



*The world needs people who discover the good, who rejoice in it and thereby derive the impetus and courage to do good.*

*Joy, then, does not break with solidarity.*

*When it is the right kind of joy... then it wants to communicate itself, and it gets passed on.*

*Pope Benedict XVI*

# editorial

One thing seems certain about the forthcoming papal visit: it will be very different from the last visit in 1982. This is a state visit, instigated by the UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown as the Queen's representative; reminding us that the Vatican is still - albeit residually with an area of approximately 110 acres and a population of just over 800 - a part of the community of nations. And while the Vatican City State has not become a member of the UN, The Holy See, which is distinct, has permanent observer status with all the rights (except for a vote) of a full member in the UN General Assembly.

Her Majesty the Queen is also the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. Thus, when she and Pope Benedict meet for tea in Holyrood it will be a meeting, not only of two heads of state, but two heads of their denominations.

In 1982, the first non Italian Pope in four centuries came to Britain and Ireland on his own initiative, in the middle of the Falklands war (itself a controversial decision) as head of the Catholic church. He was 'a man from a far country', charismatic, young (by papal standards), extravert and still recovering from an attempted assassination. He used these gifts to captivate a country far more Christian almost thirty years ago.

Pope Benedict comes to a country where just over a quarter of Catholics still go to mass and where the stock of the papacy is much diminished. In part this is the result of a relentless media campaign, using the language of caricature, eg 'rotweiler'. In part it has been the Pope's misfortune to be in office during the time when decades of clerical abuse and widespread failure to deal with the issue are coming to light. And in part it is the less than positive valuation that many Catholics now have for the papacy. One only has to consider 'Papa Woytila' and 'Papa Ratzinger' to see the difference in popular perception. Many, Catholics included, are sufficiently disillusioned to fall in with the media's assessment.

Pope Benedict is primarily a scholar and theologian, and his great influence has been St Augustine. He has said that his 'desert island' book would be St Augustine's Confessions. For that great saint, the City of Man was always going to be inferior to the City of God; and the actions of even the greatest earthly empire would always

pale into insignificance beside those initiated by God's grace. For Pope Benedict, there remains a suspicion of the earthly activities that fall under the heading of politics; and a real concern for what he considers to be the emptying of the supernatural aspect of the gospel and the Catholic faith and its replacement with a secular agenda. This is well exemplified in the following quote from his book Truth and Tolerance: 'Wherever politics tries to be redemptive, it is promising too much. Where it wishes to do the work of God, it becomes, not divine, but demonic.'

At the heart of Benedict's thought is the mysterious simplicity that God is Love. 'On this solid rock the entire faith of the church is based', he said when his first encyclical Deus Caritas Est was published. Caritas is the Latin term traditionally used for love in the Catholic tradition. Earlier, Benedict had said: 'In today's terminology, 'love' seems very far from what a Christian thinks about when he speaks of Christian charity. I want to show that it is about one single movement with different dimensions.' In this sense 'charity' means more than a few coins in a tin. It is about self giving and sacrifice.

Self giving carries the risk of self righteousness and hypocrisy like the Pharisees that Jesus took apart for their long faces and double standards. Yet while Benedict has a justified distrust of many of the ways in which the world claims to practise charity, he is aware of the importance of the apostolate of Christian charity as an antidote to the despair and despondency that can otherwise afflict us. As he says in his book, Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End, 'I don't have any right to rejoice, people think, in a world where there is so much misery, so much injustice. . . I can understand that. There is a moral attitude at work here. But this attitude is nonetheless wrong. The loss of joy does not make the world better - and, conversely, refusing joy for the sake of suffering does not help those who suffer. The contrary is true. The world needs people who discover the good, who rejoice in it and thereby derive the impetus and courage to do good. Joy, then, does not break with solidarity. When it is the right kind of joy... then it wants to communicate itself, and it gets passed on.'

Tim Duffy

## racial justice sunday 12th September 2010

A special ecumenical Service is to be held in Wellington Church, University Avenue, Glasgow, on September 12th. The Service will mark the work of the Churches to promote racial justice and will also celebrate the launching of MECTIS (Minority Ethnic Churches Together in Scotland) - the organisation which will help the new minority ethnic churches in Scotland to work together and to develop closer links with the denominations which have operated in Scotland for many years.

The Service will have international and national support. It will be attended by national leaders of the major denominations in Scotland, who will extend a welcome to the leaders of MECTIS and the members of their congregations, and by Members of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches. The sermon is to be preached by a member of the World Council of Churches' Executive.

Brother Stephen Smyth, General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, said 'The emergence of MECTIS as a body is highly significant. It provides a space for the many independent ethnic minority churches in Scotland to come together to share concerns and successes. Our hope in ACTS is, that as it grows in strength, MECTIS will provide a means by which these new churches and the established denominations can be brought into closer fellowship. ACTS is very pleased to support MECTIS and to encourage all churches in Scotland to 'Witness to Christ Today' - together.'

Brother Stephen added: 'This year's Racial Justice Sunday Service will be really innovative and lively. We invite and encourage our many ecumenical friends to join ACTS, MECTIS and the WCC in Wellington Church for the event.'

The Service will begin at 6.00 pm on the 12th of September. Between 5.30 pm and 6.00 pm an African choir will be singing as the congregation assembles. Refreshments will be available at the close of the Service.

Materials for Racial Justice Sunday can be downloaded at [www.ctbi.org.uk/490](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/490)

# citizens for sanctuary

We recently enjoyed a visit at the J&P Office from Jessica Kennedy, deputy Director of the group Citizens for Sanctuary.

Readers of our February magazine may remember how Carol and I went out on a walk last December organised by Citizens for Sanctuary. We accompanied Azure card holders to find out how inadequate these cards were for people who had been seeking asylum trying to buy basic necessities. A report was produced and subsequent attempts at a meeting with the Borders Agency foundered when they would only accept meeting on their own premises.

Jessica has previously worked on projects in India and with the UN. Her experience has been that community managed projects tend to be stronger and more successful. She particularly enjoys the kind of project that involves living out your values. She spoke of how Citizens for Sanctuary grew of the London Citizens group which represented about half a million Londoners involved in local campaigning over social issues. Not the least of these issues was dissatisfaction and concern about the Borders Agency's central office in London and its treatment of asylum seekers. The result was three reports containing 180 recommendations, which led to the foundation of Citizens for Sanctuary. The main remits of the organisation are:

- Direct negotiation with the Borders Agency. This has been largely achieved: there are good relations with all the regional directors, but Scotland still needs to be developed
- The traditional kind of campaigning such as the Sanctuary Pledge during the general Election campaign
- To work alongside citizen action, providing support and networking
- Involvement with City Action Teams, or local campaigning organisations. For example, there is a campaign to award a 'Sanctuary Mark' grading housing to ensure a good quality of accommodation for asylum seekers. And of course, there was the Azure Card accompaniment exercise.

There are several ways in which Justice and Peace is able to help with these aims. Notably, they are central to the priorities that we have long pursued. It is important that the

appropriate government agencies take the views of churches into account on the issue of asylum. Indeed the Commission recently made a submission (available on the J&P website) to a parliamentary enquiry into the detention of the children of asylum seekers - a practice which, according to Nick Clegg more recently is going to be phased out entirely in the UK. Given that the vast majority of asylum seekers live in or around Glasgow, there is an opportunity for more local initiatives than can be managed at national level.

Jessica was in Glasgow to meet those who were involved in the Azure card initiative and to plan the next stages of the campaign. It is imperative to develop better relations with the Scottish Borders agency and its Director, Phil Taylor. 'Now that changes to the Azure card at the beginning of the month make exchanging vouchers impossible, this action is even more urgent; so we've been pulling together stories and testimonies, contacting the Border Agency to set up a meeting and gathering support from key figures in Scotland and Glasgow' said Jessica.

Recent reports suggest that the Borders Agency is adopting a more proactive approach to seeking information from communities. It is important that they are aware that such approaches are being monitored and will be reported. All the recent research suggest that suspicion and animosity towards asylum seekers of the sort put about by tabloid rags is greatly reduced if not wiped out by personal acquaintance. It is also important, however, that we also have a more informal relationship with the Scottish BA to remove any unnecessary sources of antagonism and minimise any 'them and us' attitude.

It is always valuable to meet with someone who is involved more centrally and knowledgeably with an issue and to find out the latest developments as well as being able to offer cooperation. Jessica's visit was very helpful in allowing us to clarify how best to use our resources in dealing effectively with this priority for Justice and Peace and working alongside those with similar aims.

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## a hiroshima reflection

A time for remembrance and challenge: At 8:15 in the morning of August 6, 1945 an atomic bomb was dropped from a USA B-29 bomber on Hiroshima, Japan. More than seventy thousand people died instantly or within hours. Few were soldiers...

**Leader:** Let us join in prayer on this day of remembrance for Hiroshima, to recall the past, to be challenged in the present and to seek hope for the future.

**People:** O God of power, gracious in love, you have given humankind responsibility to care for all the earth. But we have put our faith in military power, while you call us to build a community of trust and love.

**Leader:** By our actions and by our inaction, and by our participation in the systems of society we often become agents of violence and destruction.

**People:** O God of us all, let Hiroshima become for us a symbol of hope that nuclear weapons will never again be used to kill and destroy.

**Leader:** Let us remember Hiroshima as a beacon to commit ourselves to find ways to live together in peace, that we may not be just peace lovers, but peacemakers.

**People:** O God of infinite possibility, transform our hearts and minds and give us courage to use our skills and technology to transform weapons that destroy into all that upholds life.

**Leader:** Isaiah said: "It shall come to pass that the peoples shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

**All:** We pray for the time when "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."



# SCVO and the **big society**

**C**herties could be on the brink of saving around £1bn a year, after the Prime Minister said he would look at funding charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises on the same basis as government.

The Prime Minister made the announcement in parliament in response to a question on how to save charities from next year's increase in VAT. It has led to a call for an immediate VAT rebate to be introduced to put the third sector on the same footing as local authorities and other public bodies that are currently able to reclaim the VAT they spend. Across the UK, charities pay £1bn in VAT every year, an amount that will rise by £150m when the tax goes up in January next year. In Scotland this translates to around £115m a year.

The extra cash would enable the voluntary sector to better support vulnerable people during the economically difficult times ahead, and is also necessary to create the Prime Minister's vision of a Big Society, said sector leaders.

Speaking during Prime Ministers question time, David Cameron said: 'We will want to do everything we can to help what used to be called, rather condescendingly, the third sector but I believe is the first sector: the excellent charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that do so much for our country. One thing we should do is look at funding them on the same basis as the government funds itself. The government is always very generous with its own bureaucracy, and it needs to recognise that so often these first sector organisations have the right answers to the social problems in our country.'

The chief executive of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), Martin Sime, urged the Prime Minister to take immediate action before the VAT increase in January next year. 'David Cameron's warm words on this issue are very welcome indeed,' he said. 'The third sector is currently battling against a tax injustice that undermines its ability to deliver effective public services. The Prime Minister also announced his plans for a Big Society and I would urge him to recognise that the government needs to learn to nurture and support rather than direct and control such initiatives. If the UK Government really wants to help charities and voluntary organisations do more then there are some pretty simple steps it can take, such as removing petty restrictions which prevent unemployed people from volunteering, allowing charities to reclaim VAT on the things they buy, and by making Gift Aid easier to claim.'

Stephen Bubb, chief executive of the Association of Chief Officers of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), writing in his blog, also called for the government to introduce a VAT rebate. 'I was delighted to see an exchange in the Commons at a recent PMQs. Bob Russell MP is a good friend of the sector and one of the MPs ACEVO had been in touch with on the whole VAT scandal. David Cameron's answer goes right to the heart of the issue of the unfair playing field between us and the state in tendering.

'We are following up with the PM and the Chancellor. One solution we will be suggesting is what the HMRC do for academies. It refunds the academies' VAT bills in full through a grant so that academies are not at a disadvantage with local authority schools. So a refund grant scheme maybe the answer. We are proposing this to government'

The Prime Minister's Big Society plans include encouraging groups to run post offices, libraries, transport

services and shape housing projects. He has announced a pilot project through which the government will fund and encourage the creation of community groups. However, fears have been raised that the government will be pushing community and voluntary groups to fill gaps in public services arising as a result of cuts.

The SCVO has written to Scottish Secretary Michael Moore urging the government to act on VAT and Gift Aid.

## **A 10 point plan to kick-start the Big Society?**

Here are 10 things Government can do if they are serious about the Big Society:-

1. Learn from the Danes and let charities claim back the VAT they pay. This would, at a stroke, make a huge difference to our capacity to do more and would level the public service playing field with business and government itself.
2. Make every public service contract "voluntary sector friendly". Eliminate unnecessary risk/reward approaches, value genuine social outcomes, make sure the scale and duration is appropriate and support users to contribute to the design, planning and delivery of services.
3. Stop issuing policy directions to lottery distributors. Agree on their broad missions and let them get on with the job of promoting and developing the work of voluntary organisations in the longer term.
4. Use endowment as a long-term tool to strengthen civil society. Create new community endowments around the renewable energy industry, the profits from the crown estate and air industry taxes.
5. Invest in the upscale and replication of what works. Do not tinker about with short term contracts but put voluntary sector services on a par with the statutory sector. Only then can they capture the full value and potential of their work.
6. Cut out the bureaucracy which is slowing the sector down and costing millions. Gift Aid needs to be simplified, HMRC rules need overhauled, the new Incorporated Vehicle for charities needs to be introduced and a whole host of other burdens should be eliminated.
7. Remove the petty restrictions that stop unemployed people from volunteering or taking on short-term work experience for fear of losing their benefits. Take the edge off rising unemployment by transforming it into a resource for communities.
8. Work through volunteer providers and existing grassroots initiatives to nurture community service for young people. Work with these groups to jointly design and co-produce programmes that inspire a new generation to commit time to helping others.
9. Bring the same principles of user involvement and co-production to international development. Persuade the Department for International Development to commit at least 25 per cent of its funds to be channelled through civil society organisations in the developing world and make clear that other funding will be contingent on countries working with and through civil society.
10. Above all, curb the instinct to direct and control. Voluntary endeavour always fails if it is the creature of government. Help nurture, promote and guard the independence of the third sector, however critical it may be.

# ONE WORLD WEEK 2010

## 17- 24 October

One World Week (OWW) was founded in 1978 by the World Development Movement out of a desire that, for one week in every year, the churches should draw the attention of their communities to the fact that the world consists of one human race which shares one planet in which all may enjoy fullness of life. Over the years OWW has broadened its approach to include people from all backgrounds.

One World Week is an annual opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally, by: Working together in caring for the earth and its resources; Taking action for justice, equality, peace and fullness of life for all; Building relationships of mutual respect that cross boundaries; Running local events that celebrate the diversity of cultures in our communities.

This year's theme is 'Peacing Together One World - creating a culture of peace for our children'. A culture of peace can be established at many levels; through inner peace and peace within the family, to harmony within the community, and justice and nonviolence on a global scale.

- What is a culture of peace?
- What is inner peace and is it important?
- What can we do to help establish peace in our homes, our schools, our local communities?
- How can we live our own lives sustainably?
- What can we do to advance understanding, to move beyond tolerance to respect, celebration of diversity, friendship and solidarity?



design: Dave Richards; printed at Conservatree, Reading  
globe: Shehmoor Ahmed and pupils from Geoffrey Field Junior School, Reading

- What kind of world are we creating for our children – one filled with fear, conflict and injustice or one based on respect, caring and cooperation?

*Thank you for having the passion that the people who support your One World project have you have to keep reminding all of us that we are family!*  
Desmond Tutu, Archbishop of South Africa, February 2009

Further information [www.oneworldweek.org](http://www.oneworldweek.org) PO Box 2555, Reading, RG1 4XW t:0118 939 4933

## Peacing together one world



www.oneworldweek.org PO Box 2555, Reading, RG1 4XW t: 0118 939 4933  
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## international day of non-violence - october 2

### The UN General Assembly has declared 2 October, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, as the International Day of Non-Violence.

It is an important day for all persons in our global village but especially for those of us committed to living the Good News of peace, justice and reconciliation. It is the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, who helped lead India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom around the world.

Mahatma Gandhi's 'novel mode of mass mobilisation and non-violent action' brought an end to colonialism in India while strengthening the roots of popular sovereignty, and of civil, political and economic rights. He has become an icon for people all over the world who believe in nonviolence as a way of life and as the best way to overcome oppression. For many Christians nonviolence is a gospel way of bringing about peace and reconciliation. Its focus is not only on freeing the oppressed but also working to free their oppressors. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr, 'Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit.'

### A Pledge of Nonviolence

In the name of the God of peace and the nonviolent Jesus, I pledge today to live, practice and teach the nonviolence of Jesus: to renounce violence and not to cooperate with the world's violence to love every one as my sister and brother to respond with love and not to retaliate with violence to forgive those who have hurt me and to reconcile with everyone to accept suffering as I work for justice, rather than inflict further suffering to live more simply, at one with all creation to work with others for the abolition of war, poverty, nuclear weapons, global warming and all violence to seek God's reign of nonviolence for the rest of my life and to promote and teach the Gospel message of nonviolence. May the God of peace give me the grace and strength to fulfill this pledge.

John Dear SJ.







# our daily bread: food security, people and planet

## Ellen Charlton describes the English Network J&P Conference

**G**race Buckley, Jackie Gillespie and I attended this year's conference held in Swanwick in July. As the title suggests the theme of the conference centred on the many and often confusing aspects of how, as committed Christians, we view our relationship with our environment.

The 400 delegates were there to discuss connections between food security and Catholic Social Teaching. We were challenged to question why, in a world of plenty, one billion people go hungry every day while in the rich west one of our major health concerns is obesity. We looked at the effects of environmental degradation and the waste and misuse of our natural resources.

Over three days we were involved in a mixture of talks, personal witness and informal workshops. The high quality of the speakers and especially the keynote speaker Vandana Shiva, political activist, feminist, and director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Natural Resources Policy in New Delhi made for an interesting and informative experience. She said, 'Pesticides are killing 220,000 every year. They have converted agriculture into warfare against the land, against biodiversity, against farmers and against our bodies. These, with genetically modified crops and developments in seed technology are crude tools which are not superior to traditional methods because they are violent. Violence is not superiority.'

There was general disappointment with the take on genetic modification expressed by the Pontifical Council for Science and Life at last year's study week. Fr. Sean McDonagh, a well-known biodiversity campaigner and Columban Missionary, hoped that the Catholic Church 'will not be seduced by the promise of greater crop yield – of which there is none!' Mary Colwell, a freelance TV and radio producer and consultant on religion and the environment said that while the Church would 'magnificently defend a populated rainforest,' it had no idea what to think about an area uninhabited by humans.

This echoed Alastair McIntosh, Scottish environmental writer and campaigner. Alastair, a Quaker, challenged the churches and indeed all faiths to overcome the 'spiritual blockage' which made it difficult to see God present in nature. Quoting from Job 12:10, he said that 'God's concern is not just for mankind, but with the soul of every living thing'. He urged Catholic delegates to, 'embrace the Blessed Virgin Mary: the symbol of transformation and the face of the feminine in God, who transformed an impossible situation into something wonderful'.

As the conference drew to an end I felt nourished by having spent time with so many people of faith, hope and



Our 3 delegates at the conference

charity. The content had been interesting, the atmosphere supportive, the services and celebrations life affirming.

The challenge now is to make those changes to my own lifestyle which will improve the lives of others on our planet. Little things like eating less meat (having lived with a vegetarian for 40 years and never been tempted to 'convert' before, I'm taking small steps!) I will try to source more local produce and more ethically produced items. I will keep myself informed and write letters (all the speakers emphasised letters, not postcards) in support of ethical farming methods and in opposition to GM crops.

There are three tapes available from the office which individuals or groups might like to use.

They contain the speeches of:-

**Alistair McIntosh**, *'Food as Sacred Relationship'*

**Elizabeth Dowler**, *'Just Food: the UK Experience'*

**Vandana Shiva**, *'The Future of Food'*

The summer edition of the Columban Magazine, 'Vocation for Justice' has an excellent editorial by Ellen Teague and very good articles on food and justice issues. Other links are available through our own website.

## *Standing Committee member and Paisley representative Jackie Gillespie gives her take on the conference*

This was the first time I had attended the English Justice and Peace Network Annual Conference. My reason for choosing to attend was to feed my 'drooping spirit'! I needed a dose of enthusiasm. Well it certainly achieved this. It was an action packed weekend, full of inspirational speakers, witnesses, liturgy, music, prayer and great people to share it all with. Everyone was very open, making a special effort to welcome newcomers.

The theme of this year's conference was Our Daily Bread: Food Security, People and Planet. Initially, I wondered whether this would be too theoretical and completely above my head. I try to be 'green' but realise that I have a lot to learn!

At each session, we listened to 'witnesses' who spoke for a short time about their lived experiences:

- Particularly moving was Diane, a Ugandan refugee and volunteer with the Jesuit Refugee Service. She spoke about being faced with destitution and hunger at various times during her asylum claim in the UK.
- Sally works for Housing Justice with vulnerable homeless people. They are involved in a project - Allotment in the City.
- Anne Marie works in school catering, and is involved in the Food for Life programme. This means that meals cooked come from sustainable sourcing, organic growing and composting. This leads to the children being educated about where their food comes from. They have a vegetable garden in the school.

We were asked to choose 2 workshops to attend on the Saturday, from about 20 on the list. This was difficult in itself, as they all sounded interesting. I opted for the following:

#### Waste of food

Ashley Ralston of 'Better Tomorrows' has been a J&P activist for 30 years. For over half that time he has been involved with local authorities and community groups in promoting 'sustainability'.

Ashley had been involved in a study looking at food waste and people's habits. The survey showed that a staggering

- 6.7 million tonnes of food is thrown away every year in the UK
- 4.1 million tonnes is unopened and untouched
- 1.2 million tonnes is left on our plates!

I had not realised that this waste releases such a large amount of CO2 into the atmosphere, thereby adding to global warming. The workshop looked at the theological roots of food, as well as at practical ways of how we can and why we should look at reducing our 'food waste footprint'.

#### 'Tunnel Vision' – Art Workshop

Artist Christine Dawson had art installations on display at the conference (see Christine's website at [www.christinedawsonart.co.uk](http://www.christinedawsonart.co.uk)). I've not been a fan of installation art, possibly due to images presented by some of our high profile Turner prize winning exhibits! (Apologies to fans and the artists). I was very pleasantly surprised by the use of this medium to present social justice issues. It was a wonderful hour given over to a very simple form of creativity. I made a Tunnel book from a few slices of bread, cardboard and glue!

The installation created a very powerful image of 'our daily bread' coming from the land, but from multinational companies. The whole exercise was very much a

community activity, as we sat round a table laughing about the difficulties of gluing, cutting and sticking and discussing the control of our diets and lifestyle by multinational companies. My friend called it my 'piece sculpture' – very funny! Each of us created a piece with pictures of products from a particular multinational company. All of the pieces of work will be exhibited together as a large installation.

Many other issues were discussed at the conference such as,

- GM crops and their effects on farming globally
- Small scale farmers losing their livelihoods to industrialised farming. Many of those who are hungry, are farmers who could produce their own food!
- Large areas of land and precious water being used to produce products such as soya, cereals for animal feed, or crops for biofuels.
- The global food supply is controlled by a few major companies.
- Monsanto patenting seeds so that poor farmers can no longer save seeds to plant next year. They have to buy both seeds and the chemicals required to allow the GM seeds to grow from the company.
- Fairtrade allowing people to have a livelihood other than being trafficked into the sex-industry.

Many of the speakers had written books on their areas of speciality. However, it is sometimes more difficult to

recapture the passion of the speaker in the written word rather than to hear them speak. Fortunately the sessions were recorded on CD. The Commission has ordered them so that anyone wishing to capture the spirit of the sessions can do so.

I would also encourage you to visit the NJPN for more detailed information on the speakers, witnesses and sessions ([www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference.html](http://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/conference.html)).

All in all, the conference was a great experience for me – one which I intend to repeat next year. It was inspiring to meet so many others involved in J&P. It reminded me that there are lots of us out there getting on with J&P in our own corner.



## craighead course

The last opportunity to undertake the Craighead course in integrating life and faith will begin on 2 October.

This year it will be suitable for all those who live within travelling distance of Edinburgh. We have highlighted not only the personal possibilities for growth through this course, but also the growth that comes through working with others. For many participants this has been the most significant, if surprising, aspect of the course.

There are still some places left on the course. If you would like to apply, or would like further information you can contact the Craighead Institute at 0141-332-2733.



# the evil of torture

and what we as christians can do about it

## The following piece is from Action by Christians against Torture

**H**e was just an ordinary 18 year old student, with no interest in politics or in taking part in demonstrations. He happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time in Iran last year when the protests against the rigged elections were taking place. He was picked up, held for almost two weeks and subjected to appalling torture. His shoulder blades and arms were damaged from being hung by his arms, swung round and beaten with cables. There were slashes and bruises on his face and he was bruised all over from the beatings. Only four of his teeth were intact, the rest were broken; he could only speak with great difficulty. Because he had been raped numerous times, his rectum was ruptured. After his release he went home but his father would not take him in. A friend took him to the hospital where he was registered under a false name. The nurses cried as they treated him.

If we came across this story in a newspaper or current affairs item on TV we might well turn the page or change channel and let the memory fade. We might think that torture is not often used in 2010 - that what happened to this teenager in Iran was something that took place only occasionally and not in many countries. We would be horrified to learn that torture did not die out at the end of the 20th century, when its use was routine on arrest in too many countries. After 9/11 the fear of terrorism led to the passage of anti-terrorism laws, often draconian, by a number of governments, including some democracies such as our own, giving rise to further oppression and an increase in torture. A debate started in the UK for instance on the possible use of interrogation in depth (euphemism for torture) in certain circumstances - the so-called 'ticking bomb' scenario.

Torture occurs in over one hundred countries. In a number it is routine on arrest - in India for example those arrested for even minor criminal offences are tortured. Anyone can be subjected to torture - men, women and even children, academics, students, trade unionists, Christians, criminals, lawyers, human rights defenders, environmentalists, indigenous peoples etc. Every torture from medieval times, together with all that the modern mind can devise, are used in police stations, prisons, interrogation centres and 'ghost houses'. No one survives torture unscathed- it results in broken bodies, broken minds and broken spirits. No one is ever the same again. Often the effects last a lifetime. Families are destroyed and communities damaged. It is used as a tool of government, hardly ever admitted and carried out in secret. It is totally banned in international law, even in time of civil war or insurgency. The ban is absolute.

What should we as Christians do about this evil? Can we forget about it or is it an issue that we feel the Holy Spirit is calling us to take up? We remember words from the letter

to the Hebrews where we read 'Remember those in prison as though in prison with them: those who are being tortured, as though yourselves are being tortured.' We also remember that Jesus too was a victim of torture and that he suffers with those who suffer in the same way today. For the Christian, inaction is not a valid option. He calls us to join the fight with others to eliminate this most terrible of evils.

You can take part in the battle and actually make a difference by joining Action by Christians Against Torture, a registered charity, formed in 1984 by the then British Council of Churches, with the support of Amnesty and the Society of Friends. ACAT UK is affiliated to the International Federation of Christians for the Abolition of Torture, based in Paris. It campaigns for individuals and groups of people, who are tortured, under threat of torture, 'disappeared', subjected to extrajudicial execution or who are receiving death threats. It campaigns for ALL - not just those who are Christians or 'acceptable' in our Western eyes. Many of the cases taken up involve human rights defenders and activists. Members are encouraged to write on behalf of victims to government officials and ambassadors etc. Appeals are highly effective - prisoners are released, inquiries started, torture stopped, conditions in prisons improved. Governments of all colours are very careful of their image! A number of Governments and embassies send replies, often long ones, some seeking to justify their actions. In addition ACAT takes up issues involving serious human rights abuses in this country, including the forcible repatriation of failed asylum seekers to countries known to practise torture, in breach of international law.

Information together with draft letters are provided in ACAT's bi-monthly Newsletters. Members can also join the Prisoner Support Scheme and the SOS Torture Campaign. In addition it runs a Christmas Greetings Campaign. This provides lists of victims, imprisoned Christians, human rights groups under threat etc. This List is available to non-members and is used by individual Christians and a number of churches, with no links to our organisation.

Prayer is seen as a vital part of the fight against torture. It stresses the importance of prayer for individuals and groups by name as well as for those who take part in torture. Prisoners on their release have said they felt upheld by the prayer of others. Prayer material and services are available to non-members and churches, together with information about the international Prayer Vigil held at the end of June. Churches as well as individual Christians are encouraged to take part in this. A 'Way of the Cross' for Holy Week is also available.

For more information contact Terry and Eleanor Newland, ACAT Information Office, 8 Southfield, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4LX Tel: 01752 843417 E mail: [acat.uk@gmail.com](mailto:acat.uk@gmail.com)

### Action by Christians Against Torture - Alleged Complicity In Torture – UK.

The Government has decided to set up an inquiry under Sir Peter Gibson, former appeal court judge and an intelligence services commissioner, who has monitored the work of MI5 and MI6 for several years. He will investigate the possible complicity of MI5 in torture. ACAT - UK has long campaigned for such an inquiry. There are however particular concerns over the appointment of Sir Peter Gibson and whether the inquiry will have sufficient authority and independence to ensure the full truth emerges. There are also concerns that new interrogation guidance for intelligence officers recently published, on the questioning of detainees held overseas, could still result in torture. The ACAT office has taken up both these concerns with the appropriate Government ministries; Reprieve has also taken up the issue of the independence of Sir Peter Gibson. It is important to remember that under Article 4 of the UN Convention Against Torture, complicity in torture is prohibited. There may also be problems concerning the calling of witnesses.



# newsbrief . . . newsbrief

**Aid to the Church in Need is hosting two visitors on 17th/18th October.** Bishop Eduardo Kassala is from Southern Sudan where there is significant tension at present around the proposed referendum and the fragile peace agreement. He has also seen many of his people attacked and the victims of abduction and crucifixion by the LRA. Fr. Michael Shields works in Magadan the former Gulag in Siberia where many of his parishioners had served sentences of 15-25 years under the old Communist regime. He also has a very active pro life project supporting women, some of whom have had multiple abortions. They will speak in St Mary's Cathedral Hall in Edinburgh on Sunday 17th October at 5.30pm and then celebrate the 7.30pm evening Mass. On Monday 18th they will speak in St Simon's in Partick at 7pm. Both events are free although there will be a retiring collection. More details are available from Dermot Lamb at 01698 337470 and [www.acnuk.org](http://www.acnuk.org)

**The Scottish Living Wage** has been updated from £7.00 per hour to £7.15. The Scottish Living Wage Campaign which is supported by Faith in Communities Scotland, the Scottish Trade Union Congress, Unison, and the Poverty Alliance set the new living wage level in May. Like the previous rate the new level is set using the Minimum Income Standard (MIS) produced by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and is an estimate of the income required in order to have a minimum acceptable standard of living in the UK today. [www.povertyalliance.org.uk/slw-home.asp](http://www.povertyalliance.org.uk/slw-home.asp)

**Making a Difference: Stories from the Fight Against Poverty in Scotland:** is a collaboration between The Poverty Alliance and Document Festival for the 2010 European Year For Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. 3 films are being made to raise awareness of the reality of poverty in Scotland from the perspective of those who experience it. The films will be screened at The Scottish Parliament on Thursday 30th Sept, in local venues where the films are being produced and showcased at Document 8, 26th – 31st Oct 2010, CCA, Glasgow. Details at [www.povertyalliance.org/events\\_detail.asp?event\\_id=42](http://www.povertyalliance.org/events_detail.asp?event_id=42)

**Leave To Remain** is a feature film about young asylum seekers trying to survive in London. To be released in cinemas and then TV & DVD in 2012. Having spent two years working with asylum seekers developing the plot, the script has now gone off to get funding. In the meantime, the producer has set up a drama and filmmaking school for asylum-seeking children, with the hope of casting the film. 'Our syllabus will teach 30-40 young asylum seekers scriptwriting, acting for camera, vocal work and dance choreography, as well as the techniques of film production: camera, sound and editing. In parallel with their arts-based skills, young people will go through a process of self-development, leadership training and confidence building'. Check out the very powerful website at [www.leave2remain.org](http://www.leave2remain.org)

**The charity Free Tibet** recently reported that their campaign 'Stop Torture in Tibet' has had a success. On 3rd May China announced new regulations that make clear that Courts may not use: Confessions extracted under torture in court proceedings; Testimonies extracted using violence or threats; Evidence whose origins are unclear.

**Enclosed with the magazine** is an order form for 'white poppies'.

**International Day of Peace September 21:** this day is dedicated to peace, or specifically the absence of war, such as might be occasioned by a temporary ceasefire in a combat zone. It is observed annually as a 'day of global ceasefire and non-violence' by many nations, political groups, military groups, and peoples. To inaugurate the day, the 'Peace Bell' is rung at UN Headquarters. The bell is cast from coins donated by children from all continents. It was given as a gift by the Diet of Japan, and is referred to as 'a reminder of the human cost of war'. The inscription on its side reads: 'Long live absolute world peace.'

**Charities warn against forcing disabled people off benefits.** Scottish charities have accused the Westminster Government of threatening to 'heap misery' on disabled Scots by forcing people into work. The Chancellor has said that he wants to cut welfare costs by speeding up plans to transfer Incapacity Benefit claimants to the widely criticised new Employment and Support Allowance scheme. Citizens Advice Scotland, The Poverty Alliance and Child Poverty Action Group are amongst many who have spoken out. Peter Kelly of the Poverty Alliance said 'The Coalition Government has made much of the fact that it is committed to tackling poverty whilst at the same time reforming the welfare state. However so far the rhetoric has not been matched by the action... the kind of changes that are being proposed by the Chancellor will leave many people in a more vulnerable position. These proposals seem driven more by the desire to cut budgets than to cut poverty.' *Source Poverty Alliance Enews July 2010*

**International Day of Democracy September 15.** This day affirms the principles of democracy, the elements and exercise of democratic government. Democracy requires: strong parliaments, free and fair elections, guaranteed human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, active civil society, effective political parties and independent media. UN defines democracy as a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems, and their full participation in all aspects of life. It states that while democracies share common features, there is no single model of democracy, and democracy does not belong to any country or region.

**Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances:** In June this year the Government announced that Frank Field MP had been appointed to lead an independent review into poverty and life chances. Over the coming months the Review team will be consulting with a range of lobby groups, poverty experts, delivery organisations, charities, parents and children. The deadline for submissions is 1 October 2010. The Review will also consider existing evidence on poverty and the factors in childhood that have the biggest impact on future outcomes. The Review is due to report its findings to the Prime Minister at the end of the year. <http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/>

**Human Trafficking:** A recent report by the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group has shed light on the repeated failures of the Government to provide sufficient assistance to victims of trafficking in the UK. The report found that despite new measures to protect victims, they are often not identified as having been trafficked and consequently do not receive the support they are legally entitled to, such as safe accommodation and counselling. In some circumstances trafficked people are charged and imprisoned for crimes committed whilst under the control of their traffickers. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/2vrgq3h> to take action

# keir hardie: labour's greatest hero?

With an eye to the upcoming Labour leadership contest, Alec Porter considers the party's founder in the light of a recent biography.

**T**housands of people in Scotland, who voted Labour out of loyalty or lack of a better alternative, are still wondering where Labour lost its way. They would do well to read and ponder Bob Holman's excellent biography of Keir Hardie, the Scottish miner and founder of the Labour Party.

When Andrew Marr on his TV political programme asked Gordon Brown what went wrong to create such an economic crisis, he replied in one word 'Values'; meaning I suppose, that he and the government did not put the values of the founders of the Labour party first in their own lives and policies. Nor did they warn the country and the bankers that we were living beyond our means and getting into debts we could not pay.

Gordon Brown on the first day he entered number 10 spoke of the values of his parents that he had grown up with. But did he make them central to his government? The same question could be asked of Tony Blair. Keir Hardie said it was the Christianity of Christ that drove him into the Labour movement and kept him on it since. Hardie lived what he talked about – as a selfless and dedicated man. He lived by his conscience. When he was elected MP one of the first questions that he asked in Parliament was, 'Where is the Christian conscience of this country? It ought to be the driving force of social revolution.'

I hope the contenders for the Labour Party leadership will study this book. When they spoke at the first hustings here in Glasgow, it seems to me they were clearer on what they were against than what they were for! To recapture the principles, the passion and the vision of the founder they would do well to study Keir Hardie's life. Hardie believed that socialism is not just an economic theory but a life to be lived and a brotherhood to be created at the heart of it. Henry McNicol called his brilliant video play on the life of Hardie 'The man they could not buy'.

When Hindman, the leader of the Socialist Federation demanded that the philosophy of Marx's class war be incorporated into the founding principles of the Labour Party, Hardie refused saying: 'It is a degradation of the labour movement to drag it down to the level of two contending

factions. Poverty is neither decreed by nature nor ordained by God but is the product of wrong relationships between men.'

Gordon Brown has indicated that he made a mistake in following the lead of Alan Greenspan, chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank, after Greenspan had admitted to a Senate Committee that he had made some serious errors.

Looking at the world situation it is clear that human wisdom is failing, in spite all our intelligence. We need a wisdom beyond our own. Hardie described his experience: 'From the day that I came into public life, I have been directed by an inner life and an inner voice. That voice is above reason, it is beyond intellect and the only times I have been sure of myself are when I have obeyed it.'

Hardie's vision for international socialism was a sort of supra-nationalism. Socialists if united could prevent wars. If workers were united there could be no war. It would need to be socialism with moral and spiritual values. History has proved this true. In Germany in 1933, two Marxist socialist parties were in the majority in the country but they were bitterly divided into communists and democratic socialists. Both parties opposed Hitler, but because they were divided Hitler was able to win the election and establish a government.

Hardie spoke out in parliament against the First World War. He was reviled across the country. When he came to speak at Bangor University in North Wales, towards the end of his life in 1915, my father was the only member of the staff prepared to chair the meeting. My father was the first in our family to stand for Irish Home Rule after generations of Unionists. Hardie was speaking, in those years for Home Rule not only for Ireland but also for India and Scotland. My father developed a high regard for him as a man and for his courage and his far seeing vision. Of course later Labour Governments implemented Home Rule in India, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This is only a small part of his legacy to the modern world.

If you would like to read more of author and activist Bob Holman's life of Keir Hardie, it is available at a reasonable price from Lion Hudson publishers, if you shop around.

## justice and peace conference – 18 September

**T**wo days after the papal visit to Scotland there is another event to celebrate – the Justice and Peace Conference in the Dunkeld Pastoral Centre in Dundee. Long arranged, this event hopes to bring out some of the ways in which we can deal with the problem of poverty in Scotland. The future would seem to suggest that poverty will be on the increase as a result of cutbacks in social welfare and increased unemployment.

The keynote addresses will address the issue of poverty. The Rev Dr Graham Blount, former chair of the Citizens' advice Bureaux and Fellow of the Centre for Theology and Public Issues will combine forces with Cathy McCormack, redoubtable anti poverty campaigner and writer, just back from Australia.

A series of workshops will allow people attending to share their own experiences and learn from those of others. A series of facilitators will take participants through a range of topics and discussions, before the day finishes with mass.

The conference is free but it is essential to book. (Booking form was included in last month's magazine and it is also available on our website). It will be a busy day, so it will be important to get there on time. Remember to bring your lunch, but even more your experiences so that everyone can benefit.



## hats and mitres off to cardinal o'brien . . .

for telling certain Americans where to get off on the release of al Megrahi. The senators, who it seems will be seeking re-election later this year, can't tell the difference between a prisoner transfer agreement and compassionate release. They have confused the two because it allows them to drag in BP as a motive for Scotland releasing al Megrahi. And they are miffed because Scottish ministers have declined their summons to attend an enquiry in the US.

The Cardinal's words (which have also provoked a bitter response in the US) are notable for saying clearly what the more diplomatic speech of politicians has glossed over. 'I too believe that Scottish ministers are accountable to the Scottish Parliament and ultimately the Scottish people alone... At the core of this dispute, there seems to be what might be termed a "clash of cultures". In Scotland over many years we have cultivated through our justice system what I hope can be described as a "culture of compassion". On the other hand, there still exists in many parts of the US, if not nationally, an attitude towards the concept of justice which can only be described as a "culture of vengeance". The Cardinal backed up his assertion with the statistics on US executions.

So much of the Lockerbie affair has been covered up, that we will probably never know the full story. Only those with a vested interest in the official version seem to feel it is sustainable. As Jim Swire has said: 'Those who seem to lust for this man's death should look not at the details of why he was released, but the question of whether he really was guilty.' The real hypocrisy is on the part of those for whom secrecy and cover up is more important than the truth which would allow the relatives of those who died a clear and final answer as to what really happened to their loved ones.



TD

## stop climate chaos scotland

Climate change campaigners can take heart this summer, after what has been a difficult few months, but should not take their eyes off the ball.

Three independent reviews have now clearly supported the science of the Climate Research Unit, based at the University of East Anglia (UEA) in the UK, whose email exchanges were illegally released into the media earlier this year. Those critics who claimed these showed collusion and conspiracy among researchers were proved wrong – there was no evidence of misconduct.

In the latest independent review Sir Muir Russell states that the 'rigour and honesty' of the climate scientists was not in doubt, although he does say that they failed in 'openness'.

It is important at this point to acknowledge the existence of a small group of climate-change deniers who are working hard to discredit the science through a mixture of dirty tricks, spin and inaccurate representation of scientific views. Some of these have links to fossil-fuel companies, part of a clear strategy to undermine on action on climate change.

It may be difficult to predict exactly what a changed climate will look like in detail, but this does not prove that climate change is not happening. Scientists can confidently predict that increases in global average temperature will cause more unpredictable and extreme weather, change rainfall patterns and melt glaciers, permafrost and other ice.

Indeed, pastoralists in Kenya are already struggling with droughts that have increased in incidence four-fold over the past 25 years. And communities in Honduras face hurricanes that are significantly more frequent and severe than before, even allowing for natural variations.

So, the need for Stop Climate Chaos Scotland to continue to campaign on behalf of those who are already experiencing climate change is as strong as ever. Despite the failure of the United Nations climate change conference in Copenhagen, we continue to campaign.

And the public is still behind us. An Ipsos Mori / Cardiff University poll in June 2010 showed that almost three quarters (71%) of Britons are still concerned about climate change. A similar number (70%) believe it is their responsibility to act on climate change, whilst 63% thought they could change their behaviour to help.

In Scotland, a recent Scotsman poll (by George Street Research, published 6 July 2010) showed that 72 per cent of respondents thought that global warming was caused by human activity.

This should encourage us to pick ourselves up and carry on. We have an ambitious Climate Change Act in Scotland. We will work hard to ensure this is implemented, and to ensure that a fair and binding international climate agreement is reached too.

Claire Aston, Christian Aid





# diary diary

## AUGUST

- July 31 - August 29 Scotland's Peace Walk
- 17-21 The Festival of Politics, Scottish Parliament.
- 19 World Humanitarian Day
- 23 International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

## SEPTEMBER

- 8 International Literacy Day
- 12 Racial Justice Sunday
- 15 UN International Day of Democracy
- 16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 18 Justice and Peace Annual Conference 'Poverty in Scotland' A challenge to Justice and Peace
- 21 International Peace Day

## OCTOBER

- 2 International Day of Non-Violence
- 13 International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
- 15 UN International Day for Rural Women
- 16 World Food Day
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 17-24 One World Week
- 24 United Nations Day

Full details and links on the events page of our website  
[www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml](http://www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk/events.shtml)

## Reflections

If we have been too concerned about our own comfort to be concerned for those who suffer; If we have made excuses why we cannot become involved;

If we have failed to recognise Jesus in the faces of the oppressed;

We are not worthy to be called God's people

Michael Evans: *Let my People Go*

We need both a deeper spirituality and a more outspoken witness. If our spirituality can reach the depths of authentic prayer, our lives will become an authentic witness for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, a witness that becomes the context for our prayer.

Out of the depths of authentic prayer comes a longing for peace and a passion for justice. And our response to violence and injustice is to pray more deeply, because only God can show us the way out of the mess that the world is in. And only God gives us the strength to follow that way.

Gordon Matthews: *Quaker Faith and Practice 1989*

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

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