



Make Poverty History

The year 2005 is one which we here in the UK are aiming to Make Poverty History: many of us are wearing white wrist-bands as a sign of our determination to do so. Why 2005? Because this is the year in which the UK has the Presidency of both the European Union and the G8 Summit and it is also the year in which the UN 2015 Millennium Goals are due to be reviewed.

The Make Poverty History Campaign is being mounted under three heads:

- Trade Justice, including promotion of the Fairtrade campaign
- Forgiveness of Debt
- Increase Aid to the UN target of 0.7% of GNP.

Just in the same way as slavery was recognised to be unacceptable. Just in the same way as apartheid was recognised to be unacceptable. Just in the same way as ethnic cleansing is recognised to be unacceptable. So, too, poverty must now be recognised as unacceptable.

Alleviation of poverty is not good enough; reduction of poverty is not good enough; eradication of poverty is now what is called for. Why? Basically because poverty is sinful. It is classifiable as Social sin, the sin of which we are all guilty to the extent to which we comply

with the existing unjust economic structures of our global village.

Isn't eradication of poverty perhaps too much to aim for? Total eradication perhaps, but if the Tsunami Disaster can result in a response from the public, of this country alone, to the Disasters Emergency Committee of some £300 million, then anything is possible.

What our Chancellor, Gordon Brown, had to say at the CAFOD Paul VI Memorial Lecture, likewise encourages us to a recognition that the 2015 objectives are attainable: if the political will is there, the objectives can be achieved. Gordon Brown himself told us to keep up the pressure on our politicians. I'm sure that the likes of Bob Geldof and the other members of the Africa Commission and the likes of ex-President Nelson Mandela will do just that, but all of us must also do the same.

We have a particular opportunity to do this with the forthcoming General Election, when we can let all our Parliamentary Candidates know that the Make Poverty History Campaign is at the top of our list of concerns. Similarly in Edinburgh in July before the G8 Summit, when we can make our concerns known to an international audience.

Fr. Pat Davies

East London Churches Ecumenical Justice and Peace Network

"Make Poverty History!"

An event for East London Churches in support of the 'Make Poverty History' Coalition Global Week of Action

➤ **DROP THE DEBT** ➤ **MORE AND BETTER AID** ➤ **TRADE JUSTICE**

Tuesday 12th April 2005

8pm—9.30pm

(Refreshments and registration from 7.30pm)

**The Church of Our Lady and St. Joseph,
100a Balls Pond Rd, N1 4AG**

(between Highbury Corner and Dalston Junction: close to 30, 38, 56, 76, 141, 277 bus routes)

Keynote Speaker

Justin Macmullan

Christian Aid—Campaign Policy Officer

All Welcome!

Bring along friends from church and community—join the action ...

With just 35 employees in its London head-office, the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) packs a heavier punch than its weight might suggest.

As an international development agency working in 18 countries around the world through policy advocacy and skill-sharing, CIIR's work is best summed up by its tag line: *changing minds - changing lives*.

Many people in the UK know of CIIR through its policy work. But CIIR's unique combination of advocacy and skill-share ensures that its reach extends far and wide, touching poor and marginalised people around the world – from tribesmen in southern Africa to farmers in Latin America and women in East Timor.

Unlike most charities, who focus on just one or two topics, CIIR's work covers three themes: sustainable environment, HIV/AIDS, and participation in civil society.

CIIR works by placing skilled development workers with partners overseas – local non-governmental organisations and community groups. We *share skills* by recruiting development workers to undertake specific tasks. We have development workers with partners in 11 countries, all of which provide an additional resource to organisations. By working closely with local partners for usually two years, development workers help increase the skills and capacity of an organisation in a lasting way.

In some countries overseas CIIR operates under the name International Cooperation for Development (ICD). But our vision and values remain the same: a just world where people can exert control over their lives and live life in all its fullness, where human rights are respected and all have their basic needs met. This vision is underpinned by key values rooted in our Catholic heritage – integrity and respect, solidarity and justice,

courage and commitment.

One message we convey is that poverty is not caused by a lack of skills or effort. It is the result of unjust structures, policies, conflicts and attitudes that exclude the poor. To tackle poverty, change is needed at many levels and CIIR endeavours to give weight to this push for change.

Leading this drive is executive director Christine Allen. She says: 'We come from the Catholic tradition, inspired by gospel values of justice, integrity and a concern for the powerless and marginalised.

'However, we look out to the world, not just the Church. We work with, and are staffed by, people of all faiths and none. We work with tolerance and respect for local cultures, religions and are committed to building effective partnerships. After all, respect for human dignity and justice is a hallmark of Catholic social teaching.'

So, where does CIIR work?

CIIR's biggest programme is in Latin America and the Caribbean. We work in Peru and Ecuador in Latin America, in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador in Central America, and in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the Caribbean. A major focus of this region's work is to strengthen and support women's organisations and indigenous groups to help secure greater rights and lift them out of poverty.

Throughout the year we run events and publish a quarterly magazine called *Interact*, an electronic newsletter and various books, briefings and comment papers. For instance, the briefing *Challenging Women's Poverty* looks at the effect of poverty reduction strategy papers on women in Honduras and Nicaragua. It can be downloaded from our website.

In Africa and the Middle East we



CIIR development worker, Deborah Ossiya, at a school for deaf children in Somaliland.
Photo: Nick Sireau/CIIR

work in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Somaliland, (the north-west territory of Somalia) and Yemen. One focus of this region is to support local organisations working on HIV and AIDS.

In south east Asia, our partner SEACA undertakes advocacy training in eight countries. After many years of international advocacy work on East Timor, we recently set up a new programme there.

Deidre Nagle is a development worker in Dili, East Timor. She says: 'Our work is diverse but our aim is a common one: to help empower the disenfranchised. Wherever there is injustice you will find people with the determination to overcome it.'

CIIR is a membership organisation dependent on the generosity of its supporters. So why not become a member?

To learn more about what we do and become a member, visit our website at www.ciir.org (in the 'support CIIR' section) or call us on +44 (0)20 7354 0883. You can also write to us at CIIR, Communications Unit, Unit 3, Canonbury Yard, 190a New North Road, London N1 7BJ, or email membership@ciir.org

Finola Robinson,
CIIR's press and information officer

Around the Networks

Herts J&P Network

For us in Hertfordshire the first few months of 2005 have been exciting and most encouraging. There has been a burst of energy and enthusiasm, and the groups and parish J&P reps who, until recently, often worked in isolation, have found a new sense of cohesion and new ways of co-operating, not only with each other but also with other groups and organisations working in the field of justice and peace. This is largely due to the Herts.J&P mailing list, which has now about 50 subscribers, and website (www.hertsjandp.org.uk).

In recent weeks there has been an enormous increase in their use, facilitated by the untiring efforts of David Furber. Thank you, David! Information about events and activities in our area can now be easily publicised and shared, and recently there have been a number of memorable events.

To name but a few: the monthly peace vigils in St Albans Abbey, especially the extended New Year vigil, a talk about the Israel/Palestine conflict in Rickmansworth, the Church Launch of the MakePoverty-History Campaign in London, which was attended by a number of us from Hertfordshire, an evening on 'Refugee and Asylum Issues on Our Doorstep' in Wheathampstead, Fairtrade events in several places.

The first, truly ecumenical, event of the new Hertfordshire Network on 19th February at All Saints Pastoral Centre in London Colney showed the strength of the network, and the commitment of so many to justice and peace issues. Our theme for the day was 'Make Poverty History and Trade Justice'. More than 70 people of all ages and from all areas of Hertfordshire, from a number of Churches and organisations attended the afternoon. We were

delighted that Bishop James could introduce the meeting, and that Father Pat managed to join us, although still in pain after his operation. Our two inspiring speakers, Fr Eamonn Mulcahy and Dermott McNulty, strengthened us in the resolve to make poverty history. The group discussions showed quite clearly that this issue is the main focus for most of us this year. Everyone agreed that the afternoon had been a joyful and empowering occasion, and that we should have a similar event at least once a year.

Thank you to Vincent Turner and David Furber, whose initiative, meticulous planning and organisation made our event in London Colney possible. – Now it is up to all of us to help bring about an end to poverty. There is much to do this year, but we know we are strong working together.

Adelheid Smith

West London J&P Network

On 3rd February, in Trafalgar Square, Nelson Mandela pointed up the moral imperative of the **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** Campaign, stating: "In this new century, millions of people in the world's poorest countries remain imprisoned, enslaved, and in chains, trapped in the prison of poverty... Over-coming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life."

On 21st February, the Ballroom at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, did not swing to the strains of a danceband! Instead, speakers from Africa, Latin America and the UK, invited by CAFOD and the West London J&P Network, reminded us that Mandela's words are rooted in Christian principles of faith.

Fr Peter Henriot SJ, Director of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Zambia, drew attention to two shocking statistics: firstly, that, in the 90's, Zambia spent 20% of its GDP on servicing its debt, but only 2% on the health and education of its population, and secondly, that in 2005, the average aid contribution of each

British citizen to Africa is £34, whereas the average debt of each Zambian citizen is \$700.

Padre José Oscar Beozzo, a Professor of History and parish priest in his native São Paulo, outlined four challenges of poverty within Brazilian society that need to be dealt with:

- delays to land reform that keep 7.5 million landless families off unused land,
- the disappearance of jobs caused by globalisation and the increasing young workers on the job market,
- the underfunding of the health system reliant on volunteers, and
- the attacks on the human rights of Blacks, Indians, the poor, women, children – in short, paradoxically, the rights of the majority!

Padre José concluded that solutions to these challenges of poverty in Brazil are greatly assisted by pressure on governments abroad to establish fairer international policies, that release funds in the developing world for health and education, eliminate institutionalised unfair trading advantages, and permit access to new technology for Humanitarian purposes.

Finally, Dr David Golding, long time advocate of the Jubilee Debt Campaign from Newcastle University, had an uncompromising imperative for his audience: globally, every day, 30,000 people die from poverty related causes. But debt relief has been proved to work. Campaigning by groups and individuals in the UK has also been proved to work. Dr Golding called for commitment to this year's "unprecedented opportunity" to change the "moral consensus of civilised nations and peoples" on issues of poverty, in the same way as similar efforts by reformers of the day changed the moral consensus on slavery and apartheid.

This was an evening to remember: a clarification of the tasks to be done, and of what is feasible for us to undertake, a call for committed solidarity and a reminder that the "preferential option for the poor" in Catholic social teaching is not an 'option', as the word is commonly understood, but rather a clear obligation to do our bit to understand poverty, to put it high on the agenda of our politicians – and parliamentary candidates! - and to keep it there.

Hugh Caldin

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In the Diocese of Westminster**

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CAFOD News

CAFOD
just one world

I want to talk about two things – and in a way both are adverts.

The first thing which I want to advertise is the new "Compendium of Social teaching of the Church" which costs £19.99 and is available from St Paul's and the CTS. It is an excellent piece of very thoughtful writing – a bit "Vaticanese" in style in places but is very accessible. It is very thoughtful and thought provoking. This publication differs from previous others on social teaching in that it is not just a collection of extracts from the various encyclicals but actually puts together all of the social teaching of the Church into a coherent whole. It is full of references to the encyclicals of course and represents a huge task of scholarship – and the thematic index at the back is extremely full and useful. I could not recommend it to you more highly as essential

reading – and an ideal Easter present!

The second thing I want to advertise is the events around MAKE POVERTYHISTORY. Two things really stand out. The first is the vigil on the night of Friday 15th April centred around Whitehall and running from 10.00 p.m. until 8.00 a.m. Whilst not for the faint hearted (!) it will be a peaceful, enjoyable, fun, thoughtful event. I often meet Confirmation catechists whose candidates seem to like sleepovers – here is an ideal opportunity to be involved in something really useful and with lots of other young people. The second event is the Edinburgh Rally on July 2nd. Many have been asking about transport and things have begun to move (excuse the pun!). It is now possible to get transport and accommodation with Scots coaches via the CAFOD website at www.cafod.org.uk/makepovertyhistory.

Cost is £69. Five coaches have been booked for London so far. CAFOD is also looking, as part of the coalition, at chartering a train from London – more info to follow.

It really is important to keep an eye on the website these days. Sometimes I meet supporters who say that they do not have access to the web because it is too expensive. However, it is possible to go onto the web from nearly all local libraries free for up to an hour. Different libraries have different rules but this is a really good service from our libraries absolutely free. I think it is time for all J&P'ers to get hooked up and to start surfing!

Best wishes.

Dermott McNulty

North London J&P Network

We are now three months into the year 2005 and there has been much activity in relation to the Make Poverty History campaign. We must all play our part in this campaign to end poverty. We have a responsibility to our brothers and sisters in the developing world. We have a responsibility as Christians to act out our professed beliefs and prove that we are truly a people of the Eucharist by realising the principles of the Beatitudes for all people. Make Poverty History is a global effort. Never before has there

been such a unified campaign to rectify the causes of poverty in the developing world. There is now an ever growing call from people of all faiths and none to end structural injustices.

Around the parishes in the Diocese many people are involved in the work of Justice and Peace. The white wristband which is the symbol of the campaign is in great demand. John Mooney, the CAFOD Co-ordinator for the Haringey Deanery, is organising an ecumenical service for the Global Week of Action on Trade making Poverty History on Sunday, 10th April at 3pm at St. John Vianney Church, West

Green Road, N15 3QH. The service will be based on the Worship Guide by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance. The Confirmation Group at Our Lady of Muswell gave out over 600 Trade Justice cards to parishioners to be posted to Peter Mandleson, to campaign against an EU tariff on Fairtrade bananas, and to vote for fairness in trade. A member of the Confirmation Group also gave a talk at Masses and made £300 by selling the white armbands. Fairtrade sales last year in Britain amounted to £130 million and Fairtrade is growing globally. God's Kingdom is also advancing globally.

Patricia Mulchrone