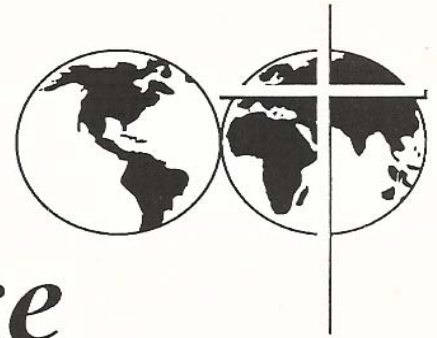


Vocation for Justice



Editorial

Spring 2010 Volume 24 No 1

Finite Disappointment, Infinite Hope

When we look back on 2009 it would be easy for us to become cynical about our own and the world's prospects for 2010. The past year has brought more than its fair share of disappointments. The economic recession caused much hardship; many people lost their jobs and their homes. Trust in our financial and political institutions is at an all time low. Families around the world have mourned the loss of their loved ones in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. Natural disasters, especially the recent earthquakes in Haiti, have caused untold suffering. Catholic Church leaders have been the focus of much anger and criticism because of their handling of child sexual abuse by priests and religious in Ireland.

Copenhagen's Climate change meeting has been and gone, and the result - an accord that lacks any global emissions reduction targets, binding or otherwise. People here and in developing countries are already struggling with the effects of climate change. We only have a short window of opportunity to prevent even worse to come.

So what do we hope for in 2010? Is it all doom and gloom? Let us remember the words of Martin Luther King Jr. who said: "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope". There is much to be hopeful about.



Although Copenhagen was a disappointment, the event and especially the preparation for it has raised worldwide consciousness of the threat of Global Warming. A week before the Conference, 50,000 people marched in the streets of London - one of several thousand events held in 140 countries around the world. Our religious leaders were there. An 11th-hour email petition, as the summit stumbled to a conclusion, attracted an extraordinary 14 million signatures. Millions of people were speaking. All this will encourage us to keep up pressure on the politicians.

We may take inspiration and hope from the New Year message of Pope Benedict, which reflected on the theme, *If you want to cultivate Peace, protect Creation*. In his talk to the Diplomatic Corps a few days later he returned to the same theme and further spelt out the action needed to protect creation and livelihoods around the world.

Time could be taken to reflect on justice issues this coming Lent. We recommend our new DVD, *Stations of the Forests*, for group study.

And we are presented with the challenge and opportunity of the upcoming General Election. We can lobby for policies protecting the poor and the exploited Earth to be a central part of any government agenda. Some election issues are featured in our Centrespread. As Christians and seekers for a better world, we ask for a government that looks at our country from the standpoint of the vulnerable, rather than bankers.

In this issue:

- Pope's Peace Message 2
- Columbans join *The Wave*... 3
- ECCR tackles Shell.....4
- No Trident Replacement ... 5
- Centrespread on Election Issues6-7
- General Election Planning 8
- Post Copenhagen.....9
- NewsNotes.....10
- New Columban DVD for Lent: *Stations of the Forests*.... 11
- Resources.....12

We can take inspiration and hope from the quiet witness of so many people here in Britain and around the world who are putting themselves at risk every day in their work for a better world. I am reminded especially of our own Columban missionary, Fr Michael Sinnott who was kidnapped and held for 30 days recently in the Southern Philippines. The enormous worldwide support for his release was truly astonishing and humbling. He is now back in the Philippines and at 80 years of age is anxious to continue his work there.

In 2010, let us remember that Christian hope does not mean living in the clouds, dreaming of an improved life. It is not merely a projection of what we would like to be or do. It leads us to discover seeds of a new world already present today. This hope is a source of energy to live differently - moving from a society based on consumerism and competition to one based on compassion and concern for its most vulnerable members, and with sensitivity to the whole of God's Creation.

Peter Hughes SSC

COLUMBAN MISSION

Collaborating with the National Justice and Peace Network of England and Wales & Justice and Peace Scotland

To Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation

These are edited highlights of Pope Benedict XVI's Message for World Peace Day, 1 January 2010.

It should be evident that the ecological crisis cannot be viewed in isolation from other related questions, since it is closely linked to the notion of development itself and our understanding of our relationship to others and to the rest of creation. Prudence would thus dictate a **profound, long-term review of our model of development**, one which would take into consideration the meaning of the economy and its goals with an eye to correcting its malfunctions and misapplications. The ecological health of the planet calls for this, but it is also demanded by the cultural and moral crisis of humanity whose symptoms have for some time been evident in every part of the world. **Humanity needs a profound cultural renewal; it needs to rediscover those values which can serve as the solid basis for building a brighter future for all.**

The goods of creation belong to humanity as a whole. Yet the current pace of environmental exploitation is seriously endangering the supply of certain natural resources not only for the present generation, but above all for generations yet to come. It is not hard to see that environmental degradation is often due to the lack of far-sighted official policies or to the pursuit of myopic economic interests, which then, tragically, become a serious threat to creation.

To combat this phenomenon, economic activity needs to consider the fact that every economic decision has a moral consequence and thus show increased respect for the environment. When making use of natural resources, we should be concerned for their protection and consider the cost entailed – environmentally and socially – as an essential part of the overall expenses incurred. The international community and national governments are responsible for sending the right signals in order to combat effectively the misuse of the environment. To protect the environment, and to safeguard natural resources and the climate, there is a need to act in accordance with clearly-defined rules,

also from the juridical and economic standpoint, while at the same time taking into due account the solidarity we owe to those living in the poorer areas of our world and to future generations.

A greater sense of intergenerational solidarity is urgently needed. Universal solidarity represents a benefit as well as a duty. **This is a responsibility that present generations have towards those of the future**, a responsibility that also concerns individual States and the international community". Natural resources should be used in such a way that immediate benefits do not have a negative impact on living creatures, human and not, present and future; that the protection of private property does not conflict with the universal destination of goods; that human activity does not compromise the fruitfulness of the earth, for the benefit of people now and in the future.

In addition to a fairer sense of intergenerational solidarity there is also an urgent moral need for a renewed sense of **intragenerational solidarity**, especially in relationships between developing countries and highly industrialised countries: the international community has an urgent duty to find institutional means of regulating the exploitation of non-renewable resources, involving poor countries in the process, in order to plan together for the future.

The ecological crisis shows the urgency of a solidarity which embraces time and space. It is important to acknowledge that among the causes of the present ecological crisis is the historical responsibility of the industrialised countries. Yet the less developed countries, and emerging countries in particular, are not exempt from their own responsibilities with regard to creation, for the duty of gradually adopting effective environmental measures and policies is incumbent upon all. This would be accomplished more easily if self-interest played a lesser role in the

granting of aid and the sharing of knowledge and cleaner technologies.

The ecological crisis offers an historic opportunity to develop a common plan of action aimed at orienting the model of global development towards greater respect for creation and for an integral human development.

At present there are a number of scientific developments and innovative approaches which promise to provide satisfactory and balanced solutions to the problem of our relationship to the environment. Encouragement needs to be given, for example, to research into effective ways of exploiting the immense potential of solar energy. Similar attention also needs to be paid to the world-wide problem of water and to the global water cycle system, which is of prime importance for life on earth and whose stability could be seriously jeopardised by climate change. Suitable strategies for rural development centred on small farmers and their families should be explored, as well as the implementation of appropriate policies for the management of forests, for waste disposal and for strengthening the linkage between combating climate change and overcoming poverty. Ambitious national policies are required, together with a necessary international commitment which will offer important benefits especially in the medium and long term.

It is becoming more and more evident that the issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our life-style and the prevailing models of consumption and production, which are often unsustainable from a social, environmental and even economic point of view. We can no longer do without a real change of outlook which will result in **new life-styles**. We are all responsible for the protection and care of the environment.

The Church has a responsibility towards creation, and she considers it her duty to exercise that responsibility in public life, in order to protect earth, water and air as gifts of God the Creator, meant for everyone, and above all to save mankind from the danger of self-destruction. ■

Full text available at:
www.vatican.va

Columban Mission

Columbans Join *The Wave*

Ellen Teague



Columbans Frank Nally, Tom O'Reilly and Peter Hughes march down Whitehall on 5 December as part of 'The Wave'.

On 5 December, in London, the Columban JPIC team joined tens of thousands of other church people supporting a day of action on climate change called *The Wave*. In the afternoon, at least 50,000 people encircled Westminster, just two days before the climate talks started in Copenhagen. Peter and Frank carried a banner, *Churches say ACT NOW ON CLIMATE CHANGE*, on the four-mile demonstration walk.

It was an emotionally charged, positive and uplifting day, which concluded with Ed Miliband, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, meeting with members of the *Stop Climate Chaos* Coalition after the march and hearing him acknowledge the contribution of communities of faith to *The Wave*. He promised that when he returned from Copenhagen he would look into more government funding for faith initiatives on climate change, such as Eco-congregation.

When Frank Nally asked Ed Miliband a question about the corporate world sabotaging sustainable development and climate action, he responded that it was easier to believe in conspiracy theories of sabotage after e-mail leaks from scientists at East Anglia University dominated media headlines in the lead-up to Copenhagen, suggesting the human contribution to global warming was exaggerated.

But before that, the day started with a gathering of 3,200 people for a church service, led by 20 UK religious leaders. People travelled with as small a carbon footprint as possible. Nicki Smith from Huddersfield set off to walk to *The Wave* - a journey of 250 miles - on 5 November and arrived on the morning with her hair dyed blue, *The Wave* colour. Tom Cullinan, an eco-theologian and monk from Liverpool, arrived on his bike. So too did Lee Rayfield, Anglican Bishop of Swindon, as part of the Bristol Anglican diocesan *wave* of 50 cyclists.

Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Archbishop Vincent Nichols, Head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales, smiled as they

held out blue gloved hands for a photo before the service, which later featured on the BBC's website. Four other Catholic bishops were present.

Catholics who have long campaigned for environmental justice felt affirmed by Archbishop Nichols when he said that, "we know that issues of world poverty and development cannot be separated from concerns for the environment; they are intimately connected". He also felt that "we must look hard at the way we live our lives and consider again those whose future is threatened by the effects of our own lifestyles". ■

Many Heavens, One Earth

In November, Sean McDonagh and Ellen Teague joined 200 faith leaders from around the world at Windsor for a three-day conference on the environment: *Many Heavens, One Earth*. It was hosted by HRH Prince Philip at Windsor Castle and attended by the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon. The aim was for faiths to launch and discuss their long term initiatives to protect the living planet, a month before the Copenhagen Climate Change talks. Commitments were given by representatives of the different faith groups. These included greening religious buildings; developing ethical investment policies; printing sacred books on environmentally-friendly paper; and creating educational programmes.



Attending the Windsor Conference (left to right) were Ellen Teague, Dan Misleh (US Catholic Coalition on Climate Change), Mark Dowd (Operation Noah), Sean McDonagh SSC, Mary Colwell (Consultant on Faith and Environment), and Chris Bain (Director of CAFOD).

Shell in the Niger Delta Miles Litvinoff

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) has launched a new report: 'Shell in the Niger Delta: A Framework for Change'. ECCR's Co-ordinator and report editor shares the findings.

'Niger Delta people's means of livelihood have been destroyed. People have been crying, begging, and there has been no response.'

'The only impact of oil companies has been pollution - of the environment, of the administrative system, and of the health and security of the people.'

Statements like these, from local community members, sum up the devastation of lives, livelihoods and the environment that the oil industry has brought to Nigeria's Niger Delta.

ECCR's new report features case studies written by five civil society organisations working in the Niger Delta. It focuses on the operations of Royal Dutch Shell Plc, a subsidiary the Shell Petroleum Development Corporation, Nigeria's largest oil and gas operator.

Church-based investor coalition and membership organisation ECCR, which works for corporate and investor responsibility, has had contacts with Niger Delta civil society since the mid-1990s. It co-ordinated shareholder resolutions at Shell's AGMs in 1997 and 2006.

The problems documented by the report are severe. Formerly a net food exporter, the once highly fertile Niger Delta now depends heavily on food imports. Life expectancy has fallen from close to 70 years to around 45 years. The Delta has some of the worst health and educational facilities in Nigeria and is now one of the world's most petroleum-polluted environments. While acknowledging that Nigeria's government has the primary duty to protect human rights in the region, the report strongly affirms the increasingly recognised duty of companies to respect human rights – to 'do no harm'.

The report explores what measures the Delta's people and civil society have identified as priorities to be addressed and good practices to be followed. And what should faith and values-based investors urge Shell to do to improve matters?

Case study contributors include the Nigeria-based Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People and the Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility, and the UK-based Stakeholder Democracy Network.



An oil spill in the Niger Delta.

While Western society remains highly oil-dependent, virtually all of us - one way or another - benefit from the oil extracted by Shell in Nigeria. As well as through our direct and indirect oil consumption, those who own shares in Shell individually, institutionally, or through managed funds, or whose pension fund, bank or insurance company holds such investments, share moral responsibility for what happens in the Niger Delta.

ECCR hopes that the report will contribute to improvement in the lives of the Niger Delta communities by helping clarify priorities for Shell and providing a framework for constructive dialogue and action. To address the problems identified, recommendations are offered. These include: an urgent end to highly polluting gas flaring; provision of sustainable sources of drinking water for communities; an environmental

rehabilitation programme; a change of company culture through staff training; more effective social and environmental impact assessments; respect for open dialogue and community consent; independent monitoring; effective grievance mechanisms; a participatory approach to community development; revenue and expenditure transparency; and linking senior executive pay to progress on human rights and environmental issues.

ECCR and its project partners, including Netherlands-based Catholic development agency Cordaid, which funded the report, are in dialogue with Shell regarding the recommendations. Part of ECCR's approach is also to encourage institutional and individual investors and concerned citizens to engage with the company and other stakeholders on the issues - for example, by writing directly to Shell or to their pension fund, bank or insurance company, which may hold shares in Shell.

ECCR has produced an action guide providing suggestions for investors and others interested in encouraging Shell to improve its policy and practice in the Niger Delta. ECCR has also published a *Guide to Investment and Engaging with Companies*.

All these materials are available free for download at www.eccr.org.uk. Another way to raise awareness is writing a letter or article about the issue for a church or local newsletter or newspaper, using points from the executive summary or full report and highlighting some of the recommendations.

Beyond the specific focus on Shell, the report prompts broader questions about how multinational companies wishing to operate in resource-rich but poorly governed and infrastructure-poor developing countries should conduct themselves. And the big question: whether they should operate in such places at all.

Report available for download at www.eccr.org.uk. Printed copies (£5 for ECCR members, £12 for non-members) can be ordered via the website.

No Trident Replacement

Bruce Kent

Bruce Kent is a vice-president of Pax Christi and CND.

Trident replacement ought to be an issue for everyone, especially every Christian. It should be one of the major challenges put to every would-be Member of Parliament in the run-up to the forthcoming general election. This is a vital moral, economic and legal issue.

To replace our present nuclear-armed submarine fleet with yet another generation of nuclear weapons is madly expensive and decreases rather than increases our security. It also continues policies based on possible mass murder by accident or design, ignores the 'good faith' demanded by the International Court of Justice, and will help to wreck President Obama's hopes for a nuclear weapon-free world.

The connection between war and poverty has been made time and time again in church and political documents. In January Pope Benedict deplored the vast sums spent on 'developing nuclear arsenals' instead of on 'the development of peoples, especially the poorest'. President Eisenhower long ago called money spent on arms 'a theft from the poor'. Today the global arms budget is nearly a trillion and a quarter dollars a year. A quarter of that vast amount would enable us to meet all the Millennium Development Goals and substantially address the problem of climate change.

The 'No Trident Replacement' campaign deals with a British aspect of the issue of global militarisation. No one knows exactly what a new fleet of nuclear-armed submarines with their missiles and warheads will cost. £25 billion is an informed guess, but actual costs invariably come out over budget. On top of this £25 billion we can add the £50 billion which it will cost to maintain the whole system operationally for about 30 years. Gross bill: at least £75 billion. Greenpeace says that is an underestimate.

We ought to be demanding a drastic cut in the Trident replacement proposal. Scrap plans for Trident replacement

and put the money saved towards real human needs: jobs, health, education, housing, the relief of global poverty, and climate change measures. This is not a private Pax Christi/CND concern. It is an issue for all of us individually and for groups like CAFOD, Church Action on Poverty, and Housing Justice, all of whom have been working for years for a more just and peaceful society. War on Want and UNISON are already involved.

'No Trident Replacement - spend the money on real needs' needs to be at the top of the electoral agenda. Every parish and diocese could sign up to the 'No Trident replacement' petition and organise meetings with would-be MPs. We can all make our views known in the press and on phone-ins and websites.

Of course we are entitled to defend ourselves militarily within legal and moral limits. The UN Charter makes that clear. But, for most people, military security is well down their list of security priorities. A decent job, a roof over one's head, the price of food, education, a loving family, and health care are all everyday concerns. There are some not uncommon dangers - such as muggings, burglaries or house fires - which is why we happily pay for a Police Force and a Fire Service.

But nuclear weapons, far from increasing security, make long-term insecurity inevitable. If we say that they are essential for our security there is no possible justification for telling other countries that they cannot have them. Indeed, nuclear weapons will certainly pass into the hands of those we call terrorists, against whom nuclear deterrence has no meaning even in the thinking of those who believe in it.

The more countries with nuclear weapons the more the risks of accident and miscalculation, let alone deliberate use. Only last year two nuclear armed submarines - one French, one British - missed a mid Atlantic head on collision by a few yards. Most people are just not aware

of the horrendous list of accidents and misperceptions which have brought us several times to the brink of global disaster.

Happily we have US President Obama, who has made it one of his priority aims to remove the global nuclear weapon threat. British nuclear weapons are one part of a vast world arsenal of some 27,000 nuclear warheads deployed now by nine countries. President Obama is following the path laid out by the International Court of Justice in 1996, which ruled: "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

A perfectly sensible detailed draft text covering all the aspects of a verifiable and enforceable abolition convention already exists and has been lodged by Costa Rica with the UN. China, India and Pakistan as well as the great majority of other countries have already voted at the UN in favour of starting abolition negotiations. But not the United Kingdom!

An opportunity, which must not be lost, comes with the review conference of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Conference in New York in May. Our country could go into the conference, showing the 'good faith' called for by the International Court of Justice. We could make non-replacement of Trident our major contribution. Otherwise we go into that meeting telling other countries that they cannot have nuclear weapons while we, with the replacement Trident on the way, make sure that we have ours for another 30 or so years. That would help to contribute to conference failure.

Years ago in my CND office there was a picture in front of my desk of a vast clumsy dinosaur with small head and very large feet. The caption underneath read: 'Too much armour. Too few brains. Now extinct.'

That does not have to be our fate if we use the brains, vision and energy that God has given us, as builders of God's Kingdom of justice and peace.

Petition available at
www.cnduk.org

GENERAL ELECTION 2010

CLIMATE CHANGE

- More than 80 percent of the greenhouse gases currently in the atmosphere are the result of emissions by rich, Northern countries.
- Some 262 million people were affected by climate disasters annually from 2000 to 2004, over 98 percent of them in the global south.

“The ecological crisis offers an historic opportunity to develop a common plan of action aimed at orienting the model of global development towards greater respect for creation and for an integral human development.”

Pope Benedict XVI

Useful websites:

www.cafod.org.uk
www.operationnoah.org

Question to candidates:

Do you support working towards a fair and binding global climate deal as an immediate priority? By a fair and binding global climate deal we mean this deal should:

- be legally binding,
- include emissions cuts of more than 40 per cent on 1990 levels by 2020,
- include US\$195 billion each year by 2020 on top of existing aid pledges to help poor countries cope with climate change.

FOOD AND WATER

- Approximately 450 million small-scale farmers feed roughly two billion people, so they are a key group in fighting poverty.
- If temperature increases in the Andes to the extent that glaciers disappear, the water supplies of up to 50 million people will be endangered.

“Continuing hunger is a deep stain on our world. The time has come to remove it – forever. We have the wealth and know-how to do so. Let us do our utmost to keep hunger at the centre of the political lens.”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Useful websites:

www.progressio.org.uk
www.fairtrade.org.uk

Questions to candidates:

How can the UK government give greater support to the world’s small-scale farmers?

Do you support fairtrade initiatives?

What will you do to ensure the access of poor communities around the world to water?

PEACE

- The estimated costs of the replacement of Trident, the UK’s nuclear missile system, is in excess of £75 billion.
- Each year the UK exports around £5 billion worth of military equipment around the globe.

“We need to work at getting relationships right: relationships between people and relationships between people and planet. This is what peacemaking is about.”

Pat Gaffney, Pax Christi

Useful websites:

www.paxchristi.org.uk
www.rethinktrident.org.uk
www.caat.org.uk

Questions to candidates:

Do you think Trident should be replaced?

The UK Trade and Industry Defence & Security Organisation is a government unit which helps private companies sell military equipment and services overseas. Do you think this government unit should be closed?

What are the options for the future of Afghanistan?

DEBT

- In 2006, Norway unilaterally cancelled \$80m in debt owed by five poor countries, on the grounds that the loans were examples of a “development policy failure” linked to irresponsible lending.
- In November 2009, two vulture funds won £20 million against Liberia in the UK High Court. A ‘Vulture fund’ is a company that seeks to make profit by buying up cheap defaulted poor country debt and then attempting to recover the full amount immediately, often by suing through the courts.

“An imaginative and radical set of policies is needed to address the triple crunch of debt, peak oil and climate change.”

Ann Pettifor

Useful website:

www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

Questions to candidates:

Would you recognise the concept of co-responsibility and illegitimacy in lending and take steps to deal with historical illegitimate debt?

Would you legislate to prohibit the activities of vulture funds in UK courts?

CAMPAIGNING THEMES

POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN BRITAIN

■ The gap between rich and poor in the UK is greater now than at any time in the past 40 years. This is not only unjust; research shows that inequality has a corrosive effect on the whole of society, linked with higher crime, health problems and other social ills.

■ People on low incomes who cannot get credit from mainstream banks are forced to borrow from doorstep lenders or ‘payday’ lenders. In the absence of any legal limit on cost of loans, many are forced to pay interest rates as high as 1000 percent. This traps people in a cycle of debt.

“There must come a point at which the scale of the gap between the very wealthy and those at the bottom of the range of income begins to undermine the common good.”
The Common Good, Catholic Bishops Conference for England and Wales.

Useful website:

www.church-poverty.org.uk

Questions to candidates:

Does the growing gap between rich and poor in this country concern you, and if so, what will you do about it?

Are you willing to call for a legal limit on the interest rates that can be charged by moneylenders, and would you support the *Debt on our Doorstep* campaign of Church Action on Poverty?

ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

■ Many people seeking sanctuary in the UK are destitute. No one knows exactly how many people have been left destitute at the end of the asylum process, without any status, permission to work, or access to benefits.

■ Tens of thousands of men, women and children (both immigrants and those seeking sanctuary) are detained under the UK’s immigration rules each year.

“We need a ministry of welcome and accompaniment for migrants”
Bishop Patrick Lynch, auxiliary in Southwark Diocese and Bishop with pastoral responsibility for migrants.

Useful websites:

www.jrsuk.net

Questions to candidates:

How can the system of asylum processing be improved to be swifter and fairer?

What are the alternatives to the detention of children and families of people seeking sanctuary?

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

■ An estimated 500,000 people in England alone are ‘hidden homeless’. These people are not visible rough sleepers but are sofa surfers, squatters, or sleeping in their cars, in tents or in bin sheds.

■ More than 60,000 households in England are homeless and living in temporary accommodation. That is over 100,000 people and includes at least 87,000 children. About 20% of these households have been in temporary accommodation for more than two years.

“The change I think would do the most to end injustice and bring about righteousness in housing would be a move to think of the buildings we live in primarily as homes rather than as investments.”
Alison Gelder, Housing Justice

Useful websites:

www.housingjustice.org.uk

Questions to candidates:

It is widely recognised - at least by all the main parties - that there is a shortage of housing in our country. How do you propose to ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing in this area?

At the moment a large number of needy homeless people - for example single adults - fall outside the statutory duty of local authorities to provide housing. What would you do to help them?

ENVIRONMENT

■ During the past 45 years about a quarter of Britain’s hedgerows have been destroyed, at a rate of about 4,000 miles a year and with a massive loss of biodiversity.

■ Each family in the UK throws away an average of one tonne of waste per year! 73% of this goes to landfill, even though 90% of this is recoverable. It could be recycled, composted or used to generate energy.

“Jesus encouraged love of children. If our generation continues to disrupt climate, not least with cars and planes, we will destroy our children’s future.”
Edward Echlin, Christian Ecology Link

Useful websites:

www.christian-ecology.org.uk

Questions to candidates:

Will you demand that ministers and parliament promote sustainable quality of life rather than infinite growth?

How will you personally live a low carbon lifestyle, and persuade your constituents to do likewise?

General Election 2010

A General Election will be held sometime before 3 June 2010. Like everyone else, Christians will be engaging with a range of important issues facing our country. Some of the key issues for Justice and Peace activists are given in the centrespread of this issue.

One way in which Churches can contribute towards assessing local candidates is by hosting hustings meetings where candidates can be questioned by local voters. Very often, ecumenical hustings initiatives are organised locally.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, in collaboration with the Methodist Church, have prepared an excellent paper:

FAITH IN POLITICS

Preparing Churches for the General Election 2010.

It can be downloaded from:
www.churcheselection.org.uk

It looks at key issues, providing a concise overview, and then suggests questions to candidates. One of the headings is 'Faith in Public Life'. Concerns include the countering of religious-inspired terrorism and how far the churches are listened to when they speak up for the vulnerable in the public sphere, for example, condemning the detention of the children of asylum seekers and denouncing the British National Party when it claims to represent British Christians.

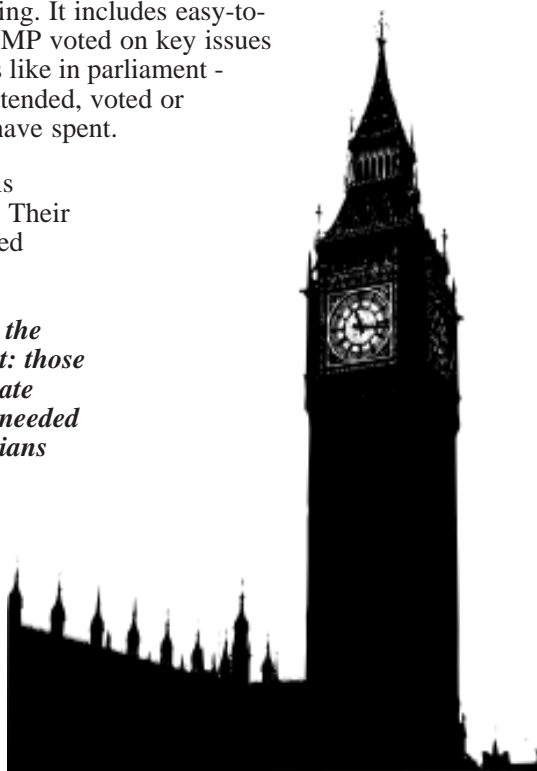
Further information and resources – including a regular newsletter and blog, and an analysis of the manifestos of the parties will be available throughout the election campaign at the Churches' election website, given above.

www.whytheyworkforyou.com is a really good site for finding out what your current MP has been doing. It includes easy-to-read summaries of how your MP voted on key issues and what their performance is like in parliament - how many times they have attended, voted or spoken and how much they have spent.

www.cafod.org.uk/election is CAFOD's election web page. Their Election Guides can be ordered through the site.

"I pay tribute not to those in the House, but to those outside it: those who saw the dangers of climate change and the actions that needed to be taken before the politicians did. I pay tribute to the campaigners who fought to bring it to public attention and above all the members of the public who wrote to us in record numbers."

Ed Miliband MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, referring to lobbying on the UK Climate Change Bill



ORGANISING HUSTINGS

Form a planning group to organise a local meeting

Contact other local churches and active civil society groups. Provide information on organising meetings and keep a list of people involved and contact details. You don't need to wait until the election is called.

Book a suitable venue

A school or church hall is ideal. Make sure lighting and the sound system are good. Have a visible top table – preferably a stage.

Invite constituency candidates in good time

Candidates often respond positively to the timing of such meetings on the second or third Sunday during the election campaign. Sound out a few dates before making a firm booking. Guarantee them a good attendance and say that absence will be noted eg. an empty chair.

Advertise properly

Consider local press and radio, fliers in libraries and community centres, local newsletters and church bulletins.

Make resources available

Plenty of Christian agencies have election material. Distribute it in the churches to ensure that the people who come are as well prepared as possible.

Choose a good Chair

Try to find a well-known figure from the community, someone not connected with a particular party. Politicians and the public can be aggressive, evasive or irrelevant – a strong Chair is required. Brief the person carefully. A timekeeper could be appointed to support the Chair.

Questions

Decide how questions should be put from the floor. You could place cards and pens at the entrance and encourage people to write out questions in advance.

Statements

At the end of the meeting give candidates around three minutes each to make their own concluding statements. Throughout, record responses and statements.

Moving on from Copenhagen

In December 2009, the eyes of the world were on the international Climate Conference in Copenhagen. But the result was far from the fair, ambitious and binding deal that justice and peace activists called for - and that we desperately need. Climate scientists suggest that we may have fewer than 100 months to reverse the growth in global carbon emissions, otherwise global warming will almost certainly exceed the danger threshold of 2 degrees celsius.

In Copenhagen, the UK led in pushing for higher emissions cuts within the European Union (EU), one of the world's biggest carbon emitters, but their commitments are still too low. Cutting these emissions would show a much-needed global lead and help rebuild trust with developing countries.

CAFOD is encouraging people to contact Prime Minister Gordon Brown and urge him to continue pushing the EU. Current EU commitments to 20 per cent cuts, rising to 30 per cent, if there's a good global deal, are not enough. Gordon Brown is being asked to champion emissions cuts of 30 per cent at the very least, rising to more than 40 per cent if there's a good global deal.

See www.cafod.org.uk/campaigns.

Climate change blogs from Copenhagen are also available using this link.

Friends of the Earth too has an e-mail petition. addressed to Ed Miliband, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change.

See: www.foe.co.uk/campaigns

Operation Noah has produced a 7-Year Plan for Action, downloadable from website www.operationnoah.org. Five headings include: *Education and young people, Pastoral care, Lifestyles, Advocacy and Partnerships*.



Fairtrade Fortnight - 22 February - 7 March

For this year's Fairtrade Fortnight, individuals and groups are being asked to participate in *The Big Swap*. This means swapping to using Fairtrade goods - your usual bananas for Fairtrade bananas, your usual cotton socks for Fairtrade cotton socks, and your usual cuppa for a Fairtrade cuppa. Every time you go shopping, you can use your wallet to make a stand.

www.fairtrade.org.uk

Peace organisations urge focus on human security

The Christian peace organisations Pax Christi and Fellowship of Reconciliation have urged Church leaders to join their call for resources to be devoted to human rather than military security.

The call, entitled: '*Addressing the real wounds of the human family: a call to action*' comes as the UK government launches its Strategic Defence Review and political parties are preparing for the General Election.

Pat Gaffney, General Secretary of Pax Christi, says: "For decades the discussion on peace and security has been dominated by those who support a 'might is right' model, arguing that national self-interest and the protection and security of others is best achieved by military means. The time has come to turn away from this false and short-sighted model in favour of a model of sustainable human security that puts people - and especially the poor - at its centre. Such a model is consistent with the social teachings of many churches which seek to build global solidarity between peoples - solidarity that heals the wounds of war, the violation of rights, poverty and the destruction of the environment."

Chris Cole, Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, adds: "We are calling on the Government, as it undertakes its Defence Review, to use this opportunity for a radical evaluation of security policies. It is not enough to tinker with budgets, to choose between 'boots or bombs'. Now is the time to redirect military spending, research and development into life-giving projects that address our real security needs today."

The 'call' plus a background briefing are available on the websites -

**www.paxchristi.org.uk
and www.for.org.uk.**

Irish bishops issue statement on climate change

In a pastoral statement, *Cry of the Earth*, released in November 2009, Ireland's Catholic bishops said, "we should react now to the risk of serious harm posed by the plausible link between certain types of human activity and the damaging effects of climate change". The bishops fear that 20 percent of Ireland's native plants face extinction and it will be difficult to grow potatoes, the country's main subsistence crop. Repeating Pope John Paul II's 1990 call for an "ecological conversion," the bishops outlined practical actions that individuals and parishes can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including conducting environmental audits, making greater use of renewable energy instead of fossil fuels and reducing waste.

(www.catholicbishops.ie)

Murdered Jesuits honoured 20 years after their deaths

Twenty years after they were gunned down at the Central American University in San Salvador, along with their housekeeper and her daughter, six Jesuit priests have been honoured by the Salvadoran government and the US Congress. On 16 November, on the twentieth anniversary of the killings, Salvadoran President Mauricio Funes awarded them the National Order of Jose Matias Delgado, the country's highest honour. Funes said the awards would be presented as a "public act of atonement" for mistakes by past governments. Two Salvadoran military officers were found guilty in 1991 of ordering the shootings. The US Congress, meanwhile, approved a resolution honoring them, saying the Jesuits had "dedicated their lives to advancing education in El Salvador, protecting and promoting human rights and the end of conflict, and identifying and addressing the economic and social problems that affected the majority of the Salvadoran population".

Ethical finance: does Britain care?

Forty-four percent of the British public are interested in finding out about the ethical credentials of the next financial product or service

they buy, according to new research by the EIRIS Foundation, an ethical investment organisation. Many people now feel that banks and financial institutions should prioritise ethical concerns such as protecting human rights, tackling climate change, and investing in fair trade in their lending and investing activities. However, lack of knowledge and of trust are key barriers to people purchasing ethical financial products and services.

Guidance on Israeli settlement goods

The UK Government has advised British retailers they can now label food products to differentiate Palestinian from Israeli settlement produce. Goods of both origins have in the past been labelled 'West Bank'. The Ecumenical Council on Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) is currently engaging with 11 British and Irish supermarket chains to highlight concerns about Israeli settlement goods, checking whether or not they source settlement goods and, if they do, how they label them. A number of ECCR members and the World Council of Churches are concerned that some British and Irish retailers are undermining efforts for peace in the region by selling goods such as fruit, vegetables, cosmetics and DIY products produced in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Settlements are Israeli civilian areas situated in territories occupied by Israel in 1967. They are illegal under international law, specifically article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which forbids an occupying power from transferring its civilian population onto occupied land. Various UN and human rights organisations' reports have shown that the presence of these settlements severely impairs the social and economic life of Palestinian communities. The WCC believes that international trade in settlement goods helps to bolster settlement economies and helps such settlements become financially viable and more permanent entities. This hinders attempts to bring a just peace to the region based on international law. Retailers that stock settlement goods unwittingly contribute to this situation.

Catholics urged to make plight of Holy Land Christians an election issue

Catholics in England and Wales have been urged to make the plight of Christians in the Holy Land an issue at the forthcoming General Election. The prompt came Bishop William Kenney, auxiliary in Birmingham and moderating bishop of *Holy Land Co-ordination* 2010, which visited Israel in January. The *Holy Land Co-ordination* represents the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Europe and North America and was formed in Jerusalem during 2001 at the request of the Holy See. The group was in the Holy Land as guests of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Archbishop Fouad Twal. Asked if he had seen any improvements since the visit of the Coordination Group in January 2009, Bishop Kenney replied: "Quite simply, no!"

(www.indcatholicnews.com)

Vincetians celebrate outreach to the poor

For the St. Vincent de Paul Society, which has 10,000 volunteers in England and Wales, 2010 is a special year of Jubilee events, celebrating the deaths of its patrons, St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac. In the UK, the SVP carries out over 625,000 recorded visits annually to people in financial hardship, the sick, people who are addicted or who are in prison and people suffering disabilities.

CAFOD Campaign helps oust mining company

Anglo-Australian mining giant BHP Billiton has pulled out of a nickel mining project in the Philippines following a campaign by CAFOD. BHP Billiton has sold its 40 percent stake in the project on Mindanao. Launching its campaign in 2008, CAFOD said that local people had not been consulted about the project which would cause soil erosion, landslides, flash floods and pollution that could affect the livelihoods of 65,000 people. The site is also close to areas of outstanding natural beauty. CAFOD demonstrated that government officials had offered bribes to gain support for the mine and to silence criticism. More than 6,000 cards, emails and protest letters were sent to BHP Billiton.

Action Ideas

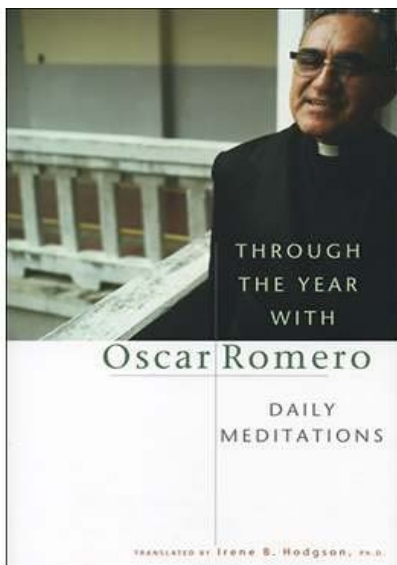
ARCHBISHOP ROMERO 30th ANNIVERSARY 24 March 2010

24 March 2010 marks the thirtieth anniversary of Archbishop Oscar Romero's martyrdom. Many will congregate in El Salvador for an extra special celebration with the new Head of State, Mauricio Funes, who has dedicated his presidency to Archbishop Romero. Meanwhile, here in Britain, there will be special services in more than a dozen dioceses in England, Wales and Scotland. Full details are on the website of the Archbishop Romero Trust.

The Trust has a supply of Romero prayer cards in English - available free of charge - received from the Canonisation Office of the Archdiocese of San Salvador. Also, a special offer on the book, *Through the Year with Oscar Romero: Daily Meditations* - £9.00 inclusive of p&p.

All may be ordered from:
**Archbishop Romero Trust,
8 Dean's Mews,
London W1G 9EE
or by email:
romerotrust@btinternet.com
www.romerotrust.org.uk.**

The Trust has around 400 'Friends of Romero' in its solidarity network. 'Friends' pay an annual subscription of £10 and new ones are always welcome.



LENT 2010 COURSES

Stations of the Forests

The new Columban DVD, *Stations of the Forests*, comes with a booklet to encourage group reflection, particularly during Lent. There is an agenda for a meeting, using the DVD in a one-off session. Also provided are short reflections for each Station, so that the programme can be used throughout Lent. This is an excellent resource for reflecting upon the loss of rainforests, a key element of God's creation, and linking into the impact on the poor and on the welfare of the entire Earth community. This revised audio-visual is based on the one the Columbans produced in the 1980s. It incorporates more

global issues, including the impact of extractive industries and climate change. The *Resource Booklet* also contains material for liturgies.

£7.00 inclusive of p&p from Columban JPIC Office, Hendon - 020 8202 2555 or e-mail JPICSSC@btconnect.com.

Love for the future

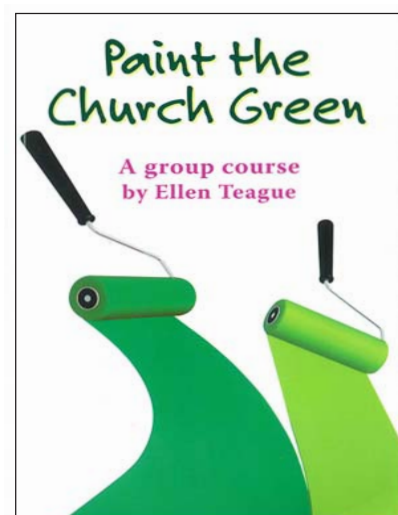
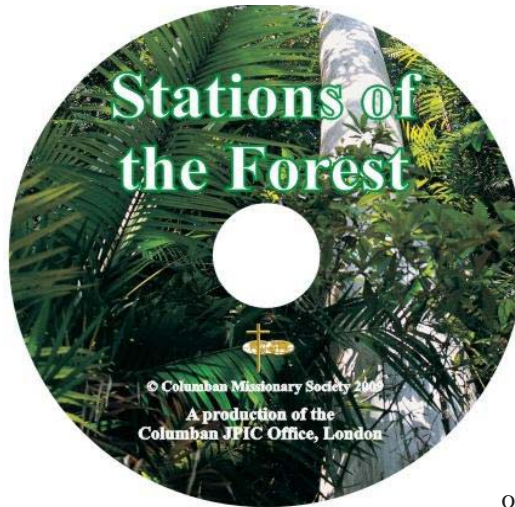
The Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells has developed a six-part environmental course for parishes to study during Lent. The course consists of six short films on DVD for housegroups, services or individual study, plus group discussion materials, bible study notes and pointers to other resources. What can we find within ourselves to develop family and community life, respond to the environmental crises and achieve a sustainable world? We need respect, compassion, justice, simplicity, repentance and hope. *Love For The Future* explores these six themes and the ways we can allow God to develop these in us, drawing on insights from the church community.

Email: loveforthefuture@bathwells.anglican.org or phone: 01749 670777. A £5 contribution is requested - cheques to 'Bath and Wells DBF'

Paint the Church Green

Paint the Church Green, written by Ellen Teague, enables church groups to explore the relationship between faith and concern for the natural world. By highlighting environmental issues, unsustainable development and the link with global poverty, it prompts reflection on western lifestyle and makes suggestions for change. *Paint the Church Green* features six session agendas: *People and Planet, Food and Drink, Battling the Elements, Energy for the Future, Abundant Life, Covenant with Creation*.

Price: £5.99 + £2.00 p&p from Kevin Mayhew Publishers, 01449 737 978, sales@kevinmayhewltd.com



Resources

Our Earth, Our Home Green Assemblies for Key Stage 1-2 Ellen Teague

These assemblies, for primary age children, aim to help them understand their relationship with the environment as part of the web of life, and to develop respect for other species and natural resources. They also create awareness about the need for a healthy and fruitful environment for livelihoods and health in every part of the world. They are designed to be presented by the children and are easily adjustable to suit both the very young and slightly older, incorporating: arts, crafts, dance and mime, which the children can prepare beforehand. There are suggestions for images to display during each assembly, *youtube* clip ideas and activities for follow up. £15.99 from Kevin Mayhew Publishers 01449 737978 or www.kevinmayhew.com



**Climate Change:
The Agenda for Mission Today
Columban Missionary Society**
Contains papers and reports presented in 2007 at a Columban international conference in the Philippines on climate change. Peter Hughes and Ellen Teague attended from Britain.
£6.00 inclusive of p&p from Columban JPIC Office, Hendon.

Up in Smoke? Other worlds are possible

Working Group on Climate Change and Development

With contributions from Dr Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and Nobel Peace Laureate Professor Wangari Maathai, *Other Worlds are Possible* calls for new economic approaches to international development which are more in tune with the needs of people and the planet. Columban JPIC is a member of the working group and several Columban case studies feature. These include the Fair Trade work of Fr Shay Cullen's Preda Foundation and the Columban organic farm on Negros in the Philippines, plus the Happy Earthworm Ecological Centre in Lima, Peru.

£10.00 from the New Economics Foundation on 020 7829 6300
Or download from their website www.neweconomics.org

Gender justice, ministry and healing: A Christian response to the HIV pandemic

Nyambura Njoroge

In this *Comment*, theologian and ecumenist Nyambura Njoroge describes the experience of African Christian women in promoting gender justice, in the context of HIV, through a 'ministry of Bible reading'. It highlights the potential of Christian communities to tackle the gender discrimination and disempowerment of women that has been a key driver of the HIV pandemic.

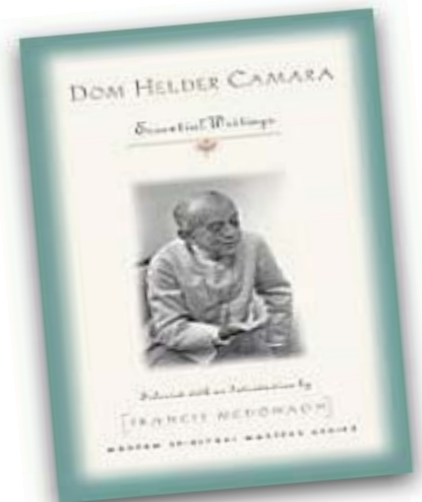
Price: £2.00 from *Progressio* on 020 7354 0883. www.progressio.org.uk

Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings

Edited by Francis McDonagh

"When I feed the poor they call me a saint. When I ask why so many people are poor they call me a communist" is one of the most widely quoted statements of Dom Helder Camara (1909 - 1999), the inspirational archbishop of Recife,

Brazil, who was one of the pioneering figures of the liberation theology movement. This latest volume of his writings has been edited by CAFOD's Francis McDonagh who has spent 20 years following developments and religious issues in Latin America.
£10.99 from Amazon at www.amazon.co.uk



JUSTICE Magazine is an excellent new magazine produced by The Universe Catholic Newspaper. Many Justice and Peace activists are regular contributors.

£27 for six issues annually + free book. See www.justicemagazine.co.uk



VOCATION FOR JUSTICE

**FAITH AND JUSTICE TEAM: Peter Hughes, Frank Nally, Ellen Teague
St. Joseph's, Watford Way, Hendon, London NW4 4TY.**

Tel: 020 8202 2555. Fax: 020 8202 5775. E-mail: JPICSSC@btconnect.com. www.columbans.co.uk

Vocation for Justice is a publication of the Missionary Society of St. Columban (Maynooth Mission to China) Reg.Charity No.221594. It is produced three times a year. Names will be added to the mailing list on request.

Price £3.00 per issue. Subscriptions are requested every two years.

