



World Student Christian Federation Africa Newsletter

January 2009

Dear readers

One year is past and another starts. The end of a year remains a privileged moment to take stock of last year and especially lay down objectives for the New Year. Within the World Student Christian Federation, Africa Region, the year which ended was rich in activities and achievements. As a very important moment, we held our 34th General Assembly in Montreal, Canada where we celebrated our togetherness. The African delegates first met in Nairobi where the Africa Regional Committee was held. This forum always offers a training opportunity to members.

We reviewed the state of Human Rights in Africa and as a family identified aspects to which our intervention should focus on for a continent free of Human Rights abuses. We held various trainings at the regional level: In addition to the training on Human Rights, workshop on Economic justice link to HIV and AIDS took place. We continue through workshops to increase knowledge of our members and their individual competences with the aim of having a pool of young people prepared to advocate to positively influence economic policies in our continent. Young people who believe they will be the change they want to see in the world and that we are the one to influence (bring) the change. Those who will be able to say as the new American President Barrack Obama

who remains a model for young African: “Yes we can” build a prosperous and rich Africa. We also offered in 2008 several leadership trainings opportunity to young people and at my great surprise, they did not disappoint me.

My special thank to Ruth Essebe Ngotty, Franck Arthur Sombo, Venance Odouara, Pascal Ngendahimana. Your sense of leadership encourages us in our ministry and gives us hope that we still have young people committed in our ministry after some frustrations we encounter. Ms Pascalinah Kabi of Lesotho SCM which represented us to an international meeting in Johannesburg did not share her experience with us.

This edition of the bulletin is devoted to testimonies and articles of our beloved sisters and brothers and the experiences gained during the seminar they attended.

During the Africa Regional Committee meeting, new executive committee members were elected. They will be entirely presented in the next edition of the Newsletter. Normand Ndayiseye was elected (President), Opiyo Edwin (Vice-president), Gloria Lae Joseph (Treasurer), Denise Akpei Memel and Tchede Jules Dakpanon (members of the Executive committee).

We dedicate this year 2009 to the Lord our shepherd and our wisdom. We look upon His blessings to continue to work for His

glory. Let me end with this thought of Dr. Wayne W. Dyer which says: "A mind at peace, a mind focused on not harming others, is stronger than any physical force in the universe".

Enjoy your reading

God bless

Georgine Kengne Djeutane

Regional secretary

WSCF Africa

Article 1 Written by Franck Arthur Sombo, President of ACEEPCI

.....? Como vivir sin agua? (How should we live without water?)

.....? Como vivir sin aere? (How should we live without air?)

This is a song by a Spanish artist, sung with much melancholy. It translates all the sufferings of a people who have come to the end of despair. One can understand the pain of a people who suffer to the extreme the distress of life's injustices.



The ecumenical community became sensitive to this cry when it convened the high level meeting held from 6th to 10th October 2008 at the Residential centre The Guatemala Ciudad Hall.

The theme of the seminary was: "Agape Consultations: links between poverty, health and ecology. Ecumenical perspectives between Latin America and the CaraiBs" The seminary offered a platform to define future actions on the conservation of the environment, climate change prevention,

improvement of health conditions and the eradication of poverty.

Just as it was with the rest of Latin America States, Guatemala is rich in natural resources. Yet its people still suffer martyrdom. People in Guatemala are robbed of their lands. People and youth lack access to education. Entire families are reduced to destitution. Whole communities are swept away in cyclones floods or by other types of natural disasters. Large portions of



water are polluted by industries which are stubbornly motivated by the pursuit of gain. Such are experiences the people of this region make on a daily basis.

Let us be careful to promote and preserve the harmony of the environment, of creation. Lets us always remember, dear brothers, that creation is a precious wealth, which will bear witness of our lives spent in righteousness and equity of which we will be called to account. Therefore let us be wiser, fairer as we daily use nature's facilities. Let us remember to pray for each other. The Latin America situation is just like that of African States. And the question is, how do we go about it? How do we reduce our dependency, and how do we reduce our

pain? The Latino-American Council of Churches perceived this issue correctly. Without attempting to close itself to the rest of the world, the Latino-American community of Guatemala wishes to take the neo-liberal concepts, which tend to promote dominion of developed economies over the poorer ones, with caution. Consequently, an advocacy targeting governments, decision makers and companies was agreed upon. The advocacy aims at considering the improper actions of men, which facilitate destitution and climate change.

It is convenient to also emphasize the fact that each region has the responsibility to respond to this call and to broaden the debate in compliance with the AGAPE programme (Alternative globalization Addressing People and Earth) adopted by the World Council of Churches since its General Assembly held in Zimbabwe in 1998, which emphasized urgent priority actions the international Christian community party to the Council's vision, has to take.

Let us all together promote love and solidarity between and among nations to create a better life, which is a pure gift from God. In taking part in this seminar, I was greatly transformed and enriched with a new vision, an orientation in the perspective of participation in the establishment of equity and righteousness. I was sensitive to the situation of the indigenous people of Latin America. The living conditions of those people are most precarious, they endure hardship and despair.

We have a challenge to take, that of building a better world, a more human

society. We are concerned with the various aspects of this challenge. As the youth of this generation, the future lays in our hands. Let us advocate a message of hope, for the Eternal God has promised that He has for us "Plans of peace and not of misfortune, to give us a future and a hope" (Jer29:11).

Article 2 Written by Venance ODOUARO, President of JCUSB - Cotonou, Benin

After several years spent in slavery in Egypt, the children of Israel decided to return to their land and to repossess their properties. Despite Pharaoh being a terrible obstacle, by the might of God they were able to migrate.

Why are we about to close our borders to our brothers and sisters who want to visit us? Why have some people folded their hands as they watch their fellow human beings suffering? Why do our governments keep quiet on this crucial problem, preferring to tackle less important issues during our national, international meetings and conferences? What has happened to our laws and the rights of human beings? What are we doing with mainstreaming and citizenship policies? Are we going to keep wallowing in notorious ignorance?

In my humble opinion, if all men on earth believe in the only and one God and they pretend they love him but are unable to show any level of love for their neighbor, their claims are groundless. The love that the creator shows to human on a daily basis can neither be counted nor measured. God's love is noble and offers everyone without distinction of sex, race or religion. His love believes all, hopes all, supports all and does not exclude anyone. I believe that God's love we must pass on to all the brethren in our continents when they decide to visit us. Hospitality does not have a price and a cheerful welcome can heal a man's heart.

There is a general saying that it not good to compare but it enlightens the mind. I feel we have long been sleeping and crucial issues have been neglected.



Thinking helps us to broaden our perspectives and be able to explore more fields of thought.

We want free and open borders, one that will not require any money, visas, identification nor any legal documents. We want a free border which will serve as a meeting point to all men. Even with the variety of languages, races or religion we will all be united with a strong love. Suspicion, hatred, marginalization and xenophobia should stop. Lets all be one.

For a long time, China closed its borders to the west and refused to consume anything from outside. But when the young MUTSO HITO came to power, this country underwent an economic revolution and huge prosperity, and this is where its strength lays, in hard and good work.

To achieve this possible dream, I would like to make a few suggestions:

1. Borders should be open to allow for the free circulation of persons
2. Immigration laws and integration policies should be revised
3. The respect of human rights should be based on legal instruments

Prepared by NGENDAHIMANA Pascal,
President of RAJEPRA

My experiences during the International political and theological Camps in AGAPE Centre held from the 8th to the 23th August 2008.

I am NGENDAHIMANA Pascal, the president of Student Christian Movement called RAJEPRA from RWANDA, the country of 1000 hills with some rare animals called Gorillas.

My movement is affiliated to the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), I got a chance to attend both International theological and political camps organized by the AGAPE Centre in Italy. My experiences started from the airport of my country as it was my first time to make a long trip. I had never been in plane before. In the plane I was like a lost kid, everything was new. Arriving in Turin I met with a special,

respected lady called Corrine who warmly welcomed me in that wonderful part of the world, may the almighty God bless her, she is such a kind, industrious, social and enthusiastic leader. During the camps, I liked the way she coordinate activities with a small number of residents.

In the Center AGAPE, I met many people from around the world and I was surprised to interact with many people speaking many languages like English, French, Italian, Spanish etc. During the conferences, we visited the Valdese church which I appreciated so much because it's ecumenical spirit.



What did I benefit from AGAPE?

Many things: migration and its consequences and I learnt more about hospitality and how to take care of foreigner. I have seen also how Europe is developed and now I am working hard for the betterment of my family, movement, country and my continent. The spirit of waiting for any financial support to start any activity came at the end after this trip because I have seen how the cost of living is so high in Europe, now I have the hope to start with the little we can get and develop our countries.

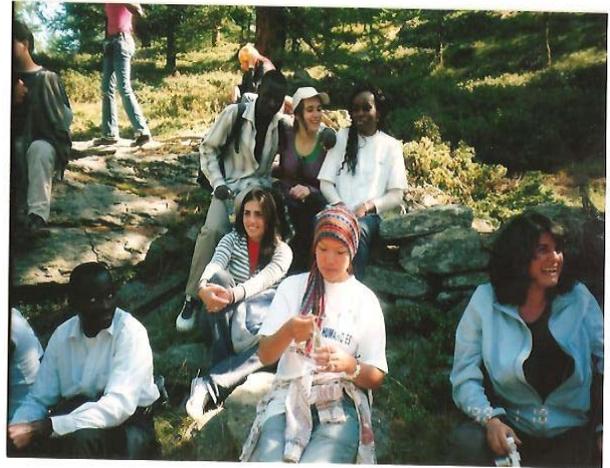
I've also have opportunity to interact with many people from all around the world and we discussed about different subjects including the political issues, HIV/AIDS, the role of young people in changing the world, the role of the churches in the crucial problem of migration, we have also discussed the

way in which migration transform our identities and transform the nation of citizenship.

We have mentioned that many people, countries have the anti-immigrant sentiments where they allow the free movement of money and restrict that of human beings. We have also highlighted the problems which immigrants are facing like isolation, potential episodes of racism and a sense of non belonging etc. As it was stated in the introduction of Luciano the Regional Secretary of WSCF North America the integration into new country is essential in order to maintain one's integrity and this integration requires a commitment on the part of both migrants and non-migrant members of society to respect and adapt each other, thereby enabling them to interact in a positive way.

At the end of the camps I asked myself this question: where are we Africans? we are in the continent where democracy in some countries is like a dream, in the continent where diseases like AIDS, Malaria, Tuberculosis are still killing many people, in the continent where many people are living under the line of poverty, in the continent where there are always wars and conflicts among the people of the same nation, in the continent where many people are still uneducated. Base on those problems Africa should be seen as the first beneficiary of the migration but it is not true as Africa is still view as a continent of problems, Africa also have many opportunities like our wonderful culture, climate, nature, some of our countries have natural resources human resources.

If we can start from now working as team we can achieve the dreams of Africans.



Do young people have to leave their continent and go and leave in other continents like immigrants without papers?

For me as one who attended the international political camp and theological camp, living in another county or continent without legal papers is a shame to us and to Africa. During the camps I listened to the testimonies of immigrants without legal papers, I learnt how they are experiencing problems, how they don't have access to treatment, health insurance and education, how they work like slaves without legal protection, how their salaries are very low etc and I was shocked.

Living in a country like immigrant without papers is a criminal liability which is punishable by the law. I beg all young Africans like me to unite and join the efforts of our presidents in forming African Union which is a step forward for a transformed Africa, let us stop dreaming and work to transform the Africans dreams into reality, let us talk less and work hard, let us have hope and this hope will give us power and the power will enable us to achieve our common objectives, let use the knowledge we learnt from our past experiences to make future bright. Let us consider the fact of leaving our countries illegally like a failure and weakness, let us be strong God is with us.

The wonderful event: Inter cultural show with our traditional dances where we spent a night dancing and eating food prepared by friends from different countries

The bad day: was the last the day, the day I was leaving AGAPE centre and Italy, I left without saying good bye to my friends as they were praying.

My appreciation

My appreciation first goes to Mrs Corrine the Director of AGAPE Centre who accepted to receive me, thanks Ms Kengne Georgine our Regional Secretary. I would also like to extend my appreciation to Luciano, Regional Secretary WCSF North America who always created the opportunities for me to express my ideas and feelings.

Conclusion

I will share knowledge gained during conferences. I also recommend that the task of organizing camps should not be exclusively AGAPE task, we should see how we can learn from AGAPE or we can contribute to send more delegates to AGAPE. I will also invite all who have attended the camps to have a good will to return there as a volunteer for a long period.

**ADVOCACY AND ACTION WEEK
CONVENED BY THE WORLD COUNCIL
OF CHURCHES "UNITED NATIONS
LIAISON OFFICE" IN NEW YORK
FROM 16 TO 21st NOVEMBER 2008**

**Written by Ruth Aimée Ngotty (SCM
of Cameroon**

How I wish all men on earth considered themselves as created in the likeness of God!!! And how I wish we could consider our neighbour as ourselves, without any consideration of his/her race, sex, age, social status, academic level, health status!!! Then this world would truly be different...

There is so much suffering, so many outcries of pain, tears, and deaths linked to selfishness of some human beings who have turned their backs to God and also display various levels of thoughtlessness towards each other. From one continent to another, from



one country to another, there is always at least one common form of violence. Refugees rights, foreigners rights, the rights of students, patients, the destitute, are neglected everywhere. More to all this, the worldwide economic crisis, which is not negligible, is worth mentioning.

Jesus Christ our divine model told us: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" and the Good Samaritan parable told by the Christ in Luc 10: 25-37 gives a clear answer to the question: Who is my neighbour?

Luke 10:25-37 was the main document of the work accomplished during the fourth session of the United Nations week held from 16th to 21 November 2008 in New York. The advocacy week to which the WCSF was invited gave the participants the opportunity to brainstorm over specific themes: the war in Sri Lanka, climate change, human rights, migration, etc), and served also as a framework for action.

Beyond being challenged to pray for countries such as Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo which are constantly at war, or to take appropriate actions to protect the environment (though we may not be affected yet by climate change, let us remember our future islands in the Pacific who live in constant fear of a tsunami...and the anxiety surrounding the possibility of being relocated), there is also the need to welcome visitors of all kinds, for we all lobbied for the ratification of the Convention on immigrants rights, with the World Council of Churches status with the United Nations, we also visit



participants of diplomatic missions of 11 countries. We laboured to impress upon those decision makers what we consider as "God's will", to advocate for the rights of immigrants all over the world.

Humanity is passing through difficult times, with countless crises; many men and women are in despair. Let's pray together, let's reason, and let's act for our own well being and that of our neighbour.

Together, let's say NO to all forms of violence. May SCMer's particularly those of WSCF-Africa, unite at the regional and local level to trigger a positive social change. By God's grace, who loves us so much, we will make it!!! May all the glory be ascribed to Him throughout all eternity.

Do you love your neighbour?

WEDDING

It is with great pleasure that we are announcing the wedding of our sister Françoise Mukabagado. We wish her and her husband a very happy and prosperous life in our Lord Jesus Christ.



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Contact us at:
1st Floor, Jumuia place, Lenana Road

P. O. Box 14782 – 00200

Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: +254 20 2730222/ 20

Fax : +254 20 2730223

Email : wscf@wscf-africa.org

Website : www.wscf-africa.org