

*Members of a workshop at L'Arche centre, Ma'an Lil-Hayat (Together for Life)*

*Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish  
the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!*

*Ps 90:17*



Members of L'Arche community at work

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# editorial

**A** brief holiday found me gadding about Galloway and Dumfries, following some of the more and less glorious chapters of Christian history in Scotland. It is an area which perhaps justifies the title of historian Daphne Brooke's account of the early times – *Wild Men and Holy Places*. There is one passage on the arrival of Christianity which struck me forcibly. Before Christianity, incessant tribal wars aimed at plunder and slaves were the norm. With conversion, slaving, of the sort which carried Patrick to Ireland, ceased. Daphne Brooke comments: 'As Christians, both Picts and Irish turned much of the energy that had gone into warfare and piracy into the development of creative skills that in both people amounted to genius.'

From the arrival of Christianity with Ninian at Whithorn to the glories of monasteries like Dundrennan and Glenluce there was evidence of this genius. But there was also a darker side: Bruce's sacrilegious murder of Comyn before the high altar of the church of the Greyfriars in Dumfries and his subsequent excommunication; Reformation double dealing by Gilbert Kennedy, 4th Earl of Cassilis, roasting the Commendator in front of an open fire in the monastery of Crossraguel to gain its wealth; and anti-Covenanting brutality that drowned two women at stakes in the Solway tide at Wigtown. It is the pattern of human events, both dark and light, that forms the basis not only of Galloway's but also of Scotland's history.

We are each created in the image and likeness of God. But we are born into a social context, first of family, then the community and then the wider society. This is the limited spatial dimension of who we are. And at any given time we live in a thin sliver of this spatial dimension. This is the moment we are encouraged to live in by the consumer society: the past already forgotten, and the future filled with nothing more than the desires and distractions of the present.

If we choose to live this way in the world, our identity becomes rather like those cartoon books where flicking through dozens of slightly different images gives the illusion of movement and continuity. We live 'in the moment' swayed by fashions, trends and the pressures of the 'opinion formers' around us; but we have lost our true self in the midst of all these projections. In order to maintain continuity, we need to be aware of our history, our place in time. To live honestly in the present means to be aware of our past as well as being clear about what is drawing us into the future.

For Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk and spiritual writer, the distraction of these false selves is a fundamental cause of contemporary anxiety and spiritual alienation. 'The tragedy of a life cantered on "things", on the grasping and manipulation of objects, is that such a life closes the ego upon itself, as though it were an end in itself, and throws it into a hopeless struggle with other perverse and hostile selves competing together for the possession, which will give them power and satisfaction.'

This is the danger of globalisation. Rather than engaging our true selves, what we find is there can only be constant anxiety the 'hopeless struggle with other perverse and hostile selves competing together for ... possession'. 'Perverse' because it runs contrary to our

proper humanity; and 'hostile' because it is opposed to anything other than self-interest and indifferent to the human damage it will cause. In such a world there can only be constant anxiety - peering over our shoulder to see who might be after us; and alienation of the spirit – dissociation from our fellow creatures, who must be seen as the others, the enemy constantly seeking to undermine us. We are back in the world of warfare and piracy sustained by greedy fantasies and it is a bleak prospect.

We might want to sidestep this by pretending that the Kingdom is not of this world entirely, until we remember that these words were already uttered in the shadow of the cross. We might wish that 'war'l'y cares an war'l'y men/ May a gae tapsalteerie'; but it only brings home more profoundly the extent of our economic, political and cultural constraints. We cannot simply opt out of the world. Our possessions possess us and our attachments hold us back: like the rich young man in the gospel who rejects the invitation of Jesus, and who goes away saddened because of his many possessions; despite Jesus 'having looked upon him and loved him' (Mark 10:21-2).

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, as the American philosopher George Santayana reminds us.

But the gift of faith allows us to see history redeemed by the Incarnation, as we allow ourselves to respond to God's unconditional love. Here, instead of the endless cravings and distractions of jaded appetite, we are drawn into a divine communion, which recalls the meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well in John's gospel: 'Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again. But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life"' (John 4:13-14).

Otherwise, in a material world that is intent on business as before for the rich and powerful at the expense of everyone else, there has been no real learning; rather a wilful and selfish ignorance. The whole dynamic is about what I can do for me and mine. This in turn leads to the kind of ethnic nationalism we find too often in the UK today, inward and defensive, lacking compassion, and destined to implode on itself.

The alternative is outward looking and compassionate, concerned for other people, where my wellbeing is seen as inseparably connected to the common good of all. Unconcerned with economic profit or political leverage, there is an openness, even a vulnerability, which allows for a real identity rooted in more than passing circumstance. It is an identity discovered and affirmed through others; spiritually it is nourished by the interaction of self, God and neighbour. We move from what is simply a way of life to a way of spirit, which for Christians is living in Christ. Its risk and its consolation is well described by Fr Gustavo Gutierrez, the Peruvian theologian of liberation: 'Spirituality is a community enterprise. It is the passage of a people through the solitude and dangers of the desert, as it carves out its own way in the following of Jesus Christ. This spiritual experience is the well from which we must drink. From it we draw the promise of resurrection' (*We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 137).

Tim Duffy



# Measuring Scotland's quality of life: The Humankind Index

**Oxfam Scotland recently published a new and more broadly based attempt to measure wellbeing in Scotland. Here Katherine Trebeck, Oxfam's Research and Policy Adviser for Poverty in the UK outlines the project and initial results for Scotland**

So as the usual economic statistics tell us that we're entering a stage of 'recovery', we need to think about what it is we want to recover. What is important to salvage from the car crash that was the financial crisis? The answer to that question might be in the Oxfam Humankind Index, the new measure of Scotland's prosperity, launched today by Oxfam Scotland.

This is not another top-down measure of the country's economic growth, like GDP. Rather, it measures Scotland's overall prosperity based on the things that people told us really matter to them, and we hope to use it to help policymakers drive Scotland's recovery in the right direction.

The consultation process revealed that it's the quality of growth that is most important to people. For example, satisfaction derived from work is one of the top priorities, not work itself. Security and sufficiency of income are important to people, not having loads and loads of dosh. The quality of our environment, strength of friendships, and the safety of those we care about are also key factors. And above all are health and housing.

With the help of the New Economics Foundation and the Fraser of Allander Institute, we assessed how Scotland is performing against those areas of life that are key to people's prosperity. What we saw was that since 2007-2008 our prosperity has increased 1.2% (to 2009-2010). Scotland appears to have become more, if only slightly more, prosperous. This is good news, but mainly due to non-economic factors such as health, community spirit and better local environments. The assessment shows that the country's overall prosperity increased by 1.2% between 2007-08 and 2009-10, largely due to improvements in how people felt about their health and community spirit.

This rise in prosperity could have been larger, but was hampered by the impact of the economic downturn on the Scots. We found that between 2007-08 and 2009-10, there was a 43% fall in people's financial security, a 26% fall in the number of Scots feeling they had secure and suitable work, and a 24% fall in the number who thought they had enough money. The areas connected to the economic aspects of life seem to be actually deteriorating. The lack of secure jobs, and the dire need for a stable and sufficient source of money are dragging Scotland's prosperity down. But

even though prosperity is rising, it doesn't fool anyone. It's a sign of growing inequality.

We also concluded that the country's most deprived communities are lagging behind, with a 10% gap in people's health compared with Scotland as a whole, a 16% gap in how people are managing financially and a 40% gap in issues around the quality and safety of the local environment.

Crucially, our deprived communities are failing to get a share of the improvements to the country's overall prosperity. They lag behind not just in terms of having enough money, but also in the fields of health, housing, the local environment, feeling safe and community spirit. These gaps reflect the extent of inequality in Scotland - its impact stretches beyond money to all aspects of life. It will take action in areas beyond the

economy to ensure Scotland's most deprived communities are no longer being deprived of the greater prosperity enjoyed in the rest of our country.

But closing this gap will not happen by simply pursuing economic growth without regard to its quality or distribution. What is concerning about current moves to return to business as usual is that the business itself wasn't that healthy, nor was 'usual' that useful to our poorest and most vulnerable communities. Instead, we need to pursue an economy that works for the people, not the other way around, and an economy that works for all of us, and not just the few of us. This is the shift we hope the Oxfam Humankind Index will help catalyse.

For Oxfam, the financial crisis provides an opportunity to re-prioritise our goals, focusing

on what is really most important to people and what is most influential on our prosperity and sustainability. The Oxfam Humankind Index is helping us to reset our national compass to point us in a new direction - one that guides us towards greater real prosperity for all the people of Scotland.

We hope this Index will help the Government to focus on what really matters, and to make more informed decisions about where Scotland wants to go. We want to ensure that policymakers make policies that bring real prosperity to Scotland, not just policies that try to advance economic growth regardless of the cost on communities or our environment. It's about remembering that the economy should serve the people, not the other way around.



# The Olympic Spirit

**K**amel Kichane has managed the *Cafe Olympic* in Stratford, East London, for several years. He was recently told by The London



Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) that under the terms of copyright he must change the name of the café. Rather than pay the estimated £3,000 to change the shop sign he simply brushed out the 'O' of 'Olympic'. I hope that this article doesn't brush out the rest.

The Olympics were conceived as a means of bringing together athletic prowess and furthering reconciliation among nations. The founder of the modern games, Pierre De Coubertin espoused the views of his time about the health and social benefits of athletics. 'Citius Altius Fortius' – 'Faster, Higher, Stronger' is the motto; borrowed by de Coubertin from his friend Henri Didon, a French Dominican priest who was a notable preacher and also an athletics fan.

This is in keeping with an understanding of the place of sport in Catholic Social Teaching: 'In fact, the common good depends on a healthy *social pluralism*... To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged 'on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs' (*Compendium*, n151).

We have moved a long way, however, from the international celebration of amateur sport to the intense nationalistic promotion fest of today's games, bristling with protective legislation for sponsors and their 'intellectual property'. Sport is little more than incidental window dressing to the business of making money. Eric Liddell would certainly not recognise it.

Thus the budding Olympian can train on an ideal diet of McDonalds and Coca-Cola – TOP Partners at this year's Olympics. Others include Dow Chemicals (remember Bhopal), Visa, Procter and Gamble (fined 211.2m euros by the European Commission in April 2011, for establishing a price-fixing cartel in Europe along with Unilever), and Atos, whose UK Healthcare division provides controversial disability assessments for people claiming a range of disability benefits, including Employment Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Disability Living Allowance and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

Then there is security company G4S, the world's second-largest private sector employer (after Wal-Mart Stores). Its American group provided security guards who prevented journalists trying to report the oil spill by BP (another sponsor). It is also involved with the transport of prisoners, who almost always reach their destinations; and asylum seekers, where there have been allegations of racism and brutality. G4S was also announced as preferred bidders for asylum seeker housing and has now signed contracts with the UK Border Agency procurement agency.

Lloyds TSB was up to its oxters in toxic debts and is now over 40% owned by the UK taxpayer. It has a dubious relationship with the arms trade, suspended aid destined for Gaza and is notable as a 'Presenting Partner' of the carrying of the Olympic Torch Relay around Britain. Torches are offered to those taking part in the relay for £199. These are then being sold on by the owners through E Bay for many thousands of pounds.

The torch is of course an innovation, introduced at the 1936 Olympics by those great supporters of fairness and international harmony, Dr Goebbels and Adolf Hitler. Indeed Hitler apparently described the Olympic movement as 'an invention of Jews and Freemasons' before being converted to its propaganda value for the Nazis.

This hardly exhausts the list of sponsors, but it is worth remembering that Olympic sponsorship currently generates 40% of the overall revenue of the games. Then there is personal enrichment in an event originally designed for amateurs. Usain Bolt (currently worth about £6 million) has

been flogging Virgin broadband in an advert that had to be withdrawn as misleading. Michael Phelps, the much medalled swimmer, is completely focussed on getting rid of dandruff as part of his lucrative contract endorsing Head and Shoulders shampoo for Procter and Gamble.

For all of this corporate and personal enrichment, the UK taxpayer is still picking up a large part of the tab. Public sector funding of £9.3 billion is accounted for although the final cost is 'inherently uncertain' and may be more than double this figure. This includes £2.2 billion of lottery funding from the National Raffle – taken from the poor and other socially useful projects to the already subsidy bloated London.

The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federation, the global union representing workers in the garment industry, released a damning report in May on working conditions in Asian sportswear supply chains. 'This report highlights how factories supplying multinational sports and garment brands, many of whom will be kitting out teams for the London 2012 Olympics, are routinely breaking every rule in the book when it comes to labour rights', says Patrick Itschert, General Secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF).

People are forced into what is called 'precarious work', including temporary contract and fixed-term employment, agency work, bogus self-employment, individual contracts, seasonal work, zero hours contracts, on call or daily hire and day labour. Workers are regularly denied written contracts, sick pay, pay when taking annual leave and separation payments at the end of their employment period. In China, children were also found to be making pin badges, which is in direct contravention of Chinese labour law and LOCOG's code of practice.

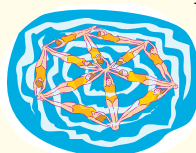
Then there is security (main contract reportedly worth £300 million for Olympic sponsor G4S). In the paranoid world of post 9/11, the 'Olympics is a tremendous opportunity to showcase what the private sector can do in the security space', according to a Whitehall official. Overall private sector security costs have already doubled in the last year to over half a billion pounds; and that's before you factor in the cost of more troops than we have in Afghanistan and an unknown number of extras.

The situation has been well summarised by Professor Stephen Graham of Newcastle University: 'contemporary Olympics are society on steroids. They exaggerate wider trends. Far removed from their notional or founding ideals, these events dramatically embody changes in the wider world: fast-increasing inequality, growing corporate power, the rise of the homeland security complex, and the shift toward much more authoritarian styles of governance utterly obsessed by the global gaze and prestige of media spectacles.'

'Media spectacles' would be an excellent translation of what the Roman poet Juvenal meant when he spoke of 'bread and circuses': the public shows by which the powerful distracted the mob from any concerted action and asserted their own empty vanity and corporate power. In the main, the directing vision of the Olympics is currently nearer Hitler than de Coubertin.

Remove the poisonous nationalism and the need for massive security goes with it. Remove the obsession with medals and you get to a situation that has been well described in this way: 'Victory isn't defined by wins or losses. It is defined by effort. If you can truthfully say, "I did the best I could, I gave everything I had", then you're a winner.' It is worth remembering that most of the athletes are simply in it for the sport that they enjoy and have made sacrifices for it; as are the 240,000 who applied to work as volunteers. But that is not the priority. Imagine a world in which athletes could perform in their sport, regardless of what they wear (after all, Greek athletes performed naked), or what country they come from, only glorying only in the wonderful capabilities of the human body. And yes, I suppose that even embraces synchronised swimming.

Tim Duffy



## International Prayer Vigil to say **NO to torture**

**T**o mark the United Nations Day of Support for Victims of Torture, Action by Christians Against Torture (ACAT) calls all Christians to pray on this particular day for the tortured and their families. This annual International Prayer Vigil will be held on the night of June 23rd.

The Prayer Vigil's theme for this year is: *'a still small voice'* (1 Kings 19:12). ACAT invites everyone to meditate on the meaning of this sentence. Who does this voice belong to? It might be God's voice but also ours. Too often our whispers are barely audible to people under pressure and those victims destroyed in body and mind. But our voices could bring hope if only we took a moment to listen in our busy and loud world to these cries for help.

Last year, thirty countries round the world were united on this one night in prayer. Why not join with other Christians in this international action? Each one of us can make a difference praying for a few minutes at home, lighting candles and interceding for individual victims, meeting with friends, asking your church for a specific prayer at Sunday services etc. Any and all participation will be welcome. Further information [www.acatuk.org.uk](http://www.acatuk.org.uk)

Whoever tortures a human being,  
Whoever abuses a human being,  
Whoever outrages a human being  
Abuses God's image,  
And the church takes as its own  
That cross, that martyrdom.  
(Archbishop Romero)

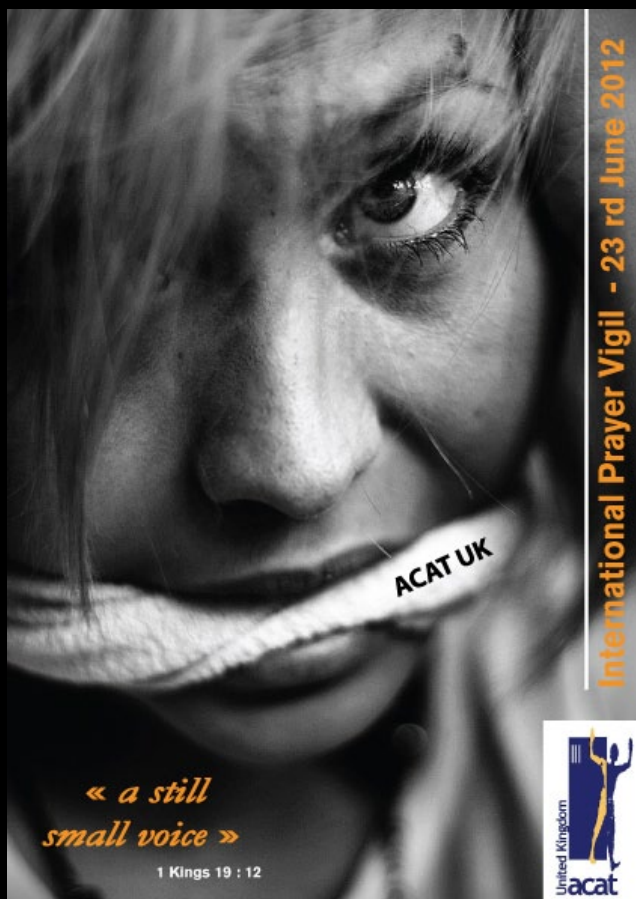
## The True Prison

It is not the leaking roof  
Nor the singing mosquitoes  
In the damp, wretched cell  
It is not the clank of the key  
As the warder locks you in  
It is not the measly rations  
Unfit for man or beast  
Nor yet the emptiness of day  
Dipping into the blankness of night  
It is not  
It is not  
It is not.  
It is the lies that have been drummed  
Into your ears for one generation  
It is the security agent running amok  
Executing callous calamitous orders  
In exchange for a wretched meal a day  
The magistrate writing into her book  
Punishment she knows is undeserved  
The moral decrepitude  
Mental ineptitude  
The meat of dictators  
Cowardice masking as obedience  
Lurking in our denigrated souls  
It is fear damping trousers  
We dare not wash of our urine  
It is this  
It is this  
It is this  
Dear friends, turns our free world  
Into a dreary prison.

A poem by Ken Saro-Wiwa, the Nigerian writer and dissident who was hanged in 1995 by the Abacha dictatorship after a show trial.

Kenule 'Ken' Beeson Saro Wiwa (October 10, 1941 – November 10, 1995) was a Nigerian author, television producer, environmental activist, and winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize. Saro-Wiwa was a member of the Ogoni people, an ethnic minority in Nigeria whose homeland, Ogoniland, in the Niger Delta has been targeted for crude oil extraction since the 1950s and which has suffered extreme and unremediated environmental damage from decades of indiscriminate petroleum waste dumping. Initially as spokesperson, and then as President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Saro-Wiwa led a non-violent campaign against environmental degradation of the land and waters of Ogoniland by the operations of the multinational petroleum industry, especially Shell. He was also an outspoken critic of the Nigerian government, which he viewed as reluctant to enforce environmental regulations on the foreign petroleum companies operating in the area.

At the peak of his non-violent campaign, Saro-Wiwa was arrested, hastily tried by a special military tribunal and hanged in 1995 by the military government of General Sani Abacha, all on charges widely viewed as entirely politically motivated and completely unfounded. His execution provoked international outrage and resulted in Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth of Nations for over 3 years.

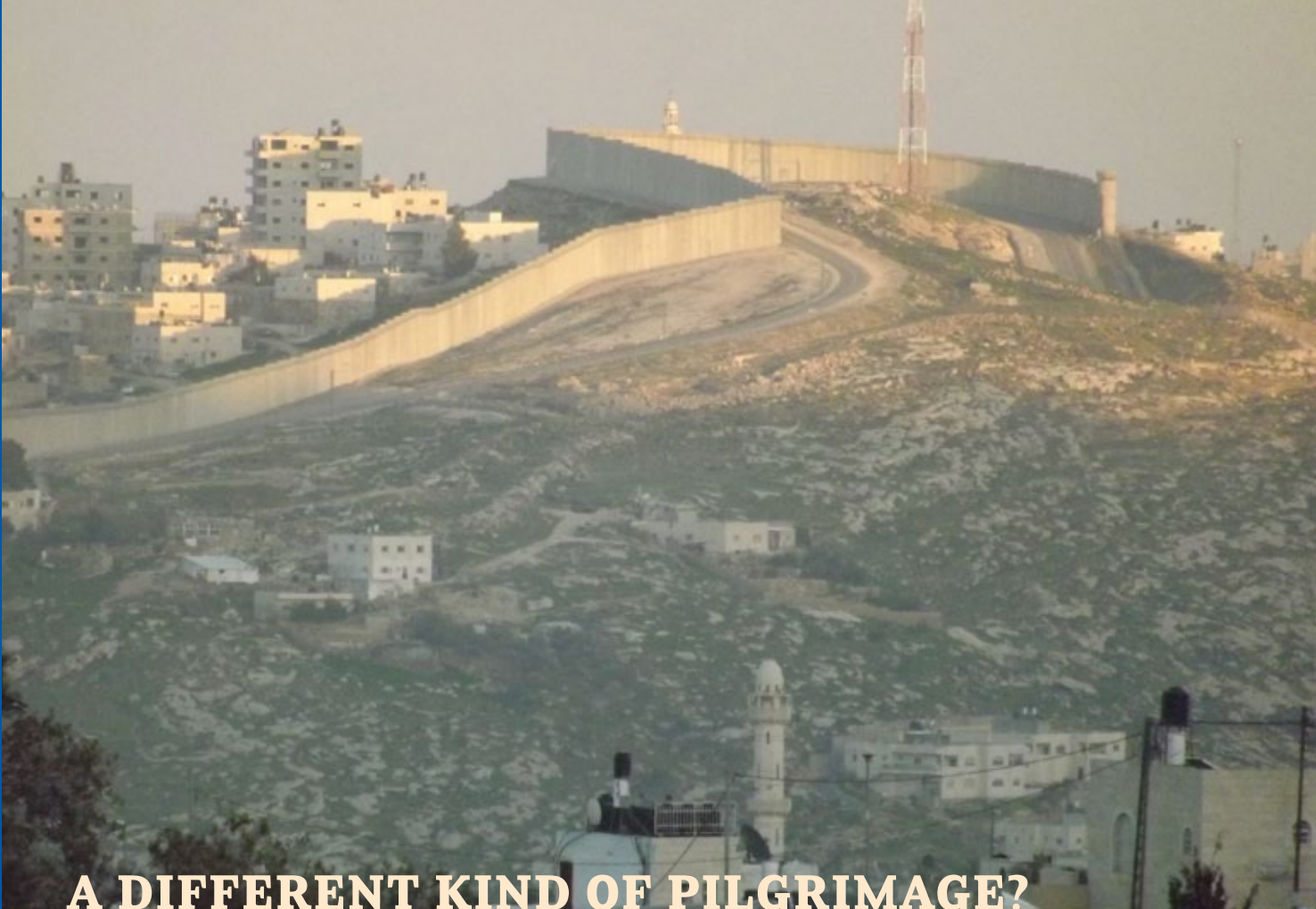


International Prayer Vigil - 23 rd June 2012

« a still  
small voice »

1 Kings 19 : 12





## A DIFFERENT KIND OF PILGRIMAGE?

Molly McGavigan looks back on a recent visit to Israel/Palestine

**R**ecently I visited that part of the world which historically I know better than many others. Week in and week out I read the names: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee, Hebron. These and so many more are places that I could place on a map but that map would be historical not political. Trying to comprehend the politics and geography of these places today is much more complex. Most people to whom I said that I was visiting Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories asked if I was going 'on a pilgrimage' to the Holy Land and my answer was 'NO'. This was because I was not going with a tour, I was not going with an organised group. I was not going with a church based outfit. Sadly the response to this nearly always expressed fear about the wisdom of such a visit and concern for my safety even although I explained that I would be visiting, and in some cases staying with, friends. My visit was in fact with two Scottish friends and colleagues and we had a slightly different agenda from that of the pilgrim tours. Therefore I did not think I could be going on a pilgrimage! Rather I was going to support *OliveTree*.

*Olive Tree* is the name of a small organisation which is based in the home of the couple who run it in Renfrewshire. It exists to help the Palestinian people in various ways: by talking to people here in Scotland to raise awareness of the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories; by buying crafts from small producers in these areas to sell mainly around the West of Scotland; by distributing any monies made from these sales to different groups - mainly Christian - in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. *Olive Tree* is supported by a group of helpers and all those connected with Olive Tree are volunteers. The main purpose of our visit was to buy crafts to restock

the supplies of goods available for sales here at home and to pass on money to a number of organizations/charities.

But, of course, it is not possible to travel to such interesting places without doing some 'sightseeing/visiting'. And yes - I was overawed by standing on the Mount of Olives looking out from the Church of *Dominus Flevit*; joining with others in Sunday Mass in the Church of the Nativity; sitting in silence in the lovely little quiet chapel of the Franciscans while chaos reigned in the main part of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This contrast of turmoil and peace probably sums up my feelings about my experience of the Holy Sites: among bustle, noise, bartering, checkpoints and heavily armed soldiers there were sudden moments of true calm and the awareness of being in a sacred place. So yes it was a privilege to be able to walk on hallowed ground. But all of this was overshadowed by the political and military situation.

A short trip such as I made does not give one the right to talk with any authority about a complex land whose troubles reach back for so many years and have such a multitude of layers and difficulties. All I can do is describe what I saw.

- The view from where I stayed in Jerusalem gave me sight of acres and acres of desolate land cleared to erect the monstrosity which is called a wall of security by some or the apartheid wall by others
- A new highway sweeping through and tunnelled under Bethlehem but separated from it by fencing, open for use only to those with Israeli plates on their cars

- The tired faces of those who had stood for I don't know how long to have their passes examined before being 'allowed' to cross through checkpoints from Bethlehem into Jerusalem
- The anxiety that is seen when people are awaiting the outcome of applications for passes and the resulting feeling of being trapped if no pass is obtained.
- The vast new settlements towering over Bethlehem built illegally on land taken from Palestine and the separate roads constructed to reach them along which Palestinians may not drive
- The presence of armed soldiers guarding the settlers as they waited at a bus stop
- The vast numbers of tourists staying in Israel compared with the day trippers into the sites in Palestine
- The encroaching of Israeli families into 'old' Palestinian areas barricading themselves into houses flying the Israeli flag.

Because of the purpose and nature of my visit I did not have the chance to meet any Israelis and I was sorry not to be able to do so because I know there are many who are working for peace and probably many more who yearn for peace. As I said already this is simply one person's experience of one short visit.

I did meet so many welcoming, warm, hardworking, interested and interesting Palestinians. In general life is a struggle for them, whether it is trying to obtain a permit to work on the Israeli side, to get to a hospital,

to visit divided family or to manage school fees for their children. All are affected by the presence of the wall mostly built on Palestinian land and planned to be 470 miles long. It is already 8 metres high in places.

We visited a women's cooperative where the most beautiful embroidery is produced, a ceramics factory where we saw the pottery being handpainted, an olive wood workshop and various jewellery makers. As we walked home late one evening in Bethlehem we passed a garage where the mother and father of the family were carving little crosses presumably after their children were in bed!

We were invited in to watch as they worked. We were also invited to different groups which *Olive Tree* has supported in the past but the most memorable was our visit to the L'Arche centre, Ma'an Lil-Hayat (Together for Life) where different groups were working on the various stages to produce felt nativity scenes. Sadly as we left this haven we realised that we were overlooking or rather being overlooked by one of the newest settlements being built illegally. This dominates the skyline from so many points.

We had only one day at the end of our visit to get back through the checkpoints, collect our thoughts and all the many goods we had purchased. Fortunately this last day was spent in the haven which is the Church of Scotland guest house and also with friends who live in Jerusalem. This gave me a little space to reflect on what had been eight busy days of contrasting emotions, many highs and lows.

I am still reflecting but have not recovered from the anger I feel because of the injustice I saw.

Perhaps I was on a pilgrimage.....

***"I feel freedom and for the first time, my voice and opinion really counts."***

Mounira Fawaz, after casting her vote in the Egyptian presidential elections, the first democratic election in the country's history. (Source: Al Jazeera)

## Veterans for Peace UK launched

**V**eterans for Peace UK held its inaugural meeting on Easter Sunday. Eleven veterans attended the meeting. The meeting started with the reading of The Statement of Purpose. This was followed by an extended discussion where there was a good exchange of experiences.

The aims of VFP UK were laid out. These are:

- To resist war through non-violent action
- To support war resisters
- To counter militarism and educate on the true nature of war

Gerry Condon (VFP USA) explained that even though there are many pacifists within VFP it is not a pacifist organisation. Bruce Kent spoke about resistance from within the British Army which is not well known.

The public launch was well attended. Barry Ladendorf who served in Vietnam with the US Navy talked about the true costs of war. Jim Radford who was at D-Day and served in the Royal Navy spoke about his long history within the peace movement and also performed two songs. Gerry Condon, who refused to deploy to Vietnam after training as a Special Forces Medic, spoke about the

work of VFP and the plight of Bradley Manning.

Mike Lyons who served as a medic on submarines in the Royal Navy spoke about being a conscientious objector and being jailed for refusing to serve in Afghanistan. Matthew Horne who served in Iraq with the Scots Guards spoke about his experiences at Occupy London. Scot Albrecht who served in the US Air Force during the cold war spoke about his work with refugees and his history of resistance to war. Danny Martin who served with the Royal Signals in Iraq read two of his poems, one of which is published on the VFP UK website. John McClean sang some very powerful songs.

Rob Green a former Royal Navy Commander who served at Northwood HQ during the Falklands war spoke about how important it was for veterans to organise themselves for peace. Further personal accounts came from Adnan Sarwar who served in Iraq with a bomb disposal unit and was also attached to the USMC; and John Lyons who was conscripted into the British Army in 1946 and has a long history within the peace movement.

The group has a Facebook page and a website:

[www.veteransforpeace.org.uk](http://www.veteransforpeace.org.uk)

# High Pay – what can we do?

**E**xcessive executive pay is of growing concern to the public. Recent press reports have highlighted that executive remuneration has been growing much faster than either other people's pay or share value and that company boards have largely failed to curtail this.

The government has suggested that it is up to shareholders to apply the pressure on boards to get a grip on executive remuneration.

The majority of us will be shareholders in large stock market-listed companies (FTSE 100), through our pension funds if in no other way. Many readers will hold shares through nominees or pooled investment vehicles.

You may think that as a small indirect shareholder, who may never receive company reports or even be aware of which companies you are invested in, you can't have any real influence on the big companies. You might feel that you don't understand how the stock market and shareholding works.

But however small your holdings, someone will manage them for you. And you can ask for action by that intermediary body on your behalf on the issue of high pay.

## Suggested Actions

1. Email your pension fund or stocks and shares ISA provider at the click of a button through the FairPensions Your Say on High Pay web page to ask them to vote against excessive remuneration at company AGMs this year: [www.fairpensions.org.uk/highpay](http://www.fairpensions.org.uk/highpay).
2. Write a more in-depth letter to the managers of your pension fund, ISA, unit trust, or to your investment broker:
  - A. Raising your concern about the failure of company boards to curtail excessive executive remuneration.
  - B. Asking them to use the current AGM season to question companies on your behalf about executive pay. Key questions might include:
    - (i) Does the company's executive incentive plan specifically link into company strategy and objectives?
    - (ii) Has the company awarded transaction related bonuses and "golden hellos" and, if so, will it end this practice?
    - (iii) Has the company adjusted performance targets on incentive plans if the initial ones are not achieved and, if so, will it end this practice?
    - (iv) What is the maximum bonus (variable pay) the company offers as a percentage of base salary?
    - (v) What is the ratio between the highest and lowest pay levels in the company?
  - C. Urging them to vote against remuneration proposals that do not address these questions satisfactorily.

*Helen Boothroyd, ECCR (Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility) [www.eccr.org.uk](http://www.eccr.org.uk)*

## July 18th, 2012 Nelson Mandela Day

**T**o mark Mandela Day which is increasingly recognised internationally as a day for voluntary public service there will be a dispatch of ACTSA Scotland's ninth container-load of books for Eastern Cape Province, South Africa, the books will be sent off from Hillhead Library, Glasgow.

ACTSA are looking for a large number of volunteers as they expect to load the container directly from the basement of the library to the container lorry, which means 1000 boxes of books being carried up two flights of stairs (one indoors from the basement; the other from the car park to the lane).

Having the send-off on the 18th of July is the result of discussion between the STUC, the Scottish Government and ACTSA about how best to mark Mandela Day in Scotland. There will be other events that day as well, and the intention is to make this an annual focus in Scotland as it is in South Africa and elsewhere.

More details will be available from the ACTSA Secretary at [johnnelson48@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnnelson48@yahoo.co.uk) but please put the date in your diary - especially if you might be able to help with the loading.



Photograph: South Africa The Good News  
[www.sagoodnews.co.za](http://www.sagoodnews.co.za)

## PRAYER FOR THE TORTURED

Loving Lord Jesus, you cried out to your Father from the cross;  
hear the cries of those who have been abandoned,  
the tortured, the disappeared, those awaiting their execution,  
those held incommunicado in detention.

Hear the cries of desolation of their loved ones.

For those oppressed by grief, remember, O Lord, your agony.

You, who came out of the tomb alive, open your garden of life to death's captives.

Christ, in agony to the end of the world, remembers all who suffer.

Speak to them your words of comfort.

May they know that you are there with them,

in their loneliness, their fear, their suffering.

Lord of Life, stay the hand of the torturer and the executioner  
and open prison doors. Amen

Action by Christians Against Torture



# Development in an Unequal World

John Dornan reviews the latest edition of a development classic:

*'In some respects the world is a much better place today than it was in 1990... Many people around the world have experienced dramatic improvements... They are healthier, more educated and wealthier and have more power... nonetheless, nearly 7 billion people now inhabit the earth. Some live in extreme poverty – others in gracious luxury.'*



About two years ago, the editor of 80:20 sent me a spoof press release announcing that poverty had been named as the eighth wonder of the world, given that it had outlasted virtually every other man-made construction. In his introduction to this 6th edition, Colm Regan pointedly reminds us that poverty in our time is not a result of natural scarcity but 'a set of priorities imposed on the rest of the world by the rich'.

Over the past 28 years, this series has placed the realities of global poverty in front of its readers in a variety of formats and the latest edition takes this further with the inclusion of a DVD of additional visual material, ideas for using the book as well as the entire text in searchable format. It also provides links to further sources of accurate information and there is a website ([www.8020.ie](http://www.8020.ie)) which will enable users of the book to learn from each other as it is used in different contexts.

But do we need another book on poverty? Only if you need to re-engage with the debates and questions or if, in the words of the editor, "We consistently fail to make the connections – between our well-being and the ill-being of others, between conspicuous consumption and deprivation, between 'them' and 'us'. We acquiesce in a set of 'resistances' that paralyse and disempower, that tell us that change is not possible despite the evidence of change before us."

The editor, Colm Regan, describes himself as an educational activist, and has dedicated this latest edition to 'educators worldwide who continue to teach not just what is but also what is possible'. The purpose of the book is to ask hard questions about the persistence of poverty and deprivation:

- Why do 529,000 women die annually from complications of pregnancy and childbirth when this could be ended for the cost of a single Stealth Bomber?
- Why do so many lack clean water and effective sanitation when providing it would cost just over half of the annual expenditure on cosmetic surgery in the USA?
- Why is there no declaration of war against poverty when raising the 40% of humanity living below the \$2 a day line would cost \$300 billion annually, a fraction of the estimated \$1.29 trillion cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan up to the end of 2011?

This book does not simply seek to inform or even map out the scale of poverty but challenges those who open it to decide how we feel about what we learn: to bring our values and emotions to bear as well as our knowledge and skills. Unlike previous generations we cannot claim 'not to know'. We can choose to act for change or not but we cannot remain 'neutral'.

Throughout its 16 chapters, 80:20 combines up to date information with challenging perspectives, attractive graphic displays and cartoons alongside the matter-of-fact accounts of the people whose lives make up the statistics which can often de-personalise the reality of

their daily struggles. From inhabitants of a shanty town in South Africa taking control of cleaning up their area, to a Brazilian domestic worker inspired to join a union fighting for workers' rights, to the South African activists taking on 39 international drugs companies for the right to affordable treatments for HIV, there are case studies which remind us time and again that the marginalised, disregarded and excluded have names, families, hopes, fears and dreams.



The graphic presentation pages lend themselves to use in wall displays for schools or church porches. The numerous quotations offer ample material for reflection and inspiration, and the introduction alone brings a passion to the field of development, justice and rights reminiscent of Martin Luther King's oratory on civil rights.

On the personal level, I am still appalled by the simple fact, eloquently and visually presented on the DVD by Judi Dench and Daniel Craig, that no country on the planet treats its women the same as its men.

From sustainable development to human rights, from the rights of women to conflict over resources, from aid to empowerment, there is an entry point into this book for everyone. The authors make no claims to have written the last word but it provides comprehensive coverage of the major questions with guidance towards other sources (particularly other Third World sources – and there's a term that causes endless debate in itself) and will be of value to teachers, students and interested individuals. Try it for yourself, but be sure that it will disturb and challenge your conscience.

*[80:20, Development in an Unequal World, (6th Edition) with accompanying DVD, is available from the Scottish Development Education Centre, 3 Stafford Street, Edinburgh, EH3 7AU. Tel: 0131 226 1499, or through [www.seedsforlearning.org.uk](http://www.seedsforlearning.org.uk) Price £17.50 plus p&p, discount available for bulk orders.]*

# Newsbrief . . . Newsbrief

**Afghanistan:** Afghan prisoners are systematically tortured while in custody to obtain confessions, according to the UN Mission in Afghanistan, which interviewed 379 prisoners, including teenagers. Abuse occurred in 47 facilities. Torture included being hung by wrists from walls and ceilings, beatings with rubber hoses and electric cables, twisting and wrenching of genitals, removing of toenails, threats of sexual abuse and electric shocks. Some of the worst and most common allegations occurred at the National Directorate of Security in Kabul, called 'Hell' by the inmates. (Source United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan)

**Design contracts awarded for Trident Replacement Submarines:** Contracts worth £350m have been signed by the Ministry of Defence for design of 'Successor' Trident replacement submarines. In a written Parliamentary statement Peter Luff, Minister for Defence Equipment, Support, and Technology, announced that contracts had been awarded for the first 18 months of work on the design and assessment phase of the Successor submarine programme, representing the start of a rolling programme of work on this phase of the programme. More info at <http://bit.ly/Lr3FN2> (source Nuclear Information Service)

**The Trade Justice newsletter** contains introductory articles on investment and some key cases, but here is a flavour of what's happening: tobacco giant Philip Morris is suing Uruguay for legislating to put health warnings on its cigarette packaging; the UK Children's Investment Fund is suing India because, they claim, they are losing profits due to government's coal pricing decision; British Gas tried to sue Argentina for loss of profits following a price freeze on gas – a decision taken in response to its sovereign debt default; Swedish energy company Vattenfall is planning to sue Germany for its decision to move away from nuclear power. This list goes on. We think a system that allows companies to have such significant influence over national policy making needs urgent reform. Organisations across Europe are mobilising to challenge it and to ensure the new European investment policy is much more balanced. To see full newsletter visit [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk)

**Fair Trade:** The paper for the SQA (Scottish Qualification Authority) Geography Standard Grade, Credit Level examination on 8 May included the question "Explain the benefits of Fair Trade for Developing Countries". Well done SQA.

**A Brazilian government agency** says that it has as its top priority saving the Amazon Awá tribe - as Survival International says that a new government survey finds them outnumbered ten-to-one by invaders. The survey estimates that there could be up to 4,500 ranchers, loggers and settlers now occupying just one of the four territories inhabited by the Awá, whose total population now stands at no more than 450, many living un-contacted in the remaining forest, many of them survivors of brutal massacres. Hired guns are known to have been paid \$60 per Awá head by unscrupulous landowners and speculators in the past. They live in the North East of Brazil, in the Maranhao State, at the heart of the Tiracambu sierra. The government has been receiving tens of thousands of messages following a campaign launched last month by the actor Colin Firth. Read more at [www.care2.com/causes/brazilian-tribe-on-brink-of-extinction.html](http://www.care2.com/causes/brazilian-tribe-on-brink-of-extinction.html)

**United Nations Chooses Mugabe as a 'Leader for Tourism':** Never mind that Robert Mugabe is under a travel ban for his cruel stewardship of Zimbabwe since independence. The United Nations, in its wisdom, has designated him a 'leader for tourism' and chosen the Victoria Falls, shared with Zambia, as the venue for a holiday industry conference next year. At the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), based in Madrid, the thinking seems to be: 'If the old man can't visit us then we should visit him.' Kumbi Muchemwa, a spokesman for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) said: 'I can't see any justification for the man being an 'ambassador'. An ambassador for what? The man has blood on his hands. Do they want tourists to see those bloody hands?' (David Usborn, *Independent*, 30/05/12)

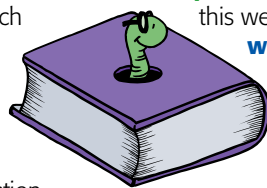
**UN official criticises Israel over on-going Gaza blockade:** 'The people who really have been penalised are not the people in power in Gaza; it is the common people who are being impoverished by the blockade as well as the business community' The UN official responsible for Palestinian refugees said that Israel has been too slow to relax its blockade of Gaza, which has devastated the isolated economy and failed to achieve its security goals. Israel and Egypt closed their crossings with Gaza to all but humanitarian aid after Hamas violently seized power in the coastal strip in June 2007, exacerbating poverty among the 1.4 million residents. (Y-Net)

The following 4 snippets came from the *Lanarkshire Green Bulletin*

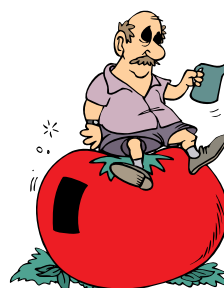
**Do you want to end inconsiderate parking** that forces pedestrians onto the road and into the path of vehicles? Joe Fitzpatrick MSP is introducing a bill to do just that and Living Streets Scotland has set up a standard response form to help you tell politicians what you think - deadline is 30th June so please respond.

<http://tinyurl.com/cps2kpu>

**Buy a book from a social enterprise:** Bookdonors, this week launched their new retail website [www.bookdonors.co.uk](http://www.bookdonors.co.uk) If you want to buy a book, go straight to Bookdonors new site where you can purchase all your books directly from a social enterprise - with over 180,000 books listed online.



**Active citizen goes global:** The turnout in recent local elections was painfully low. While our representative democracy may be on a life support system, there is of course another, complimentary form of democracy which is in much better shape - participatory democracy. This is when citizens become actively involved in shaping the society they live in. A brilliant new website is gathering the best examples of citizen participation from around the world. Find out more at Participedia <http://participedia.net>



**Want help to grow your own food as a community?** Advice, funding, contacts - a new website from the Federation of Community Gardens and Farms at Grow your own Scotland. Find out more at [www.growyourownsotland.info](http://www.growyourownsotland.info)

# Half the Sky

Margaret Lawrence reviews a book on the lot of women in the developing world

**H**alf the Sky - How to change the world by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wudunn brings it altogether: the over-riding problems that face women in many areas of the world in the 21st century: the injustices of abuse, both physical and mental; forced marriage; deprivation of essential needs such as food, medical care and education; and always the fear and horror of rape – and its unjust repercussions of being shunned, maltreated and stigmatised.

We are probably aware of some of the evils, which deny women in diverse cultures basic rights and freedoms. Yet as we are inundated by the media, which diverts our attention to sensational unfolding news, we remain only vaguely aware of the terrifying reality. But suffering through gender injustice is the day-to-day experience for women in societies where the male of the species is accepted as being dominant and superior to the female and is encouraged to treat women as inferior, tolerated only for procreation, as providers and comforters for men.

Although it is often well-nigh impossible for us to contemplate, when faced with such deliberately imposed savage injustice, Men too are the victims in this. Living this socially accepted aggressive role, does not lead to the well-being of the perpetrators, nor to a thriving society.

This book gives irrefutable statistical and anecdotal evidence of the millions of women who endure a miserable existence simply because they are female. Abuse starts in the womb. In many cultures, female fetuses, once identified, are likely to be aborted. Female toddlers will probably be last in the line for nourishment. They will not be a priority for medical care, either preventive or life saving, (even when the care is available). Elsewhere, girls have a very short childhood, if any, subjected to female genital mutilation before the onset of puberty. According to the WHO, it is practiced in 28 countries and up to 140 million women have experienced the procedure. They are then often sold off as child brides (over 10 million each year). The fact of her sex in many places determines the limitations and exploitation of many women's lives.

Women like Neth in Cambodia. Neth was sold by a family member as a teenage virgin to a brothel in Poipet (not an uncommon practice), where she was imprisoned and forced into drug dependency. Her release was purchased by Nicholas Kristof but this did not in itself make a happy ending to her story. Neth then opened a grocery stall in her home village. Although flourishing initially, business deteriorated as male members of Neth's family refused to pay for goods they took, despite her protestations, leading to the collapse of her business. Fortunately an aid worker enabled Neth to move to a neighbouring town where she trained as a hairdresser. Overcoming other setbacks including a mistaken diagnosis as HIV positive, Neth did eventually win through to a better quality of life. But her future must remain precarious.

Half the Sky is not simply doom and gloom. It testifies to the life of subordination endured by women in many parts of the world, but the authors have also met 'saints' who have found ways of bringing about change. Women like Mukhtar, who lives in rural area in Pakistan. Mukhtar was gang raped, for speaking up for her younger brother, who had also been abused. She was set on killing herself, which is an accepted course of action for women in that situation in her culture. Her family, with constant vigil and care refused to let this happen.

A local Moslem leader also spoke up for Mukhtar at Friday prayers, denouncing the incident as an outrage against Islam. This gave Mukhtar the courage to report the incidence to the police, who surprisingly arrested the attackers. President Musharraf heard about the case, sympathised with Mukhtar and sent \$8300 in compensation. Mukhtar used this money to set up a school, which girls could attend in her village. She believes that educating girls will empower them to help build a more equitable society. This was not the end of Mukhtar's troubles, her determination to speak up against injustice made her dangerous enemies, who used various forms of force to try and keep her quiet. Mukhtar survives - so far!

Change also comes through a degree of economic independence and autonomy funded by microcredit systems and similar arrangements. This independence brings a dignity and respect which is often the basis for cooperation with other women. The best way to help, the authors say, is not the well intentioned attempts at charitable funding for big projects from outsiders, but cash directed to specific individual and community projects, often in rural areas. Initiatives which allow the victims the opportunities of seeing that there is another way and that they are valued and are themselves best placed to bring about an appropriate change.

The book highlights cases where dedicated women armed with initiative and imagination have taken steps towards empowering themselves with equal rights and status. It also gives instances of how to set out on a road to stop violence against women in all its forms, bringing to an end the horrors of treating females as worthless, which dehumanises both victim and perpetrator. The appendix lists organisations set up to promote the ending of people being treated unjustly because they are female.

It is a movement that requires women, from all cultures, to initiate and to empower the changes, which can emancipate and empower those living in subjugation and set all humans on the way to a world of mutual respect, which accords dignity to every person, whatever their gender, creed or colour.

*Half the Sky - How to change the world by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl is published by Virago; First Vintage Books Edition*

*Stand beside those who are marginalised as the result of force, power or a prosperity which is blind to the poorest of the poor. The Church cannot separate the praise of God from service to others. The one God, our Father and Creator, has made us brothers and sisters: to be human is to be a brother and guardian to our neighbour. ... The Church must relive and make present what Jesus was: the Good Samaritan who came from afar, entered our human history, lifted us up and sought to heal us.*

Pope Benedict XVI in Mexico, 25 March, 2012



## JUNE

- 18-24 Refugee Week
- 20 UN World Refugee Day
- 21 Historic Visit to Scotland of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
- 23 Carbon Capture and Storage – Conference
- 26 International Day in support of Victims of Torture

## JULY

- 2 UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty begins
- 16 First atomic bomb detonated in New Mexico 1945
- 18 Nelson Mandela Day
- 26 Emancipation Bill - Slavery abolished throughout the British Empire (1833)
- August
- 1 2010: Convention on Cluster Munitions comes into effect
- 6 Hiroshima - Anniversary of Atomic Bomb
- 9 Nagasaki - Anniversary of Atomic Bomb
- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People
- 19 World Humanitarian Day
- 23 International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
- 29 International Day Against Nuclear Tests

## SEPTEMBER

- 8 International Literacy Day

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

### *Jubilee Collect*

*Loving God,  
As the UK celebrates the Queen's Diamond Jubilee,  
We remember the need also for a 'justice jubilee'  
We join your call to cancel debts and free slaves  
We join to celebrate what we have achieved.  
We join to remember what we have done.  
We join to demand what next needs to be done.  
To change your world,  
To change lives,  
To end debts,  
To make your kingdom real.  
Amen*

*Adapted with kind permission of Rev. Elaine Russell*

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