empower us in accomplishing this task in all aspects o f works and ministries among the migrant communities.

Songs of Challenge:

Christ be our Light

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in or hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us, make us your living voice

Refrain

The Blessing

Leader: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; may the peace that we received from you be the same peace that will enhance abundant life for the marginalised migrant communities.

The People All Together:

God of Life, we have listened to the plight of the migrant workers and their families, may the peace that we received from you be the same peace that will enhance abundant life for the marginalized migrant communities.

Parent God, bless the hands and give wisdom to the group of people who will finalize the document of this conference on migrant the church responses. We are submitting to you the outcome of our work. Let the pages of our words be turned into sanctuaries, basic needs, respect and dignity, and creative pro-active ministries to migrant workers and their families.

Accompany us in sharing the migrant stories, let the love that binds us, as your disciples spur us into action to transform our longing into a struggle, to affirm and uphold dignity, to reclaim the rights of the migrant communities and their families as human beings and give credence to God's promise of life and its fullness. Amen

Closing Song:

Christ be our Light (Part 2)

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed.

Refrain

Christ, be our light! Shine in or hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone.

Refrain

5. Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come