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The technologically advanced societies can and must lower their domestic energy consumption, either through an evolution in manufacturing methods or through greater ecological sensitivity among their citizens.

Benedict XVI

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four days **in seville**

Chair of J&P Scotland Ellen Charlton describes her recent trip to the European Conference

The annual conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions was held this year in Seville (18th–22nd September) where twenty-five countries were represented. When the invitation arrived earlier in the year we thought we had the perfect candidate to represent the Scottish Commission – fluent in Spanish, experienced, knowledgeable. Unfortunately she had to pull out on health grounds and I was the obvious alternative, non-Spanish speaking and prone to the charge of ‘a little knowledge being a dangerous thing!’

Friday Visions of juicy oranges under sunny blue skies soon gave way to a reality check. Yes, Seville was beautiful even though it was the wrong season for oranges but there was little time for sightseeing. I finally arrived at Betania, the conference venue in San Juan, Seville after an interesting journey from Glasgow starting at 4.00am on Friday. My journey by car, ‘plane, trains, bus, and metro left me with three minutes to spare before the beginning of the international workshop on ‘What are the frontiers (barriers) to solidarity in Europe?’

The meeting was opened at 6.00pm by Mgr. Gerard Defois, President of J&P Europe, Isabel Cuenca, President of the Spanish Commission and Cardinal Carles Amigo Vellojo of Seville. There followed a ‘round table’ on the theme, ‘What kind of a society are we about to construct in Europe? Political and economic implications’

Emilio José Gómez Cirano, Professor of the Labour Law Department of Castilla-La Mancha University and member of Justice and Peace Spain spoke passionately of the need to challenge the threat of fear, especially the fear of strangers and promote truth over lies in public life. He stressed the responsibility of all of us to promote justice and confront indifference and apathy, to meet our neighbours, to talk, debate and communicate as opposed to living in isolation pursuing the God of consumerism. Growth is not always a good thing even in economic terms.

Here I was reminded of my lifelong theory that ‘enough’ is often actually preferable to ‘more’ (But when is ‘enough’ enough I hear you say. Answers on a postcard please.) There was much to talk about and debate over dinner that night at 10.00pm... and so to bed.

Saturday Having reset my watch on the ‘plane I forgot to do likewise with my ‘phone, hence a frantic rush to breakfast next day when my alarm rang at 7.55am instead of 6.55am. We met at 8.30 to break into our various groups and set off to visit one of the four ‘projects’, which were to give us a personal insight into areas of deprivation and exclusion. One of these visits was to Ceuta, an autonomous Spanish area on the mainland of Morocco. This is where so many young people, full of hope after trekking hundreds of miles through the African continent, set off in boats in an attempt to reach Europe. Many of them never reach it alive and most of those who do are soon returned. (More of this in a future article).

When we returned that afternoon to the conference venue the members of each group set about compiling a report on their experiences before setting off on the two and a half hour drive to Algeciras on the Strait of Gibraltar where a very moving ceremony was held on the beach in memory of those who had lost their lives trying to reach

this border passage to Europe. Dinner on our return at 11.00pm. was subdued. Everyone was tired but also reflective as we shared our thoughts and feelings at the end of a long and emotionally draining day.

Sunday After breakfast the four groups reported back on their experiences of the previous day and engaged in another ‘round table’ event on challenges to solidarity before leaving for Mass in the Cathedral of Seville at 1.00pm. When I was asked to do one of the readings at mass I agreed without giving it too much thought... until we arrived at what is surely the grandest church building in the world outside of the Vatican. The pomp and ceremony of the sung Latin Mass surrounded by more gold leaf than I’ve ever seen seemed terribly at odds with the experiences of the previous day and although it was an honour to be asked, I felt the long walk to the lectern quite intimidating.

After mass I was delighted to be asked by the Spanish contingent from Barcelona to share lunch with them before I was kindly offered a lift back to Betania by a local priest who was possibly the worst driver I have ever known. I am truly grateful to be alive.

At 5.00pm that evening the General Assembly began and continued with work sessions until 9.00 that night when we shared dinner. I had by that time ‘adopted’ three young reps from Lithuania, Ukraine and England. They were to be my ‘daughters’ for the rest of our stay and I can only say that Jovita, Anna and Asta took great care of ‘Mum’ who did her best not to embarrass them too much.

Monday began with mass at 7.30 and continued with work sessions throughout the day. This was when I had the opportunity to bring up our concerns and our involvement in issues such as poverty, human rights, detention of migrants, trafficking and climate change. It was a very busy, hectic and demanding day and I was looking forward to the official sightseeing trip to Seville beginning at 5.00 that evening. A five hour walking tour of the city and its sights ended with a display of Flamenco music and dance before dinner in a city restaurant at 11.00pm. On our return to Betania at 1.00am we found ourselves locked out and were finally admitted by a security guard who seemed slightly bemused by Mgr Defois’ rendition of ‘We shall overcome’.

Tuesday began with a continuation of business and the drafting of the Declaration of the European Commissions. The recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* was referred to often during this session and I was asked to help with the redrafting of the Declaration before its acceptance by all Commission members. We worked until 12.30pm when we had a final mass followed by lunch and departure at 2.00pm.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to have had the opportunity of participating in this event. The sense of solidarity and kinship among our European neighbours was genuinely felt. Good contacts were made and friendships formed which I hope will continue to our mutual benefit for many years to come.

Ellen and her adopted daughters, Asta, Jovita and Anna.



seville – final declaration

We, of the Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions of the Catholic Church, representing 25 European countries, came to Seville from 18th to 22nd September 2009, to hold our General Assembly and an International Workshop on the theme: “Where are the frontiers for solidarity in Europe?”

The theme of solidarity takes on particular significance in the context of our increasingly globalised world. Unsurprisingly, globalisation and the issues arising from this phenomenon featured prominently in Pope Benedict XVI's latest Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, in which he pointed out that: “As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers” (n 19).

In Seville we have had the opportunity to examine the challenges to solidarity – political, social, cultural and economic – on both a national and international level. The experience we have shared here have given us a renewed sense of our responsibilities – as individuals, as Europeans, and as a Church – to take action to address the challenges and take down the barriers blocking solidarity.

Pope John Paul II told us that ‘human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question’ (*Laborem Exercens*, n3). *Caritas in Veritate* also states that this work should be decent (n 63). A meeting with the staff of *Forja 21*, an NGO that provides support for young people seeking employment, highlighted the importance of addressing the problem of youth unemployment – a serious concern in many European countries at the present time. We need to invest in the young people, who are our future, facilitating their access to employment, which will enable them to participate in our society and reach their full potential. The significance of unemployment as a barrier to participation needs to be recognised.

A visit to the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on the Moroccan coast allowed us to learn more about the human dimension of the challenges arising from migration – a phenomenon closely linked to globalisation and also intimately connected to the problem of unemployment. The 600 migrants currently stranded in Ceuta as they await a legal resolution of their residency status, a process that can take up to three years – if they have not been deported before this – are, for the most part, young people willing and eager to work, and yet they are prevented from doing so. Forced to flee their homes as a result of violence and/or unemployment and/or extreme poverty, they have undertaken a long and perilous journey to get to Europe in search of work and a better life. Instead, they find themselves confined at the margins of European society, with their freedoms severely limited, unable to participate, contribute, or make choices about their future. In fact, some of these young people told us simply: ‘We have no future’. Solidarity demands that we do all we can to give these people something to aim for.

The huge double-fences, topped with barbed wire, that divide the city of Ceuta from the rest of the African continent, are a powerful visual representation of a fear that seeks to keep those in need as far from our doors as possible. We all felt a shared sense of responsibility for

this wall – part-financed by the European Union. We have taken down the Berlin wall twenty year ago and we have erected other walls elsewhere.

On the shore of Algeciras the representatives of the Justice and Peace commissions, together with the representatives of the local church and wider community, shared a moment of prayer for all the people who had lost their lives in their quest to come to Europe.

Social exclusion, fear and insecurity were evident also in our visit to the *Poligono Sur* neighbourhood, which served to highlight the links between poverty and violence. Faced with the problem of violence in our society, it is tempting to retreat behind thicker walls, higher fences and closed neighbourhoods. As a long-term solution, however, this will not work. What is needed is an active response, founded on solidarity that addresses the root causes of this violence – unemployment, poverty, social exclusion. The visit ended on a note of hope as we saw signs that such measures are already beginning to take shape in the form of the ‘participative social action plan’ currently being implemented in the neighbourhood with the active participation by the residents.

A visit to *Sevilla Acoge*, the first organisation established in Spain to provide support to migrants and promote their integration into the local community, showed a powerful example of people who saw a need and are doing all they can to meet it. This is achieved through networking and committed social work input. The work of this organisation serves to remind us that true solidarity demands respect for cultural diversity in a spirit of hospitality.

The problems we examined in the International Workshop are manifold and complex, requiring solutions in both the short-term for those in our society who are experiencing poverty, unemployment and exclusion at the moment, and long-term aimed at addressing the structural causes. This includes recognition that we cannot distance ourselves from the political, social and economic problems of the African countries. Through this experience we were also able to broaden our understanding of effective and real solidarity, including its ethical and spiritual dimensions and the need for personal commitment on the part of all those involved. Hence, solidarity will enable us to reshape barriers into meeting places where we can meet as brothers and sisters.

We wish to conclude by thanking the Spanish Commission for Justice and Peace, H.E. Cardinal Amigo of Seville, Bishop Antonio Ceballo of Cadiz y Ceuta, and all those who welcomed us during this international workshop, which has reaffirmed us in our Christian responsibility to care for the most vulnerable, on local, national and international level, because for the Church no one is a stranger.

Seville, 22 September 2009

speaking with a forked trident

In recent years the moral argument about Trident has taken second place to considerations of cost and affordability. I am reminded of Alfred Doolittle's attempt to sell his daughter Eliza for a small sum to Professor Higgins. 'Have you no morals, man?' cries the indignant Higgins. 'Can't afford them, governor,' replies Doolittle, 'neither could you if you was as poor as me.'

It has sharpened recently through party conferences and the stultifying 'pre-election campaign'. Politicians in sackcloth are even willing to contemplate cuts in nuclear weapons, under the guise of diverting funding to ill equipped armies fighting wars approved by those same politicians.

An recent report from Greenpeace (available on the J&P website), entitled *In the Firing Line*, goes into considerable detail to show that, even using the government's own figures, the cost of renewal will be much more than the £15-£20 billion put about by the MOD in 2006. The figure is likely to be around £95 billion, says the report (exceeding even CND's estimate by £20 billion).

Indeed the fact that this is not a CND report is significant. The foreword is by Former Tory Shadow Defence Secretary Michael Ancram (a Catholic), and the report is festooned

with celebrity politicians, diplomats and others querying the value of nuclear weapons. This and the attitude of the US government (which effectively controls the UK's independent deterrent) in the run up to next May's five yearly review of the Non Proliferation Treaty may prove significant in the longer term.

So should we worry if the reasons for nuclear reduction are economic or strategic rather than moral? If virtue came cheaper, would that make us virtuous? But when we hear the old chestnuts about possession of the nuclear deterrent giving a 'seat at the top table' we hear the desperation of the powerful. The real weapons of mass destruction are deceit and hypocrisy, pretending that apocalyptic violence can bring security or peace. And when the curtains and trappings of power are drawn aside, it's a bit like the Wizard of Oz: inadequacy and insecurity over-compensating with force. So while it may seem to be the secondary issues of cost or purpose that are brought forward, it's important to hold on to our moral integrity. Because that is the only way, our faith and social teaching tell us, that we can ever reach true peace, the peace which the world can't understand.

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december 1 - world AIDS day



World AIDS Day started on 1 December 1988. It is about raising money, increasing awareness, fighting prejudice and improving education. The World AIDS Day theme for 2009 is **Universal Access and Human Rights**. World AIDS Day is important in reminding people that HIV has not gone away, and that there are many things still needing to be done.

According to UNAIDS estimates, there are now 33.2 million people living with HIV, including 2.5 million children. Since 1981, more than 25 million people have died from AIDS. During 2007 some 2.5 million people became newly infected with the virus. Around half of all people who become infected with HIV do so before they are 25 and are killed by AIDS before they are 35. Antiretroviral drugs can help but they are costly and often not available in the areas of greatest infection.

Around 95% of people with HIV and AIDS live in developing nations, where the effects on families have wiped out entire generations. In the UK over 80,000 people are infected with HIV, with about a quarter unaware that they are carrying the virus.

While much has been achieved, a great deal remains to be done and HIV today is a threat to men, women and children on all continents around the world. On 1 December we can bear in mind with more than usual concern the sheer loss of life, the debilitating sickness and the devastation of families – often in situations of existing poverty and poor healthcare. As Christians, it may be a good time to examine if our compassion is affected by prejudice. Most of all we can pray for strength for those with the illness, progress in the search for remedies and a willingness to respond wherever we can be of help.

a prayer for prisoner's week scotland 15-23 November

Lord, you offer freedom to all people. We pray for all who are captive in prison and for those who are affected by or involved in their imprisonment. Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist. Support with your love, prisoners, their families, friends, prison staff and all who care.

We pray for young people in prison. Lord we ask you to help all young people to develop into mature and responsible young adults. We ask you to comfort parents who are worried about their children passing through this difficult time of their lives.

We pray for the victims of crime and their families. God of justice and compassion we pray for those who have been wounded by the activities of others, especially the victims of crime that they may be healed in body, mind and spirit, given freedom from bitterness and the grace to forgive.

We pray for all men and women in prison. Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ, in his strength and his spirit, now and every day.

Amen.

wave to copenhagen

Join 'The Wave' - Scotland's biggest ever demonstration in support of action on climate change.

On Saturday 5 December 2009, ahead of the crucial UN climate summit in Copenhagen, thousands of people from across Scotland, from all walks of life, will flow through the streets of Glasgow to demonstrate their support for urgent action on climate change. Please be one of them! The march is being organised by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (of which Justice and Peace are members) and will run in conjunction with a similar 'wave' happening in London on the same day.

In Scotland we are asking

- The UK Government to share Scotland's ambition on Climate Change as shown in the recent Scottish Climate Change Act.
- Protect the Poorest; the poorest people in the world are those that will suffer the most by changes in the climate.
- Act Fair & Fast to secure a deal that will urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Make sure you let everyone know about this event - the more people who attend the bigger the impact. Let's send the UK Government to Copenhagen with a clear message - Stop Climate Chaos.

More information on the Glasgow event including time and assembly point, plus details of transport to Glasgow can be found at

www.stopclimatechaos.org/thewavescotland

Ring out those Bells

International Day of Climate Action for Faith Groups - Sunday 13th December 2009

Churches across the world, led by alliances of Christian development agencies and churches, invite parishes and dioceses across the country to mobilise churches to ring their bells on Sunday 13 December to call for urgent action against climate change.

Across the world, church bells will ring to represent a unified message from people of faith, calling for action on climate change. The bells are calling for global climate justice to remind us of the obligation we have to save God's great creation. People of faith all over the world will be calling on politicians to take responsibility and create a climate for justice. Urgent reductions in our emissions are needed if we are to avert disastrous effects on people and the planet. Why not get your parish congregation involved, invite your local newspaper along, invite your local MP or councillors, and take photos or videos of the day?

Sunday 13 December marks the height of the climate summit in Copenhagen. The church bells will ring out through all time zones, starting at 3pm local time in Fiji in the South Pacific, where the day begins, and continuing on until 15:00 CET in Copenhagen and across Central Europe. Why not find a time on Sunday that suits your church? It might be easiest to arrange for the event to happen straight after your Sunday service- make sure you give people plenty of notice in the church bulletin, asking them to stay on afterwards or to come back for the event. You can also extend the invitation out around your local community, and let people know why their local church bells are ringing out!

On the occasion of the UN Summit in Copenhagen, churches, development agencies and their supporters want to signal to politicians that they must reach an equitable and just climate change deal in December 2009. The National Council of Churches in Denmark, where the meeting will be hosted, describes the day of action as 'marking our hope in the Lord and our resolve to act for God's Creation.'

Be part of it! And don't forget to let us know about your event by emailing the office!

pope benedict on environment

The following sequence of quotations from Pope Benedict's Caritas in Veritate, (nn 48-51) might form the basis for group discussions in the lead up to the Copenhagen Summit

The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. When nature, including the human being, is viewed as the result of mere chance or evolutionary determinism, our sense of responsibility wanes...

The technologically advanced societies can and must lower their domestic energy consumption, either through an evolution in manufacturing methods or through greater ecological sensitivity among their citizens. It should be added that at present it is possible to achieve improved energy efficiency while at the same time encouraging

research into alternative forms of energy...

This responsibility is a global one, for it is concerned not just with energy but with the whole of creation, which must not be bequeathed to future generations depleted of its resources...

One of the greatest challenges facing the economy is to achieve the most efficient use – not abuse – of natural resources, based on a realisation that the notion of 'efficiency' is not value-free... when 'human ecology' is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.

the 'rights' stuff conference 2009

About a hundred people came to the Justice and Peace Conference on 5 September. We were fortunate to have obtained, through the good offices of Fr Roddy Johnston, Argyll diocesan representative and parish priest for Caol, Charles Kennedy as our keynote speaker on the subject of 'Just Human Rights'.



Charles Kennedy with Bishop Peter, Ellen Charlton and Fr Roddy

Charles began by saying that there is no stereotype for a Catholic MP, arrived at by ticking a series of boxes. He had been uncomfortably reminded of the tension between being a parliamentarian and a person of faith by a recent gospel reading from Mark 7. *It was of you hypocrites that Isaiah so rightly prophesied in this passage of scripture: This people honours me only with lip-service, while their hearts are far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless, the doctrines they teach are only human regulations.* He himself works by a moral compass which derives from his Catholic view of God. This is the case not only for the big issues but no less for the routine and mundane issues that are the daily round of most parliamentarians' work. Problems between 'pulpit and politics' in Britain can often be traced back to the absence of a written constitution. Standing for and working within parliament requires engaging with the shortcomings of a defective system. Nevertheless, it is the means by which government is administered.

There is also a tension between the classical and ecclesiastical tradition of morality deriving and flowing from Natural Law and the secular twentieth century civil and social tradition of rights. Indeed the Church has been resistant to the notion of human rights until quite recently.

Civil rights are inevitably balanced with civic responsibilities. Civil Disobedience, within a non violent context, is something 'sacrosanct'. Nevertheless, those who take up such an option must be willing to accept the consequences. Rights must also be inalienable, universal and equal, both nationally and internationally. Often the self interest of national politics forgets the universality in pursuit of short term gain.

Charles exemplified this and spoke of the process by which he, then leader of the Lib Dems, was opposed to the Iraq War and sought to take his party with him. In

this he was actually helped by the government's failure to be ethically consistent as well as by early exposure of the dubious claims made in the government's 'dodgy dossier'.

Thinking about rights requires a structure of ethical consistency which strives to avoid simplistic claims. There is a need to see the distinction between 'negative freedoms' – the freedom **from** constraints; and 'positive freedoms' - freedom **for** – which constitutes the basis of entitlements.

Charles then focussed on the writing of the Catholic lawyer, Conor Gearty, who has recently been making a persuasive case for a secular view of human rights rooted in 'dignity' and 'compassion'. Hence, said Charles, the Scottish Justice Minister took the right decision releasing Mr Megrahi on grounds of compassion. In Gearty's terminology 'the language of human rights is the Esperanto of the virtuous'.

Charles concluded by noting that one of the most notable changes in recent politics has been the almost catastrophic decline in the membership of political parties. At the same time there has been an enormous rise in the non government organisations dealing with single issues, where the background is at once altruistic and global. Thus, in the example he gave, the RSPB membership is much more than the combined membership of all the political parties. This sense that dignity and compassion is alive in different channels gives Charles grounds for optimism.



discussing in groups

These reflections were the basis for groups to discuss their own response. The fruit of these discussions came out as questions. Some of these queried whether it was possible to sustain the coherent ethical integrity within the conflicting demands of party politics as well as those of the media. Charles' response suggests that he feels the work of a politician is valuable and needs to be seen as a whole: the necessary and often unnoticed routine business as well as the set piece debates on big issues.

Those of us who have come of age in the last half century can hardly have missed out on the place of the protest song in popular culture. It is part of a long tradition that included psalmists and bards and those who fused the prophetic power of poetry to music. Ian



Davison is a founder of the Scottish folksong renewal which coincided with the civil rights movement around the world. The great civil concerns of apartheid, nuclear weapons and the suffering brought about by oppression were to form the subject matter of the songs sung by Ian, his versatile accompanist Carissa Bovill and her mother. Where Charles had spoken, quite properly, largely to the head, these songs were meant to speak to the heart. It was a departure – and a

successful one – from past formats. It was also a reminder of how important and central to our humanity our emotional responses are.

Head and heart were brought back together in the celebration of the mass. We celebrated the Mass for Justice and Peace. In a thoughtful homily, Bishop Peter pointed out that, in one way, it was almost unnecessary to have a mass specially designated for justice and peace since, properly understood justice and peace are at the very heart of every mass.

The evaluation cards suggested that most people found the day very agreeable and appreciated the balance of elements; as well as the chance to catch up with old friends. It was good too, to see some of the recent Craighead course members joining in the day.

An edited version of the day is available on DVD, made by Stewart Daniels-Emm, husband of our Edinburgh representative Norma. A copy can be borrowed from the National Office to show to groups or those who could not manage to be there on the day. It should also form a lively discussion starter.

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bishop peter awards diplomas

After the hard work, there was an evening of celebration for those who graduated from the first year of the Craighead/Justice and Peace course



Bishop Moran was the guest of honour when students of the Craighead Institute received their diplomas on Tuesday 22 September in the Ogilvie Centre in Glasgow. The 15 participants had completed a new course in the integration of life and faith, funded by SCIAF and coordinated by the Justice and Peace Commission.

Bishop Moran commended the work they had done. The course consists of a mixture of weekend modules taught at the Institute and work done in groups in local areas. The participants learned about the way groups function; about how Catholic Social Teaching helps in pastoral situations; about the centrality of the revealed truth of scripture in social situations; and about how a spirituality based on the principles of St Ignatius can form us to meet social and pastoral challenges.

Members of the course spoke eloquently of how the course had affected them helping them to clarify their sense of purpose and find what God is calling them to do. For some this was a landmark experience, while for others

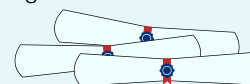
it was a consolidation of activities they have been carrying out for a long time.

'I feel this course is my burning bush, God's way of attracting my attention' said one participant. Others commented on aspects of their faith understood for the first time, or familiar social concerns viewed in a new light as a result of working together on the course. For many it was the chance to compare and to cooperate, which gave a renewed sense of hope to take back to parish work.

Bishop Moran has also written to participants' parish priests, expressing the hope that the new skills and aptitudes can be put at the service of the parish and local community. Four of the participants will now work alongside

Craighead Institute staff as trainees, aiming eventually to present the course themselves.

The evening was rooted in prayer and there was a sense of commissioning, of being sent out to do the work which God intends.



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Craighead Institute Graduates and course leaders, with Bishop Moran, Mary Cullen of SCIAF and our own Tim Duffy

reflection: a great cosmic drama

Unless we live our lives with at least some cosmological awareness, we risk collapsing into tiny worlds. For we can be fooled into thinking that our lives are passed in political entities such as the state or the nation; or that bottom line concerns of life have to do with economic realities or consumer lifestyles. In truth, we live in the midst of immensities and we are intrinsically woven into a great cosmic drama.

Brian Swimme, *The Hidden Heart of the Cosmos*, 1996. (source ASCJC)

a national conversation

Mary Macpherson, former Chair and the Commission's expert on conversation, describes a recent discussion with government.

On 1st September Carol Clarke and I went along to the Molendinar Community Centre in Glasgow to take part in the fifth National Conversation event. On the platform were all the members of the Scottish cabinet including Alex Salmond the First Minister, who has said *the National Conversation is about giving you the facts, hearing your views and providing opportunities to debate some very serious issues about the future of Scotland.*

The event was well attended and the questions asked were on a variety of subjects: asylum seekers, help for small businesses, abuse in the work place, town centre regeneration, training and many more, including inevitably the release of Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al Megrahi. Interestingly the general mood in the hall was that this had been a good thing.

Alex Salmond introduced us to the members of the cabinet and asked each to say a little about what they were currently working on. Interestingly perhaps, Kenny MacAskill did not mention Mr al Megrahi.

In the packs we had been given on arrival, there was information on the Scottish Government's view of various areas of concern to Scotland relating to its place in the world.

- Finance and Sustainable Growth
- Justice
- Rural Affairs and the Environment
- Education and Life Long Learning
- Health and Wellbeing
- Broadcasting
- Europe and International

Defence and Security

Democracy and Government

These are also available on the National Conversation website.

The First Minister spoke about the limits of Devolution, mainly those areas where the current recession and the cut of £512 million from the block grant the Scottish Government receive from Westminster would make it difficult to put money where the Scottish Government felt it was most appropriate since 'Scotland is dependent on decisions made by the UK Government at Westminster.'

Mr Salmond also referred to the Referendum his government intends to hold in 2010, saying that 'Scotland can successfully govern itself by providing distinctive, innovative solutions to issues that matter to Scotland.'

The questions which then came from the floor covered a great variety of subjects. Some questions I felt were answered less than fully or not at all, but the ministers made themselves available during a buffet lunch (provided for everyone) and in our pack was a sheet which could be sent to the ministers with questions and comments with the promise of a swift response.

I found the meeting very worthwhile and if the Scottish Government does listen, as it has promised to do, then 2010 will be an interesting time in Scotland.

More Conversations are being held over the coming months. For details and background material, see www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/a-national-conversation

a pure cranhill legend

When Pope Benedict suggested the idea of an 'economy of communion' in his recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (n 46), he might have been talking about John Kerr, who died at the end of July. For many years John was a regular at Justice and Peace meetings and conferences. Based on his own experience with the Provvy, he set up a credit union when he and his family were rehoused to Cranhill. But it was not simply a financial initiative, but rather an expression of John's deeply held Christian faith. He was one of those eccentrics who tended to stand out by living his beliefs uncompromisingly; even to the extent of standing as a parliamentary candidate.

Certainly, he converted me some twenty five years ago to the notion that family economies needed to have grassroots control and accountability to preserve human dignity and serve the common good. He welcomed the asylum seekers who came to live in the community and spoke of how they continued paying off loans after they returned home. He was an apostle of

the sustainable. Influenced by the Focolare movement, he understood intuitively that the hearth (for which focolare is the Italian word) is the centre of community. Yet it breeds hospitality, as John's son remembered at his funeral. The family would wake up to find a homeless family their father had brought home until they could find a place.

It could be argued that the further one got from the hearth, the less John liked it. He reserved his ire for the 'professionals' – the poverty industry and politicians. He felt that with conclusions which were not based on personal experience, they were more likely to disempower and hinder than to help.

And helping was John's vocation - as those who knew him testify. Whether the online tribute to his football coaching skills in former years which gave this item its title; or the crowded memories of those who attended his funeral in the church outside of which he had collapsed and died. His last journey into eternal rest was a short one.

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newsbrief . . . newsbrief

The Ethical Consumer magazine is 20 years old. They've come a long way from the first issue of the magazine, produced from a council flat in Manchester in September 1989. Today they're still true to their roots as a totally independent organisation, funded by subscriptions, consultancy work for campaigning groups, and adverts from ethically vetted companies. Visit their website for a free 'Ethical buyer's guide to Supermarket shopping' which researches the social and environmental records of companies. The modern supermarket is an incredibly complex creature. With the biggest stocking up to 40,000 different products, their supply chains reach around the world and impact on pretty much every ethical issue you can think of. When they first began to analyse supermarket behaviour twenty years ago, best practice was to stock a few organic or 'eco-friendly' products on a shelf somewhere at the back. Nowadays the bigger supermarkets have realised that leaving decisions on what constitutes responsible behaviour to consumer choice is not an easy position to defend. This means that best practice now involves applying ethical standards across their whole supply chains (such as only stocking free-range eggs). Visit www.ethicalconsumer.org to read the 7 page report and to find out more about all things ethical.

Traidcraft launch 'Make it Fair Campaign': The UK's top five brands account for 72% of the UK tea market and directly affect the lives of over one million tea workers worldwide. Within the tea industry many small-scale farmers and workers lead extremely hard lives, doing physically demanding work for low pay. If the biggest tea brands switched to Fairtrade they would make a real difference to many people's lives. There are postcards available for this campaign, to find out more, call or visit www.traidcraft.co.uk/get_involved/campaign/make_it_fair.htm The Traidcraft Christmas catalogue packed with lots of fairtrade produce and crafts is available by contacting 0191 491 0591

Chairman of the Financial Services Authority backs Currency Transaction Levy (CTL) to tackle a 'socially useless' and 'swollen' banking sector. Lord Turner, Chair of City watchdog the Financial Services Authority (FSA), said such measures are 'the most powerful tools to eliminate excessive activity and profits' in the sector, adding that they represent a 'sensible revenue source for funding global public goods'. This revival of a 'Tobin Tax' initiative caused a real stir. Lord Turner's support is also symptomatic of the unprecedented movement growing behind the Currency Transaction Levy. More details www.stampoutpoverty.org also Larry Elliott's article <http://tinyurl.com/lt3cax>

BT Community Connections is an award scheme which enables community and charitable organisations to get online. Groups can apply for a laptop and a year's free broadband connection. Award packages will be given to groups who can demonstrate how an award will benefit their work and the local community. To find out more and see case studies from past winners visit their website. The deadline for postal applications is 5 January 2010. The deadline for online applications is 7 January 2010. Details www.btcommunityconnections.com

G20: On the first weekend of November, finance ministers from the twenty richest nations in the world will meet in St Andrews to decide on solutions to the global financial and climate crises. Help make sure that they know that business-as-usual is not an option. Hundreds of people will be coming to St Andrews on November 7th to show the G20 ministers that we care about the decisions that they will be taking in our name. Come and join the rally on the beach (bring a banner!), hear about some real solutions at the 'People's summit', and stay for a free screening of 'The Yes Men Fix the World'. Details www.g20standrews.org

It's never too soon to start teaching your kids about trade unions - and one good way to do so is through children's books that cast unions in a positive light. There aren't a lot of these, which is why we're delighted to have come across a new historical novel by Mary Cronk Farrell, 'Fire in the Hole'. It's suitable for readers aged 8 and above. To learn more about this book and to order your copies, <http://tinyurl.com/yey5m9c> (from LabourStart www.labourstart.org)

Raped women in Bosnia continue to be denied justice: Successive governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina have failed to provide justice for thousands of women and girls who were raped during the 1992-1995 war, a new Amnesty International report reveals. Launched at a press conference in Sarajevo, Amnesty's 82-page report, *Whose Justice? The women of Bosnia and Herzegovina are still waiting* details how thousands of rape survivors are still denied justice and reparation, while those responsible walk free, sometimes within the same community.

World Community Day is held on the first Friday in November. The annual focus is on responsible corporate action for justice and peace. World Community Day began in 1943 from a motion by Mrs. Albert Palmer, president of the Chicago Council of Church Women, that a day be set aside for the study of peace by church women. World Community Day continues to emphasise peace, but has been broadened to include a vital partner of peace - justice. This day is an invitation to be in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world, keeping them in the forefront of our consciousness and concern, especially those in the greatest poverty.

Karen Silkwood: Karen was a laboratory analyst at a nuclear facility in the United States. She became contaminated with plutonium and then died on November 13, 1973 in a mysterious car crash en route to a meeting where she planned to expose unsafe practices by her employer. Her death was ruled as an accident, but unanswered questions have prompted continued speculation about foul play.

Universal Children's Day November 20: Every year more than 10 million children under the age of five die of preventable diseases. More than 13 million children under the age of 15 have lost their mothers or both parents to AIDS. More than 100 million children are not in school (60% of them girls). And an estimated 300,000 child soldiers are fighting in armies and militias around the world. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts have helped some former child soldiers return to civilian life with their families and communities. However, many child soldiers remain in armed forces and groups. Girls in particular are at risk of neglect because they often play less visible roles in conflict, or are stigmatized due to rape and sexual abuse. More info at www.child-soldiers.org and www.unicef.org

Human Rights Day - December 10: Human rights are often violated by violence. Violence is a destructive force of immense proportion, which influences our lives at all levels, individual, societal and global. Violence refers to crime, exclusion, war, persecution, terrorism, detention without trial, slavery, environmental damage, bullying, discrimination, harassment, and victimization. It is often undertaken in the name of criminality, imperialism, nationalism, political expediency, power and control, and may be legitimized by the prevailing norms, values, belief systems, cultures and structures of relationships in our societies. Violence affects our humanity and our environment.

so you can be in good time for christmas . . .

ALTERNativity

In amongst the modern buzz of the "holiday season", it is easy to see Advent as a countdown to a lavish Christmas Day party and stop there. A new resource from **ALTERNativity** has been designed in response to this and is intended to help us maintain a more reflective celebration. Allowing us to carry on reflecting after Christmas Day, using it as a beginning rather than an end.

The themes running through this resource are the reactions of people to the birth of Jesus and the forgotten people in the gospels. What can we learn from their stories and the forgotten people in our society today?

These lovely boxes are made by women who are part of a co-operative, Hot Chilli Concepts, in an inner city slum community of Bangkok. The Cooperative aims to provide a fair wage and give job security to the women involved. Each box helps to restore dignity and freedom to the women who made them.

In the pages of the booklet included in the box you will find reflections for each of the 12 days of Christmas leading up to Epiphany. Each day has a symbol to aid reflection and

also to act as a reminder. There are 12 hand-made tiles in the box which share these symbols.

These boxes make a wonderful gift, and the reflections can be adapted for use with Bible studies or small group meetings. The boxes cost £10+ P&P and are available now directly from **ALTERNativity**.

About **ALTERNativity**... Many find Christmas a stressful and busy time of year and wish for something different but don't know where to look. **ALTERNativity** has ideas about getting you started. Offering materials and workshops to help you explore how to take control of your celebrations and make Advent a time of peace and joy.

There are a wide range of materials available covering worship, celebration, spiritual growth and group sessions, and they are ideal for small groups, school assemblies, church services or simply for quiet personal reflection.

For more information on how to become a member or to order resources, visit www.alternativity.org.uk or contact: Alternativity, 759A Argyle Street, Glasgow G3 8DS info@alternativity.org.uk 0141 221 4242



action by christians against torture

christmas greeting card campaign

'He was pierced for our transgressions, tortured for our iniquities

Without protection, without justice, he was taken away, and who gave a thought to his fate?' Isaiah 53: v 5-8 (NEB)

Action by Christians Against Torture (ACAT) run a Christmas greeting cards campaign, which we would urge you and your parish to get involved with. The campaign calls on churches and individual Christians to take part in sending messages of support to prisoners of conscience, human rights defenders, persecuted Christians, those under threat of death. Messages can make all the difference to those suffering so greatly under repressive regimes. They bring hope, encouragement and the knowledge that they are not forgotten.

A political prisoner who was tortured in Zimbabwe said, when given details on the concerted campaign that was mounted on his behalf, "After these letters the beatings stopped. . . . after these I had a bed and a desk and books. . . . and then I was allowed to go shopping in the village without a guard. . . . but other men were dying"

ACAT(UK), a registered charity was set up in 1984, and is a Body in Association with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. It is part of the International Federation (FIACAT) based in Paris. This has consultative status at the United Nations and access to other regional and international assemblies. Its patrons include; Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Professor Lord David Alton, Bishop Peter Price.

Why is ACAT(UK) Needed?

- Torture is not a thing of the past. All around the world human beings are being tortured intentionally and systematically.
- Torture happens every day and every hour.
- Torture is very effective in forcing confessions, information (often false), denunciations and compliance. Too many states fail to resist the temptation to torture.
- Torture is immoral and always hidden. No state justifies it.
- Torture is banned by international law. *'No one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'* (Article 5, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

Of course torture is just not reserved for the Christmas season. There is much that you and your church can do throughout the year, some involve almost no effort, visit the ACAT website to find out more. www.acatuk.org.uk

A list of those to write to should be available from the end of the first week in November free from the ACAT office at 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall, PL12 4LX, although small donations would be welcome. It will be sent out by post but enquiries can be made by phone 01752 843417 and email uk.acat@googlemail.com

christmas quiet day

This is a day of quiet reflection in your church, and the perfect way to prepare for the birth of Jesus. All that's required is a Saturday or Sunday close to Christmas, a warm church, candles, Christmas religious music. Perhaps put up a few nativity prints for reflection and contemplation. The J&P National Office can provide a reflective leaflet for photocopying.



Ask people to volunteer half an hour of their time to watch over the candles and change the music. Invite the Christian churches in your area to encourage people to come along for a period of time, away from the madding crowd, to recover the true meaning of Christmas.

forgiveness in an unforgiving world

Alec Porter reviews **No Enemy to Conquer** by Michael Henderson

This book, recently published, is very timely for us in Scotland in the midst of the controversy surrounding the release of Mr Al-Megrahi. In deeply moving stories of people in deadlocked situations all over the world, Henderson illustrates the transformative power of forgiveness – both for those who forgive and those who seek forgiveness to find a way out of conflict.

Its relevance to our present situation was aptly stated in a letter to The Times by Michael Smith. The Times has strongly condemned the release of al-Megrahi, a view widely supported by letter writers. Mr Smith took a contrary view;

'Those on both sides of the Atlantic who feel outraged by the reaction over the release of al-Megrahi will eventually have to come to terms with that old prayer: 'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' This does not condone injustice. But it does have the effect of pouring balm on overwrought emotions. It could help prevent escalation. Muslims observing Ramadan, who pray in the name of the Merciful and the Compassionate, would also understand the notion of forgiveness.'

The foreword to this book by the Dalai Lama entitled, 'No peace without forgiveness' very appropriately leads into the first story in the book about Pentecostal Minister James Wuye and Muslim Imam Muhammad Ashafa in Kaduna, Nigeria. They were leading opposing armed gangs in the religious conflict in their city. Hundreds were killed. Pastor Wuye lost his hand in the fighting. Imam Ashafa had two brothers and his spiritual teacher killed by Christian extremists.

A turning point came for Ashafa when he heard another Imam preach in the mosque about forgiveness and the example of the Prophet, who in Mecca forgave the people who tried to destroy him. 'Muhammad has forgiven, you have to forgive,' said the preacher looking straight at Ashafa. When the Imam finished preaching he said 'Let us pray.' It was then Ashafa started thinking 'I can really forgive James Wuye.'

The opportunity to speak to James came at an event convened by the wife of the military administrator of Kaduna state. Wuye was convinced it was all a ploy to identify him for assassination but Ashafa persisted and eventually after some years won his trust to the point where they set up the Interfaith Mediation Centre con-

centrating on bringing young Christians and Muslims together for conferences and workshops. When violence has broken out in Northern Nigeria their intervention on the streets has saved many lives. Their help has been requested in different trouble spots by the government. Their story is also available on DVD in both English and Arabic and is called *The Imam and the Pastor*.

An Israeli Woman dialled a wrong number and found herself talking to a Palestinian woman. Instead of hanging up they began a dialogue about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conversation resulted in them founding an organisation providing free phone calls for dialogue between the two peoples called "Hello Peace, Hello Shalom, Hello Salaam." It is now financed by the E.U. with Arabs and Jews picking up the phone daily and talking to people on the other side. More than one million calls have been made.

One further example is the remarkable story of Keiko Holmes, a Japanese woman living in London, who heard about Jack Caplan, who had set the Japanese flag on fire when the Emperor of Japan visited London in 1998. Caplan had been captured at Singapore and worked on the Thai-Burmese railway and hated all things Japanese. Keiko arranged for Kaplan to visit Japan, where people queued for hours to meet him and apologise to him. This changed him and his perception of the Japanese: 'I have realised,' he said, 'that our enemy is not each other but war.'

Undoubtedly the power common to all those peace-building relationships is the Spirit of God at work in the hearts of people.

There are similar stories of peace building by individuals from The Lebanon, India and Pakistan, Northern Ireland, Rwanda and South Africa. The stories are interspersed with short commentaries by academics and men and women of faith amongst them Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dr David Smock and the late Benazir Bhutto.

One quote that stood out for me and in a way sums up the main issue being addressed by the book is from Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, 'The biggest weapon of mass destruction is the hate in our souls.' Overcoming this is the challenge that we all must rise to.

No enemy to conquer by Michael Henderson is published by Baylor University Press. Price £10.99



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Housmans is London's premier radical bookshop - it's one of the last remaining such shops, as well as having been one of the first (originally opening in 1945). Every year Housmans produces its own Peace Diary, a non-profit service to movements around the world working for peace, social justice and the environment. The diary includes a unique World Peace Directory, listing almost 2,000 national organisations and international peace, environmental and human rights organisations in 150 countries. For more information and to buy a copy please visit our website, www.housmans.com.

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diary diary

OCTOBER

- 22 - 1 Nov Africa in Motion Film Festival
- 23 G20 at St. Andrews Question Time event with Douglas Alexander MP, Sec of State for International Development. University West of Scotland. 6.30pm
- 24 United Nations Day
- 24 International Day of Climate Action
- 24 Disarmament Week commences

NOVEMBER

- 4 Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Public Talks Programme. Glasgow 5.30pm
- 6 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- 6 'For everyone born a place at the table' - Tackling Income Inequality in Scotland
A conference jointly organised by the STUC and ACTS. Edinburgh
- 7 Road to the G20 - St Andrews. The People's G20. Stunt on the beach, speeches and stalls, afternoon events on positive alternatives for a global economy.
- 14 Annual Scottish Fair Trade Campaign Day
- 15-23 Prisoner's Week Scotland
- 16 International Day for Tolerance

- 18 Stop Climate Chaos Scotland Public Talks Programme, Edinburgh 7.30pm
- 20 Universal Children's Day
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
- 28 STUC St Andrew's Day Anti Racism march and rally, Glasgow
- 28 Buy Nothing Day 2009

DECEMBER

- 5 'The Wave' Scottish climate change march, Glasgow. For more information email gail@stopclimatechaosscotland.org
- 7-18 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen

Full details and links on the events page of our website www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml

You may have an army of bleeding hearts tending the sorrowful and the hungry and yet not see an end to the causes of hunger and thirst. Working for real change is vital.

Melba Maggay, Filipina evangelical theologian

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Our Office: 65 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 2BX. Tel/Fax: 0141 333 0238
 Email: office@justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk
 OPEN DAILY 10.00 hrs to 16.00 hrs Monday to Friday inclusive.



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