

HEARTS THAT LONG FOR JUSTICE

INTRODUCTION: As we observe the world, from the perspective of the speed of communications and the incommensurable size of the universe, our world appears smaller and smaller. But at the same time we have a sizable consciousness because we are brown-skinned, made in the image of our Creator and at the same time, of Jesus.

A look at the world shows phenomenon that both articulate and diversify humankind: different races, classes, social patterns, and multiple cultures, nations related through economic, political and cultural phenomenon. We especially are subjects of a dominant system, in which, generically, the North seems to crush the South with systems loaded with injustice.

1.- **Migratory Phenomenon.** The human species is, fundamentally, a migratory species. Our bones, muscles, digestive systems, hearts, and, above all, our brains have evolved and developed through what we have encountered, precisely because humans have been made to stand upright, to walk, to move, to migrate. The physical, intellectual, and spiritual components of humanity made us naturally a migrating species.

"The long path and process of humanization of people is essentially, a process of migration. In the history of humanity, people that created great civilizations have been precisely those who were able to proved to pass through a process of migration ". (Envío. Centro de Estudios Ecuménicos. Octubre 2004 # 94 p. 1-3).

The phenomenon of migration is not, as such, new. We know that in the history of humanity there have been many migrations. The foundational legends of many cultures are stories of the migration of a people, from their mythical point of origin to the place of their destiny.

"The Hyksos immigrated giving origin to the Egyptian civilization; the Hebrews forged the Jewish civilization; the Trojans marched to the Italian peninsula and formed the Roman Empire; many people of Asia and Polynesia migrated to the east and gave birth to civilizations such as the Olmec, Maya, Toltec Mexica, and Inca; the Huns immigrated took over many of the great civilizations of the world; the Aztecs left Aztlán to go to Tenochtitlán and create the Aztec Empire; the English were displaced from the North of this continent forging what we know today as the United States ..." (id. p.3).

Today we are faced with a massive migration that has come to be a planetary phenomenon. The movement has not stopped. What social, political, cultural, and religious forces have not been able to accomplish perhaps will be accomplished through immigration, which is the basic motor of civilization.

a.- Causes of migration. These are very diverse: the increase in population that grows more rapidly than offers of work; natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, and fires; political or armed violence that generates numerous displacements; but above all, and with great frequency, the economic crisis that brings unemployment with it, low salaries, scarcity of services without hope of a better life. People are attracted to new economic centers that offer work and better wages than their lands of origin, in which frequently they cannot find work or services.

b.- The suffering: Those who immigrate are relatively few, and are surrounded by waves of people that come to the decision for reasons that can be extremely dramatic and painful. Displacement insists on becoming an ex patriot, changing worlds, leaving one's land, home, family, loved ones, and becoming involved in another culture that is completely foreign, where they become victims of discrimination and exclusion. Those who migrate stick together with other migrants, forming new colonies, living new expressions of their own faith, that distances them from what they accepted as their own experience of

God.

In all parts of the world, migrants are paid, on average, half what would be a just wage for the work they do. Thus those who employ them are enriched enormously.

When the country of destination begins to perceive that other migrants bring the outside reality that they had fled, they begin to present a threat, they are accused of destroying progress, as those who are a danger to human and religious achievement that these countries have created. This justifies even greater atrocities, in order to preserve values (as the saying goes) even religious

In order to make a dignified and better life, many migrants lose it, or, if they survive, suffer indescribable vexations outside of their country and in their own country they are victims at abusive military checkpoints and charged excessively to be able to hold onto the fruit of their labor.

It is understandable that, after the painful events of September 11 of 2001 in New York and in Washington, DC the people and authorities of the US were greatly concerned about their national safety; but that does not justify the attitude that all immigrants are terrorists and even less, that certain citizens would take it upon themselves to persecute and hunt down immigrants.

On the other hand, we cannot feel less than ashamed of the inhumane treatment given so many times in Mexico to immigrants from central and South America who immigrate to other places in the country.

Tied to the migratory phenomenon is the increasing vulnerability of a particular population in Latin America and the Caribbean: a majority of women and children are fooled, sold, coerced, or subjected to situations of sexual exploitation from which they cannot escape. They constitute the merchandise of a global industry, dominated by criminal exploitative groups that are well organized and operate with complete impunity.

2.- We are the people who make a pilgrimage toward God. Since our first parents left paradise, humanity has been made up of migrants. Also Cain, to protect himself and not be assassinated, became a migrant. Abraham, in order to respond to the call of God, had to get ready to leave Ur. He had to leave his native land of Ur. The Hebrews began to call him “hibri”: the migrant. The sons of Jacob also left their country before becoming one solid people. The reign of Judah, for reasons of domination, migrated to Babylon and in various occasions, the people of Israel participated in a great migration called the Diaspora. In this way the migrant became a symbol for all of humanity that moves toward the Promised Land.

We could say that the Gospel of John could say, “The Word was made migrant and lived among us”, and that the same Incarnation is the migration of God into the history of humanity. Just born, Jesus is sent away from his land to immigrate to Egypt. He defined himself as THE WAY and sent his disciples out as migrants to announce the God news to all of creation. Before, followers of Jesus we known as “those who follow the Way.”

3.- Recognition of migrants. It is necessary not to just announce the rights of migrants; but rather to guarantee them while they are in transit, to their arrival place, and to know that to be a migrant is not the same as being a criminal. We cannot forget that, besides their strong work, migrants bring with them cultural and religious baggage, capable of enriching their place of destination.

It is right to promote human development in the places of expulsion and create an infrastructure to improve the quality of life. We must attend to broken families, create pastoral projects of holistic attention and motivate a solution to oppression, intimidation, violence, and terrorism that forces them to migrate

against their will. There is a lack of public policy and programs to address the mistreatment of people, such as intervention that punishes the perpetrator.

When poverty worsens and one's own country does not have adequate conditions that lead to a more dignified life, human beings have the right to migrate. This right should be respected as much by the country of origin as the destination country. Human rights are a universal value based on the common human nature created in God's image and, in the light of faith, are part of the Gospel and are considered obligatory principles for all of the believers in Christ. In the mystery of the child of God, made human, all human beings acquire a dignity equal to the Child of God.

Immigration questions the practice and the being of those of us who say we are Christians and is a call to build the Kingdom of God, where everyone has a place and there is absolute respect for human dignity. We should admit the idea that the world is one and joins together a human community of all families

4.- Option for the poor. If immigration is analyzed from a structural perspective, an option for migrants as the poor, wouldn't be only in the sense of compassion, mercy or direct assistance. Rather it would be that they recognize their role as protagonists in the construction of a more just society and (as members of the Church) the commitment to the edification of the Kingdom of God here on earth. To those who are impoverished, we have to push toward hope and the guarantee of a more dignified life, through the support of humane and social promotion. The elites have to be shaken up prophetically so that they can understand that, being in the one and only boat of existence together, we will survive only with solidarity and intelligent support through human and social promotion

The option for the poor isn't a theory of Latin American Theology of Liberation, but rather a transcendental dimension of Christianity which is part of the same essence of God. The option for the poor has to be considered as "firm and irrevocable" and a "sign" of the true church.

CONCLUSION: Human mobility brings with it a global citizenship and that is what the migrant is living. Looking at this global citizenship through the lens of human rights, we should consider is based on the dignity of each human being.

The new global citizenship is set in the midst of the pain of the migrant who leaves her land, his customs, her way of life, suffering violations of his rights; but it is also a sign of hope that, despite the pain, he or she is capable of confronting the present and seeing that, more important than the land left behind, s/he has to gather together what s/he carries inside, a hidden treasure, along with the things that the culture of the new country brings

On the other side, no one should ever be forced to migrant – to leave their home, country, language, and culture due to economic or political reasons or because of violence

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