“Both colonialism and slavery are historic root causes of forced and enforced migration today” – Rev. Liberato

“In Italia alcune forze politiche quando parlano dei migranti in arrivo via mare parlano di invasione. E' strutturalmente errato.” – Massimo Gnone dalla Diaconia Valdese

“Les Etats - Unis D'Amérique, L'Australie, la Nouvelle-Zelande, L'Argentine, Le Canada et bien d'autres grandes prospères aujourd'hui, sont les fruits d'une émigration massive européenne. Il est donc étonnant que la seule émigrataion qui soit très mal perçue et tellement décriée, c'est celle des populations du SUD en partance vers le NORD.” - Professor Fiacre LASCONY

Agape Times
Newsletter / International Political Camp 2016
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Migrants are people, not documents

Editorial by Rev. Liberato C. BAUTISTA

Migration is a fact of life. Human beings and living things move from one place to another in their lifetimes. People move on their own volition. But sometimes, such movement is not voluntary. There are those who are forced to move. Forced migration, especially massive dislocations, are realities but whose causes we must be concerned about. We must not ignore the root causes of forced migration; we must address them with solutions that are just, durable and sustainable.

Migrants are human beings who, like all other human beings, share fundamental human dignity and the equal protection of all human rights. Because movement is a natural thing that human beings do, freedom of movement is precious to human beings.

Human beings have always moved for life and livelihood, for security and survival, indeed, they move to find food, clothing, shelter, work, and so much more. This is why it is a protected human right. Where there is deprivation of these basics in life in the usual places of dwelling and community of peoples, then there is bound to happen an irregular, even, massive movement of people.

Massive movement and dislocation lead to denial of human dignity and a violation of human rights when such movements have been forced by political upheavals, economic scarcity, religious persecution, or human trafficking of all sorts.

It was the movement of colonizers that impacted in the most consequential manner the relation between nature and human beings. The accumulation of properties drove the appetite for moving, no longer just in one’s immediate surroundings but beyond into other lands, indeed across lands and oceans. The so-called Doctrine of Discovery provided a set of religious-philosophical underpinnings, ideological backing really, for colonialism.

Over the same course of history, the material conditions of both peoples and nature have changed. These changes have significantly affected the movement of peoples, goods, and services. People chasing labor. Labor chasing capital. Capital chasing wealth. Capital goes where more profit can be made, not necessarily where it is socially and responsibly needed.

The group of “Churches Witnessing With Migrants” or CWWM, asserts that “Migrants are human beings with dignity and worth who cannot be reduced to mere commodities traded and exchanged in the global market place. Not even structures of injustice in the global market system can strip them of their dignity and worth.”

“A true and meaningful dialogue includes migrants as subjects of their own destinies puts primacy to their human rights and welfare. Such dialogue must not be limited to migration as a strategy for development. We must challenge policies and priorities set by international institutions and national governments that much more funds to profit enterprises and military and defense budgets and fewer to education, health, decent labor and the environment.”
“I decided to devote my life fighting for peace and the human rights.”

With a peaceful smile, Ugur Bilkay showed his strong determination on peace activism. To look deeply at refugee or migrant’s life, the journalism committee conducted an interview with this political refugee who migrated from Turkey to Italy to express his opinions about anti-militarism more freely.

**Agape Times: Please tell me about yourself.**

**Ugur:** I believe that I was born for sharing cultures with people around the world. I think I am the kind of person who was born to act for peace. When I found out how corrupted [the] Turkish military is, I decided to spend the rest of my life speaking out to create peace in the world. So, I am working as an intercultural mediator, and I like what I’m doing because I have the ability to create mediation between people. I also believe that there is hope in activists’ work for peace.

**Agape Times: Why did you migrate? What is the foremost reason you decided to move away from your home country?**

**Ugur:** The main reason why I decided to leave Turkey was because I was seen as a conscientious objector. I was seen as a traitor in our country because I was an activist of anti-militarism. Even if I had stayed in Turkey, I would have had two options: fight for the rights of Kurdish people by violence or become a soldier. I saw no hope in both of these choices so I decided to migrate.

**Agape Times: What were the difficulties you faced in: your home country, during your process of migration, and in your new country?**

**Ugur:** The biggest problem I had in my home country was not having the freedom of expression. For example, in Turkey, to say that there is no need for the military is a huge crime. When I declared in the newspaper that I oppose the military, I was immediately viewed as a political traitor of the country. The biggest problem I had during the process of migration was that I was now seen as a terrorist. While I was crossing the borders, I was not treated as a human being. There were some humiliating moments because people thought I was a terrorist. I did not have big problems in Italy but after migrating, I realized that full-time activism can be a difficult job. Before coming to Italy, I did not think of working. I always worked and had to work for human rights. And generally, activists do not need a lot of money. However, to have the ability to protest and fight, we need the basic needs such as food and shelter.

**Agape Times: If you were a minister in charge of a refugee centre or a politician, what do you think they (i.e., refugees) need the most?**

**Ugur:** This is a really important question as it is something I ask myself every time I work for human rights. The biggest priority would be guaranteeing their human rights. We do not have to treat them like they are others. In order to create a communication between the refugees and the people who have already been living in that area, we need to acknowledge and protect refugees’ rights. Some refugees’ rights are still violated even in the countries they migrated into. Activists also need to be aware that refugees are the same humans as they are.
New language, new reality
Column by Diana CRUZ, edited by Maria KOZHIKOVA

Is a new language a door to a new reality?

When one migrates from one country to another country, with a different language, it sets off a difficult process, because one does not know how to communicate. Not only because of not knowing the words, but also because of not knowing what is right or wrong to say or show, what is considered polite and which behaviour patterns are expected. The language here is not only a tool, but it is first of all a conventional system - a construction of society. Each society builds a language around how they live. So entering a new country is just the same as entering a new universe, with all its new concepts and dimensions.

I have discovered in my travels that language can also mean identity. For example, Spanish is my language, but meeting here at Agape with other Spanish speakers - other Latinos - I realized how much we have in common, and how having this one common language creates a cultural identity which we all can share.

The relationship with a new language depends on the circumstances of learning. If you want to learn the language, you are most likely to have a good relationship with that language. However, if you are forced to learn a language, for example if you are a refugee, and this is your only way to survive in the new home society, you might develop an "affective filter" towards the new language, and through this, could extend a non-affectionate attitude to your new culture. In the beginning, not knowing the language is a big struggle, because you cannot let people know about your needs. And since you are a minority, people will not learn your language, but you have to learn theirs. It could be an interesting experiment to have the receiving communities learn the languages of their refugees - this would help to understand migrants' realities and to make them feel more welcome.

Integrating into a new culture always affects people's identities. When we hear about migrants or refugees, all we hear is very often just numbers. But personal stories which I heard at this camp, impacted me a lot: I realized how every single individual has his/her own story, journey, wins and tragedies. People are not just numbers. All people who go through migration undergo a transformation, but this doesn't mean that they have to renounce what they were.

Language is a double-edge sword: on the one hand, it can be confusing, confronting, even intimidating; on the other hand, it can be used as a powerful tool to demolish stereotypes and to build confidence. Knowing multiple languages makes one a mediator between different worlds: when you speak to different people, you begin to break boundaries, both visible and invisible.

I believe that language is the key element in building peace. It is a tool which can be used to welcome people and to teach people on all ends to understand and respect each other. If people were able to understand the richness brought by new languages and cultural diversity, it would mean a whole new dimension for peacebuilding: through language, we can define our world differently, and to make it operate on different terms.
Contributo al tema del protagonismo o attivismo

Op-ed da Luca BARBINI

“L’attivismo vuol dire non ignorare i problemi e cercare una soluzione.”
“L’attivista è una persona che ha una causa da perseguire.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire cercare di rendere il mondo migliore per tutti.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire non stare zitto e cercare di mettere in funzione la coscienza.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire che in certi casi non servono solo le parole ma anche i fatti.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire dire la verità.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire coniugare vari fattori.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire prendersi cura di qualcosa che ci sta a cuore.”
“L’attivismo vuol dire condividere l’idea e tutto quello che c’è attorno a noi anche se i governi cercano di prendere in giro il popolo per i loro interessi.”

“La nostra reazione di fronte ai migranti è quasi sempre la paura e cosa che spesso tendiamo a dimenticare, questo atteggiamento partì dal 1492 l’anno della Scoperta dell’America da parte di Cristoforo Colombo il cui nome in spagnolo vuol dire colonia e per tutta la durata dell’epoca del Colonialismo parlando dell’altro:i popoli delle terre conquistate e anche se il flusso che sta avvenendo oggi si chiama migrazione e non colonizzazione, in quanto a spostarsi è la parte orientale e non quella occidentale come in passato. Purtroppo oggi alla luce di quello che sta succedendo a causa del Terrorismo di matrice Islamica, dobbiamo trovare il giusto equilibrio fra la nostra sensibilità verso i migranti e i profughi che si riversano nei porti siciliani di Lampedusa e Potzallo trasportati dai barconi guidati dagli scafisti che partono dall’Oriente in Primis dall’Africa e che li sfruttano come merce e la luce negativa e ahimè anche nuda e cruda sotto cui ci presentano i Mass Media europei/occidentali come dei mostri molto più violenti degli uomini da cui sono sfruttati.

Manifestazione contro l’ingiustizia
Dobbiamo inoltre far capire che non basta più parlare e discutere, perché questo è uno dei più contraddittori fra tutti i problemi che questo mondo sta affrontando, perciò bisogna affidarsi agli attivisti proprio, perché questa parola vuol dire persona attiva o in azione e sono queste le persone che servono, perché e con la cooperazione e l’azione che si vince la paura del diverso." "Bisogna aiutare i migranti ad abituarsi non solo alle usanze europee, ma anche a rispettare la legge, perché una volta che i bambini e i ragazzi saranno riusciti a frequentare le scuole e gli adulti a lavorare in Europa saranno ormai cittadini a pieno titolo e dovranno apprendere a non seguire le strade delle dipendenze:dall’alcool, dal fumo e dalle sostanze stupefacenti/le droghe oltreché dai videogames / dalle playstation e della delinquenza come ad esempio la Mafia proveniente dalla Sicilia e dall’Italia che potranno attirare anche la loro attenzione come quella dei cittadini già europei e poi spesso quando si parla di migrazione si tende a porre eccessivamente l’aspetto sui diritti e troppo poco sui doveri e questo potrebbe rischiarie di far credere agli stranieri di poter strutturare la loro diversità per essere immuni dalla legge e questo metterebbe in pericolo la nostra sensibilità verso i migranti che dovrebbero anche e assolutamente smettere di essere in conflitto soprattutto fra di loro e rispettarsi a vicenda seguendo gli esempi di:Ghandi, Martin Luther King e Nelson Mandela e godere dei diritti anche nei loro paesi natali/d’origine oltre che in Occidente. Ma un altro grande passo avanti anche da parte nostra, sarebbe eliminare dal mondo occidentale tutti i nostri vizi più diffusi di cui ho appena parlato lasciando le malattie e gli incidenti stradali a cui magari anche grazie ai migranti troveremo dei rimedi dimostrando così che gli stranieri non rubano il lavoro, ma lo potenziano. In altre ed ultime parole i migranti non sono un pericolo o una minaccia per l’Europa, bensì una risorsa molto utile per uscire dalla crisi sia economica e politica che culturale che sta vivendo ora da cui potremo imparare molto."
Agape perceptions on world migration

Statistics by Ken SCHOON

The above map is a representation of migrations reported by campers, campolovoro, staff, and interpreters at Agape in their home countries. Participants' home countries included Brazil, Cameroon, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Italy, Kenya, Macedonia, Mexico, Pakistan, Palestine, Romania, Somalia, South Korea, Spain, Sudan, Tonga, Turkish Kurdistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.
Todos Somos Migrantes
Artículo por María Gabriela HERRERA

**El mismo Jesús fue migrante.**

*Tener esperanza y pensar que hay situaciones dramáticas, sin olvidarse de ser humanos.*

El ángel del Señor se apareció en sueños a José y le dijo: "Levántate, toma contigo al niño y a su madre y huye a Egipto; allí estarás hasta que te avise" (Mt. 2, 13 ss). En Este relato histórico, o interpretación Teológica del evangelista, hace considerar que Jesús es desde que nació, identificado con el Israel emigrante, peregrino, y refugiado. Así también, padecer el tener que buscar trabajo de un lugar a otro. Con el oficio de artesano y sin mucha oferta de trabajo habría de buscar oportunidades cada día, recorriendo poblados, en pos de quién ocupará sus servicios.

Jesus enfrentó adversidades, fue creciendo y madurando. Al encontrarse con otras personas extranjeras, fue cambiando su mentalidad adaptándose y comprendiendo su misión. En los diferentes encuentros con personas ajenas a su propio pueblo, Jesús da señales de reconocer a los otros y otras en sus diferentes contextos y situaciones. Por ejemplo al escuchar la petición del capitán solicitando que le ayudará a sanar a su ayudante, le reconoce y aprecia su fe cuando confiando solo en su palabra le muestra su confianza. Aquí Jesús hace referencia nuevamente a quienes vendrán de otros lugares.

Cuando una mujer sirofenicia le pide que cure a su hija y Jesús dice a sus discípulos: "Me han enviado sólo para las ovejas descarriadas de Israel". A la mujer le dice algo muy duro: "No está bien quitarle el pan a los hijos para echárselo a los perros". Recordemos que los judíos llamaban "perros" a los no judíos, a los paganos. Pero esta extranjera le dará una lección ejemplar que Jesús va a aprender con humildad y sencillez: "Cierto, señor, pero también los perros se comen las migajas que caen de la mesa de sus amos"... Y Jesús, asombrado, le contesta: "¡Qué grande es tu fe, mujer! Que se cumpla lo que deseas" (Mt. 15, 21-28). La respuesta de Jesús no acobarda a la mujer, sino que la lleva a afirmar que la compasión está por encima de la discriminación...
entre pueblos. Sólo entonces Jesús cura a su hija puesto que él mismo ha caído en la cuenta de que el amor de Dios no tiene fronteras. ¡Una mujer y además no israelita, hace madurar a Jesús!

En otro relato, quien lleva la cruz de Jesús sería un extranjero: "Al salir encontraron a un hombre de Cirene que se llamaba Simón y lo forzaron a llevar la cruz de Jesús" (Mt. 27,32). Esta figura de Simón Cirineo contrasta con la de Simón Pedro: mientras éste ha renegado de Jesús, aparece aquí la figura de un extranjero que llevará su cruz hasta el Gólgota. Por otra parte, también es extranjero el capitán de los soldados: "Verdaderamente este hombre era hijo de Dios" (Mc. 15,39). Solamente este pagano, reacciona reconociendo en Jesús, el hombre lo divino. Con ello reconoce que en Él estaba la vida de Dios mismo.

Jesús experimenta en la cruz la más cruel soledad y grita: "¡Dios mío, Dios mío! ¿por qué me has abandonado?" (Mc.15,34). Jesús se hace solidario con tantas soledades y abandonos como han de padecer tantas personas que viven injusticias. Es sabido que muchas personas migrantes; que se pierden o ahogan en el mar, o se pierden en medio de una sociedad hostil o indiferente, viven la experiencia de sentirse solas, abandonadas de todos y hasta incluso pueden llegar a dudar de si Dios no las habrá abandonado también ante tal sufrimiento.

Jesús vive como un predicador ambulante, de pueblo en pueblo, no tiene residencia fija. Jesús tiene una vida itinerante, es como un trabajador temporal, y conoce bien lo que es estar a la intemperie, sin casa propia, a expensas de la hospitalidad de la gente, o de su rechazo. Como muchos emigrantes, sabe lo que supone no tener casa ni seguridad alguna, vivir de prestado: "Las zorras tienen guaridas, y las aves del cielo nidos; pero el Hijo del Hombre no tiene donde reclinar la cabeza" (Mt.8,20).

El ejemplo de Jesús es el de vivir con mentalidad de comunidad, no de secta. Aceptando y siendo amorosos y respetuosos con quienes solicitan hospitalidad. Viviendo de manera sencilla y viajando ligero por la vida. Como ejemplo, Jesús envía a sus discípulos de pueblo en pueblo también como peregrinos pobres que solicitan hospitalidad: "No toméis oro, ni plata, ni cobre en vuestras fajas; ni alforja para el camino, ni dos túnicas, ni sandalias, ni bastón. Donde lleguéis informaos quién hay allí digno, y quedaos allí hasta que salgáis" (Mt.10,9-11). El deseo de poseer es la raíz del reparto injusto que se hace de los bienes en la sociedad y esa desigualdad y acumulación, es entre otros motivos, lo que causa los procesos migratorios actuales en el mundo. La vida de Jesús es una invitación para adoptar una actitud similar. Y de recrear los "valores" No se trata de imitar, se trata de "vivir". Vivir con sencillez y "ligeros de equipaje". Estemos abiertos a recibir a quienes llegan a nosotros.

Es posible hacer nuestro el proyecto integrador e incluyente de Jesús. Derribando fronteras y construyendo puentes. Eliminar la discriminación, sin excluir ni excomulgar.

Multiplicar lugares donde las personas. Sean vistas como persona, no como objetos y vivir en comunidad.
To follow a dream and to survive: An interview with Hamdi Ali FARAH

*Life put the desert and the sea in front of her. Today, Hamdi still has hope to achieve her dreams.*

**Agape Times: Tell us about yourself.**

Hamdi: My name is Hamdi, I am 26-years- old and I am from Somalia.

**Agape Times: What made you go out of your country?**

Hamdi: I was in Kenya for four years to study in high school, and I decided not to go back to Somalia because my parents had supported me all the time, paying for my tuition fees and living expenses. I chose as a grown up to try being independent and try to help them too. I looked for a job in Kenya but did not find one, so I chose to take the long way to come to Italy.

**Agape Times: What difficulties did you find on your way and when arriving to Italy through the migration process?**

Hamdi: It was very difficult and risky. There’s a long distance between Kenya and Italy, so I went from there to Uganda and Sudan, by bus through the desert. In the desert one must pay a man to let you go through the border. At that time I paid $500; I’ve heard that now they charge $2000. In the desert I saw a young man who did not make it. He was there waiting for money from his family and died. I cannot forget the fact that while we were waiting days to be able to go through the desert, we were given water with petroleum to diminish hunger and in certain way to be less thirsty.

When I finally made it to Libya, we were treated as animals, not as persons and put into jail for a month. Then I was moved to another jail where people came to search for people who would do house cleaning. I accepted to go and was with them for less than a month, and since they did not allow me to go out and I escaped but the boat I took broke down. I was caught and put back into prison. After fifteen days, I decided to try again and took a boat one more time but
unfortunately the boat sunk and I was put in jail once more. This event was very painful as I saw water coming in and flooding and other persons drowning.

Photo by democraticunion.eu

Thanks to Allah I was back in Libya, and although I was a prisoner again, I was grateful to be alive. Three months later, on September 1, 2011 at breakfast, I came out with other persons, mostly women and began to protest by not eating and complaining. I took advantage of the situation and left with four other girls. Four made it to Tripoli, but another girl and I were caught and brought back. That night I escaped by myself and went out to the street, afraid since I did not know if whom I ran into might be good or bad people. I found a group of men and one of them helped me and through his boss I was able to get to a boat again safely and made it to Italy.

Thank God! I arrived to Lampedusa and stayed there for 40 days and then was moved to Catania (Sicily) for a year while waiting for my document. When I got the document the government took me to Turin and said I could go anywhere. This was difficult since I didn’t know where to Go or what to do. I spoke with another refugee and he gave me some advice and now I am doing okay, though I have not been able to get my school certificate validated.

So for now, I am not able to go to college. I’ve worked as an assistant for a dentist, and do some translations for a doctor who helps refugees. I have decided to become a nurse and while I manage to get my certificate validated, I have enrolled in a foreigner’s school to complete high school again, in case I do not get my official document. I am looking forward to accomplishing my dream. Still, I do not have a good job, and do not have a house, I live in a community and share with other girls. My family still supports me a little, but I am hoping to be able to help my family and [to] be independent.

Agape Times: If you were a minister in charge of a refugee center or a politician, what do you think the refugees need the most?

Hamdi: Give immigrants the opportunity to have rights and benefits as any other citizen. Provide [them with] financial resources to have a good life.
Photo Essay: Hiking Excursion in the Alps

By Charles McKINNEY

Setting out for the hike from the Agape campus
The Victorious Ones at Lago Verde
Get involved!
Got inspired by people’s stories? You can do more by joining or supporting one of the following organisations/representatives of which you might have met at the Agape 2016 International Political Camp.

Global

**World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)** is a global student organisation, which provides support to committed young people to carry out humanitarian, justice and advocacy work in their communities. Advocacy and Solidarity Committee of WSCF attracts attention to problems in society through publishing solidarity statements and prayer requests, and defines the Federation's solidarity and mission work. Contact: Regional Secretary for North American Region Luciano Kovacs, wscfna@gmail.com, or Communications Officer for Europe Region Maria Kozhinova, publications@wscf-europe.org, http://www.wscfglobal.org/

**Amnesty International** is a global movement that campaigns to end abuses of human rights. For example, Amnesty aids people who were detained but their conviction is not justified, or they are tortured. Contact for Amnesty Finland: Krista Autio, autio.kh@gmail.com. https://www.amnesty.org/en/

**Peace Corps** is an American government organisation that sends trained men and women overseas to developing countries to build capacity in the nation and to foster sustainable development at the grassroots level. Contact: Peace Corps Volunteer Charles McKinney, charles.mckinney.iv@gmail.com. https://www.peacecorps.gov/

Europe

**Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME)** provides a space for churches and Christian agencies to share their experiences in the ministry among migrants, refugees, and minority ethnic persons. CCME is part of a wider ecumenical network of the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches. Contact: Dr. Katalina Tahaafe Williams, katalina.tahaafe_williams@wcc-coe.org. http://www.ccme.be/

Italy

**Cooperativa Progetto Tenda (Torino)** focuses on welcoming refugees in Italy, in the framework of all-Italian project SPRAR. Contact: Anna Bertrand, annaletizia.bertrand@gmail.com. http://www.progettotenda.net/

**Mosaico** is an association that defends the rights of refugees by empowering them and bringing their stories on the surface. Mosaico aims at promoting education of general audience on the problems and challenges of refugees, as well as on positive consequences of immigration. Mosaico is part of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). Contact: President Berthin Nzonza, nzonzapena@yahoo.fr, or Colette Meffire, meffire@yahoo.co.uk. http://www.mosaicorefugees.org/

**Association for Sudanese Immigrants** helps with resolving problems of Sudanese migrants in Italy. Contact: Alhadi Ali Mohammad, alhadiamd@hotmail.com.
**Comitato Immigrati in Italia** works with immigrants in Italy and aims at improving their rights, such as the right to stay in Italy and to get Italian citizenship. Contact: Luz Myriam jaramillo, luzmiriam61@hotmail.it, http://comitatoimmigrati.blogspot.it/

**Mexico**

**INESIN** is a civil-society organization that strives to contribute to the construction of peace in Chiapas through promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue in projects focusing on topics such as prevention of domestic violence, positive conflict transformation, migration, personal spiritual growth, Biblical translation, and strengthening Chiapanecan communities. Contact: Concepcion Erindira Villanueva Sanchez, mama.villa@hotmail.com, http://inesin-mx.org

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**Masthead**

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*Special thanks to the hosting committee and Agape staff for making this camp a success! Let us always remember the heart of Agape’s philosophy, which is “love never fails.”*