

Global Peace, from Page 1

are powerful thus causing some of the worst ongoing war and armed conflict the human race has seen.

“People are denied access to rights, freedoms, and resources due to unequal social and economic structures often engendered by repressive regimes. Such structures are even more deepened by foreign debt and other impositions of powerful multilateral organizations,” stated Valera during his speech at the Global Peace Festival.

He also stated that leaders of the world should advocate for peace and not war, to uphold justice instead of violating human rights. In order to achieve peace Valera stresses the requirement to rebuild total human security, which is harnessed by basic rights and freedoms for both individuals and states. Peace exists only when life and human dignity is respected. The key notion behind activating a prominent peace policy/plan relies on solutions aimed to address the root causes of war such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and injustice.

If authority figures in governments and international institutions remain reluctant to be involved with issues pertaining to marginalized communities, the objectives of peace agreements and cease fires will remain stagnant. This then implies that prosperity and peace is only for a select few within a population and will continue to be another wish for many. Thus causing further unrest and tension within societies, and this will remain one of the main reasons for migration and displacement.

Over the past several years Americans have seen the influx of migrants in the United States resulting in much heated debates over U.S. Immigration policy and national security. As mainstream media has chosen to depict certain migrant groups as illegal criminals, a spread of fear is being transplanted into the minds of citizens everywhere creating more divides between common neighbors. While local governments deal with deportation and discrimination issues, the true reasons why migrants flee from their homelands is somewhat forgotten. One is forced to leave because of the search for survival; because s/he refuses to let her/his child starve, because the scourges of war result in displacement, because corporations are not accountable for stolen resources and cheap labor, because governments have failed to uphold just laws. Thus, the decision to leave is not really an option, but a desperate attempt to live in hopes to find security and peace. As Dr. Hyun Jin Moon claimed in his keynote address: “The ‘American’ dream is not only for Americans. The dream is for all mankind, for all God’s children, not just American children.”

Just as migrants from various parts of the world fight for basic human rights, we must all come together in an effort to fight for peace. In closing, Valera said, “Global peace is when people, regardless of race, religion, and politics commune and act together in solidarity as global citizens.” The priority of peace should not only be the goal of government officials, but also each individual should take his/her part in helping to create a just and peaceful world. The common person is capable of being involved in his/her own community by volunteering to help others in need. Reverend Mark Farr from the Points of Light institute clarified that “one element important to peace is public service, because without service there is no peace. Public service brings understanding between others and interfaith is not just dialogue, but action.”

Upon reflecting the words of wisdom shared with thousands of people – Jews, Muslims, Christians, Black-Americans, Koreans, Latinos, etc., it is essential to remember that all human beings are responsible for building peace in their communities and sharing this peace with others regardless of our differences. Only when dignity and respect for one another is present in our intentions, actions, and decisions, can peace truly be felt. Dr. Moon said. #



Make Your Vote Count, from Page 6

Ron Paul opposes amnesty but finds a border fence “rather offensive” and does not solve anything (see www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2008/01/ron_paul_on_immigration.html). The Green Party candidate Ralph Nader opposes the exploitation of illegal workers and favors a guest worker program. However, he also believes that H-1B visas contribute to the “brain drain” of developing countries as their highly skilled workers are lured by corporate America (see www.ontheissues.org/Celeb/Ralph_Nader_Immigration.htm).

Make It Count

There is no time like the present to exercise our right to vote. While we know that many of these hot-button issues—especially the tangled web that is the current immigration policy—will not be solved overnight, a path toward their solution depends on who we elect to the White House. Therefore, it is our obligation and responsibility to make an informed decision when we approach that ballot box on November 4, 2008. The fate of our families, our friends, and the other immigrants following our path hinge on who we vote for. Therefore, choose wisely, and make your vote count.

Kristine Tungol Cabagnot is an immigration lawyer and legal editor at the American Immigration Lawyers Association Publications. You may reach her at ktungol-cabagnot@aila.org.

