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Racial Justice Sunday - <sup>9th</sup> September 2012

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## editorial

### And here is the news read by me, a man in a suit trying to look authoritative. And from me, a pretty young woman, preventing it from getting too real.

Tonight we will tell you what has been decided as being the most telegenic stories, with dramatic pictures. These stories will have less to so with the reality and more to do with what is marketable. The audience will be treated as having the attention span of a gnat and as accustomed to being spoon fed with the sensational, the entertaining and, only if need be, something which requires joined up thought.

Those most likely to appear on the news tonight have all been carefully coached on how to appear in front of the media. They will always appear to be anxious to engage and communicate with the viewer. They will always accentuate the positive of their own version, even where there isn't any. They will try to reduce problems to simple black and white in which they are right and others (including inquisitive interviewers) are wrong.

Correspondents will speculate on what might be happening in important meetings, most of which now go on into the night because it is supposed to show how tenacious our politicians are. The thought that major decisions about the wellbeing of society and even the planet are regularly being made by people deprived of sleep is not a great source of confidence but it is dramatic news. Similarly, while earnest discussion or questions of what might happen or be said in forthcoming meetings or reports is not news, but hypothetical speculation, it makes for news which is not accountable to what eventually happens.

And there will almost certainly be items about sport and celebrities, which are often difficult to disentangle since the two worlds are now tightly intertwined. In sports only winners or potential winners are interesting. Losers do not become celebrities. Microphones are shoved in front of exhausted athletes in the mistaken belief that facility in doing something is always accompanied by facility in talking about it.

And to show the democratic reach of the news there will be interviews with *vox populi*, struggling home with a shopping bag until a microphone is stuck under their face and they are asked whether they think the Euro can survive, or whether increased taxes on fossil fuels will diminish global warming. To their credit, many manage an answer. Most often, however it is a gormless spur of the moment cliché or uninformed drivel – in other words exactly what the viewer at home is thinking. When occasionally, someone does respond intelligently, it sticks out like a sore thumb and seems to spoil the game.

Anyway that's the usual format: pretty much the same from here to Beijing; and from San Francisco to Saudi Arabia. Like a shopping mall, which after all is what the news now is: another form of consumerism based on market research and selling stories.

But here is the real news which sadly, won't change much from day to day; won't involve celebrities, just ordinary people trying to stay alive and make a living; and is too often fraught with suffering to be bearable in its totality.

Every day 25,000 people die of hunger and poverty. Of these, 10% die as a result of famine or from the high profile emergency crises that we are sadly all too familiar with. The other 90% of deaths from hunger and poverty related illness are avoidable and happening in other parts of the world, not as a result of famine, earthquake or flood, but because of the chronic persistent hunger that exists in the developing world. In 2008, nearly 9 million children died before they reached their fifth birthday. One third of these deaths are due directly or indirectly to hunger and malnutrition. One billion people, one seventh of the world's population, live in extreme hunger and poverty and exist on less than 80 pence a day. About 195 million children under the age of five in the developing world – about one in three children - are too small and thus underdeveloped. The first 1,000 days (9 months to 24 months) of a

child's life are absolutely crucial. Short-term interventions are important to poor families during this period because even temporary interruptions in intake of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals during can lead to permanent reductions in cognitive capacities.

Climate change and an increased frequency of extreme weather events, the supplanting of local food with cash crops for export, increased linkages between energy and agricultural markets due to growing demand for biofuels, and increased treatment of food and agriculture as commodities for financial speculation all suggest that price volatility and therefore food uncertainty is here to stay.

World military expenditure in 2011 totalled \$1.74 trillion (about \$250 for every man, woman and child on the planet). Civilians accounted for 71% of people killed and injured by explosive weapons in 2011. The world's six top arms exporters are the same powers who sit on the UN Security Council with the addition of Germany. Although 2,000 people die every day from armed violence caused by small arms, UN representatives, notably the US, Russia and China last month failed to endorse a treaty that would curb the \$60 billion a year industry, supposedly on the grounds that it might infringe basic human freedoms. The issue has been left hanging.

In 2011, UNHCR reckons there were 42.5 million refugees in the world, of whom almost 26 million were under its care. Developing countries hosted four-fifths of the world's refugees. About 2% of the world's refugee population live in the UK. Anti-Slavery International estimates that 20 million people live in working conditions which are the equivalent of slavery.

In 2010/11, according to Scottish Government figures, there were 780,000 individuals (of whom 160,000 are pensioners) living in relative poverty in Scotland. Relative poverty – roughly where net disposable household income is below 60% of the UK median amount - has shown a statistically significant drop. The number of individuals living in poverty has fallen from 17 per cent to 15 per cent between 2009/10 and 2010/11. This follows a 5 year period of little change in poverty levels. While this gives a quantitative measure, it says nothing of the quality of life for people in Scotland who remain poor, or sick, or homeless.

And finally, as Lord Coe clears up at his £350,000 a year job as Chair of the Olympic organising committee for the Games bid that started at £2billion and currently stands at £9.3billion; William Hill the bookie is offering 16/1 against it coming in at under £10bn, 4/6 that the final cost will be between £10bn and £20bn, and quoting 11/10 that it will soar to over £20bn. Worth a bet? Probably better than the National Lottery, the piggy bank for 60% of the current Games and the source of future competitive sporting investment under the guidance of the government's Olympic Ambassador... Lord Coe.

And given the success of London, couldn't we just transfer the Commonwealth Games of 2014 there with all those state of the art facilities, using the savings to encourage and support athletics. Unfortunately not, because like all the sports fields that have been sold off, the Olympic village has been sold to the Qatari government's investment arm and UK property developer Delancey Estates for £557m at a loss to the UK taxpayer of £275m. And that is the end of the news.



### Carol Clarke reflects on her recent visit to the Olympics

Before I say anything more, I confess I am an Olympic Games fan. In fact, my youngest son who works in London managed to get tickets – albeit hockey tickets – and I went down for the middle weekend of the games to join him. I was in the Olympic park on the night Jess Ennis and Mo Farrah won gold, we watched it on the big screen in the park, and I was jumping up and down like an idiot with hands in the air shouting for Mo all the way round his last lap. Likewise I was in Hyde Park again watching on the big screen when Andy Murray won gold, everyone round about us was congratulating us and giving us hugs and high fives because we were Scottish, and for me both moments were magical and the atmosphere was electric.

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I further enjoyed the rest of the games once I got home, glued to my television every night. All of the Olympians doing their best, some ending in triumph some in despair, and everyone crying, winners and losers in equal measure.

Yes a grand time was had by all, all who were lucky enough to get tickets and to watch it on TV. But, and it is a big but, what about the workers who made the clothes and the tracksuits for all the athletes did they have a grand time? Were they paid a fair wage for all the extra hours they had to work? Were they paid even a living wage? Do they have any of the employment rights most of us in the UK enjoy? The answer to that is a resounding no.

On the night Usain Bolt won the 100 metres gold, War on Want projected a giant video message in protest at the exploitation of Adidas workers around the world. (You can see the video on Youtube). Adidas remember was the sponsor of the UK team kit, and was worn by all our gold medal winners, including our own Andy Murray and Chris Hoy, even royal princes wore Adidas tops when watching events.

According to War on Want Adidas has already sold £100 million of Olympic clothing whilst workers making its goods around the world are paid poverty wages and are having to skip meals to survive. Workers making Adidas clothes around the world are paid as little as 34p an hour, have little or no job security and face harassment or dismissal if they try and organise to defend their rights.

Justice and Peace has over the last month displayed prominently on our website the Playfair campaign 'Light the flame for workers' human rights!' Evidence from the Playfair campaign shows 'that workers making London 2012 merchandise like mascots and pin badges, and goods for Adidas, the official sportswear partner, were exploited. Wages were not even enough to cover basic needs like food, accommodation and medical expenses. Workers reported being forced to work excessive hours, sometimes in hazardous conditions, and in none of the factories investigated was there a union or credible worker committee'.

And this is not to mention the company that supplied the metal to make the medals - Rio Tinto who locked out 780 workers who are standing up against the company's aggressive contracting-out demands at a highly profitable aluminium smelter in Alma, Quebec.

All this despite Early Day Motion 2969 in the House of Commons which states: 'That this House is concerned about press reports that UK Olympians will be asked to wear sporting equipment produced by exploited child labour; is further concerned that successful Olympians will be presented with medals produced by multi-national company Rio Tinto who have locked out their entire workforce in Alma, Quebec without any serious consultation; and, therefore calls on the Government and the Olympics governing body to ensure that ethical trading standards will be maintained during a hopefully successful Olympics in the UK'. Shockingly this motion attracted the signatures of only 37 MPs.

So getting back to that word legacy, the legacy of the UK Olympic Games is to inspire a generation. To leave a legacy for future generations of young people to excel in or even just enjoy sport. I would like there to be another legacy. Yes, let's all get up from our couches, let's take up an activity. What about writing to the sports manufacturers, to all the Olympic governing bodies, to the UK government, to the sportsmen and women, and to royal princes to get them behind a campaign to bring an end to exploitation.

I heard one of our medal winners in an interview saying, 'follow your dreams, if you believe you can achieve anything'. So my message to the UK Government is 'if you believe you can achieve anything'; so let us put a stop to exploitation everywhere, let that be the true legacy of the London 2012 Olympic Games. And if there is any crying to be done in Rio 2016 let's make sure it's only for the sport and not about the exploitation of vulnerable workers worldwide. To find out more and to take action visit www.playfair2012.org.uk/lighttheflame/

### World's Biggest Economies are no Longer Countries but Corporations

#### **Revenues (\$billions US)**

- 1. Royal Dutch Shell \$bn484, 489
- 2. Exxon Mobil \$bn452, 926
- 3. Wal-Mart Stores
   \$bn446, 950

   4. British Petroleum
   \$bn386, 463
- 5. Sinopec Group \$bn375, 214

#### **Revenues (\$billions US)**

- China Nat Pet
   State Grid
   Chevron
   ConocoPhillips
   Toyota Motor
- \$bn352, 338 \$bn259, 142 \$bn245, 621 \$bn237, 272 \$bn235, 364

### http://businesstech.co.za/news/international/17475/the-biggest-companies-in-the-world

For comparison, in 2010 the US GDP was almost \$Trillion 14.5, the UK GDP \$Trillion 2.25. The lowest figure quoted above falls between the GDPs of Egypt and Ireland at number 44 in the world with 166 countries producing less.

### Racial Justice Sunday - 9 September 2012

### What is Racial Justice Sunday?

### Have you ever felt really left out or unjustly treated? In your church or community, are there individuals or groups who feel excluded or on the fringes? As Christians do these situations matter to us and if so, why?

Racial Justice Sunday has been marked by our different church traditions for some years now. The day was initiated because it was believed that churches needed support to help their members develop the confidence to get to grips with prejudice and racism in themselves, in the church and in wider society. It was hoped that then individuals might respect and honour those different from themselves, that the Church might become inclusive in the way that we believe God wants it to be and society transformed.

### Being an Inclusive Church ...and not an exclusive club

This year the theme is 'Being an Inclusive Church'. Many of us consider that our local churches as well as our national Church institutions are inclusive but when we listen to those who feel on the outside we learn that we still have a long way to go, particularly those from different ethnic backgrounds. Materials for this year's Sunday can be ordered or downloaded direct or ordered from Churches together in Britain and Ireland at **www.ctbi.org.uk/588**/ The Scottish Racial Justice Sunday Service, organised by Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and by Minority Ethnic Christians Together in Scotland (MECTIS), is to be held in Morningside United Church, Edinburgh, on September 9th. Between 18.00 and 18.30 the Edinburgh African Choir will present a programme of songs of praise as people assemble for the Service. The theme for the Service will be 'Growing Together in Faith' and the preacher will be Rev. Aftab Gohar, who is minister of Abbotsgrange Parish Church in Grangemouth. All are welcome to attend the Service and, by doing so, to show your support for the Churches' work to ensure that people of all races are treated justly by the society in which they live.

### The Catholic Association for Racial Justice prayer

Heavenly God, we praise your name and thank you for your glorious goodness and mercy.
Lord Jesus, we pray a blessing for all those actively engaged in the struggle for racial justice.
Holy Spirit, we beseech you to enter into the minds and hearts of all those in authority in the Church.
Grant that we may
Hear the voices crying out for justice
Engage in developing a better understanding
Act to bring about change
Lead and inspire others by their good example.
We ask this through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
The love of God is greater than all evil.
We pray for racial justice in our lives in our parishes in our dioceses in our land.
Amen.

### **TAKE ONE ACTION film festival**

he UK's global change film festival is back celebrating its 5th birthday from 20 September to 6 October, in Edinburgh and Glasgow with two weeks of the most moving and acclaimed cinema about the big issues of our time.

In today's visual culture, many people get a great deal more information from visual sources such as film. Film can convey a coherent story and invite personal interaction, which is ideal for social justice purposes. 'Take One Action brings to light incredible stories from across the planet which - like South Africa's injustices, courage and beauty - were once hidden,' said Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

There will be a chance to see award-winning Sundance and other global festival films before anyone else in the country. Connect with filmmakers from Palestine, India, the US, Tunisia, Bulgaria and southern Africa. And stick around after the lights go up to join discussions and workshops with leading journalists, politicians and campaigners about where Scotland – and you – relate to the stories told.

Highlights include the mind-blowing festival opener Surviving Progress, executive produced by Martin Scorsese, about the future paths humanity might take; the UK premiere of Tribeca Best Film winner War Witch, with Oxfam Scotland, a beautiful and uncompromising tale of child soldiers in West Africa; and family events in Leith and Easterhouse, including the fun- Mary Poppins: the Bankers Strike Back. With inspirational screenings exploring solutions to hunger, HIV, climate change, sex trafficking and the financial crisis, there's something here for everyone.

Check out the full programme and book tickets at www.takeoneaction.org.uk, or pick up a programme from the Edinburgh Filmhouse or Glasgow Film Theatre.



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ne would think it a cause for rejoicing when the Republican presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, nominates as his running mate Paul Ryan, a Roman Catholic who claims that his political views have been influenced by Catholic Social Teaching. Except this is the USA, three months from an election. These days US presidential elections are mostly sophisticated marketing exercises where political perceptions tend to be more important than the actuality in electioneering. The total cost of November's elections for the presidency, House of Representatives and Senate is estimated to run out at \$5.8 billion. The presidential race itself will cost an estimated \$2.5 billion, which is actually slightly down on the 2008 figure of \$2.9billion - but this time because only one party has held primaries to choose their candidate. Further, in a country where David Cameron would probably qualify as nearly left wing, it is worth remembering how far to the right we would find much of US politics and religion.

Representative Paul Ryan, as Chairman of the House Budget Committee, produced a controversial alternative budget, known as the Path to Prosperity, to counter President Barack Obama's budgets in 2011 and 2012. The report begins with a table of contrasting visions. It claims it will cut spending by \$5 trillion relative to President Obama's budget over ten years, by, among other measures, cutting back on federal bureaucracy, reducing pensions, cutting food aid and bringing large changes to government-funded healthcare. It also proposes the lowering of tax rates, and halving corporate income tax.

Prior to his visit to Georgetown, the Jesuit University in Washington DC, Paul Ryan received the following letter from Thomas J. Reese, SJ, Senior Fellow, Woodstock Theological Center and 87 other staff members of Georgetown University:

Dear Representative Paul Ryan,

Welcome to Georgetown University. We appreciate your willingness to talk about how Catholic social teaching can help inform effective policy in dealing with the urgent challenges facing our country. As members of an academic community at a Catholic university, we see your visit on April 26 for the Whittington Lecture as an opportunity to discuss Catholic social teaching and its role in public policy.

However, we would be remiss in our duty to you and our students if we did not challenge your continuing misuse of Catholic teaching to defend a budget plan that decimates food programs for struggling families, radically weakens protections for the elderly and sick, and gives more tax breaks to the wealthiest few. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has wisely noted in several letters to Congress – "a just framework for future budgets cannot rely on disproportionate cuts in essential services to poor persons." Catholic bishops recently wrote that "the House-passed budget resolution fails to meet these moral criteria."

In short, your budget appears to reflect the values of your favorite philosopher, Ayn Rand, rather than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Her call to selfishness and her antagonism toward religion are antithetical to the Gospel values of compassion and love.

Cuts to anti-hunger programs have devastating consequences. Last year, one in six Americans lived below the official poverty level and over 46 million Americans – almost half of them children – used food stamps for basic nutrition. We also know how cuts in Pell Grants will make it difficult for low-income students to pursue their educations at colleges across the nation, including Georgetown. At a time when charities are strained to the breaking point and local governments have a hard time paying for essential services, the federal government must not walk away from the most vulnerable.

While you often appeal to Catholic teaching on "subsidiarity" as a rationale for gutting government programs, you are profoundly misreading Church teaching. Subsidiarity is not a free pass to dismantle government programs and abandon the poor to their own devices. This often misused Catholic principle cuts both ways. It calls for solutions to be enacted as close to the level of local communities as possible. But it also demands that higher levels of government provide help -- "subsidium"-- when communities and local governments face problems beyond their means to address such as economic crises, high unemployment, endemic poverty and hunger. According to Pope Benedict XVI: "Subsidiarity must remain closely linked to the principle of solidarity and vice versa."

Along with this letter, we have included a copy of the Vatican's Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, commissioned by John Paul II, to help deepen your understanding of Catholic social teaching.

Respectfully, Thomas J. Reese, S.J. Senior Fellow Woodstock Theological Center

Is there a similar message here waiting to be delivered to Iain Duncan Smith?



## Chicistianis in the Middle East

n 1963, Phil Graham, the publisher of the *Washington Post* gave a speech to correspondents which contained a sentence that has become proverbial. Journalism, he said, is 'a first rough draft of history that will never really be completed about a world we can never really understand'. Today this is perhaps all the more true in the face of the avalanche of drivel purporting to be journalism. Good reporting, descriptive or reflective, stands out by its capacity to rise above the frothy gossip with which modern life is saturated.

A good example of this process is to be found in the reporting of the 'Arab Spring', the process beginning in December 2010 by which largely repressive governments in North Africa and the Middle East have been changed by popular protest. Reportage of these events, as well as coordination was vastly increased by new social media. This meant that popular activism can now circumvent the efforts of authorities clamp down. Even the restriction or shutting down of the internet did not prevent immediate and often embarrassing contradiction of the official reports on unrest and conflict. Bloggers and photos from mobile phones are now an even earlier draft of events with little or no attempt at interpretation.

Like so much popular revolt, however, the initial idealism needs to be consolidated in structures, which so often fall short of the initial enthusiasm; and not infrequently are a retrenchment to the old order in slightly different clothing. It is perhaps too easy for the journalist to be caught up by the heady euphoria which is transmitted to us as readers. By the time the retrenchment is being imposed, conventional news media and the eyes of the world have moved on to another story.

One of the neglected aspects of recent decades of conflict in the Middle East has been the catastrophic effect on some of the oldest Christian communities in the world. In the early twentieth century, Christians accounted for 20% of the Middle Eastern population: today it is about 5% and decreasing. The Ottoman Turkish massacres of 1915 caused an estimated 2.1 million deaths, divided between roughly 1.2 million Armenian Christians, 0.75 million Assyrians and 0.3 million Greek Orthodox Christians. These ancient communities, some of which trace their ancestry back to Apostolic times, have found themselves constantly under threat.

In Egypt there are perhaps 10 million Coptic Christians. Before the disastrous civil war in Lebanon which ended in 1990, Christians were about three quarters of the population and still comprise about a half of the population with members of the Maronite Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches, and minorities from the Melkite Greek Catholic Church.

Most Iraqi Christians are Assyrians, an ancient people some of whom still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus. They are Eastern-rite Catholics who are autonomous from Rome but who recognise the Pope's authority. Most belong to the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, the Ancient Church of the East, the Syriac Orthodox Church or the Syriac Catholic Church, along with Armenian rite and Roman Catholic communities. They have been drastically reduced by up to two thirds since the Iraq war of 2003, by exile, harassment and targeted violence including murder.

In Syria, as in Iraq, Christians found themselves living fairly safely under the secular Ba'athist regimes of Assad and Saddam. The imminent collapse of the Syrian Alawites, a Shia version of Islam with its own particular beliefs, however, who were originally put in power to counteract the majority Sunnis, is already having dire consequences for Syrian Christians who constitute about 10% of the population. The Syrian regular forces are supported by plainclothes Shabiha (an Arabic word meaning thugs) who are responsible for much recent slaughter. The US has accused Iran of increasing support for the Syrian regime. The paradox is, that the US, committed to the downfall of the Assad regime (by which it hopes Shia Iran will be weakened), is aligned with Sunni Saudi Arabia and Qatar supplying weapons to opposition Free Syrian Army (FSA) insurgent groups. Most of these militias are not random individuals who came together for the first time to defend their homes. Many represent the economic interests of violent local power brokers and have long experience in running local criminal protection and smuggling rackets, in addition to whatever nationalist goals they may have. This is being increased by the infiltration of experienced Sunni militias from Iraq with links to Al Qaeda.

Patriarch Gregorios III of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church, the largest Catholic congregation in Syria, has warned against foreign intervention in Syria and accused the media of misrepresenting the situation in the country. He acknowledges that some of the violence has been motivated by a perception that Christians support President Assad. 'Yes. Not all of it, but some,' he said. The picture is more complex, the range of Christian opinions is far wider, with many ordinary Christians involved in the anti-Assad protests from the outset.

In a poignant letter of 3 August, the Patriarch also tried to quell suspicions that Syrian Christians are aligned with government forces, or are seeking weapons to defend themselves. The paradox is, that the US, committed to the downfall of the Assad regime (by which it hopes Shia Iran will be weakened) is aligned with Sunni Saudi Arabia and Qatar supplying weapons to opposition groups containing Al Qaeda elements.

At the end of July, the Melkite Bishop Shaheen sent the following account from Damascus. The Melkite, Greek Orthodox and Syriac Orthodox Patriarchates and other historical Christian

Churches are in, just by or not far from the Street Called Straight in Damascus, the street mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (9:11):

I will keep on writing as long as I live and as the Internet access is still possible ... Since Tuesday, July 17, 2012 morning, the battles reached the capital... Damascus using heavy weapons, tanks and helicopters in a crowded city. The destruction is enormous. What a Calvary!.. The clashes are taking place in the streets and move from one neighbourhood to another. It is impossible to sleep with the fear and the sound of bombs and gunfire of cannons. Summer temperatures are from 42°C (108°F) to 56°C (133°F) and power outages are awful... Damascus is cut off from the rest of the Syrian cities and suffers from many shortages. The supplies can no longer reach it. We are short of bread, vegetables, cooking gas and fuel for bakeries ... Run for your lives ... Many families are leaving the hot neighbourhoods of battles to form an endless chain on the road to Lebanon. Other

roads to Jordan, Iraq and north to Homs-Aleppo are closed... A general feeling of panic is causing the exodus towards Lebanon. I hope the people will find the proper welcome there ... Because the Syrians have so welcomed Palestinian, Lebanese and Iragis refugees...The few faithful who dared to come to Mass burned many candles at the tomb of Blessed Martyrs of Damascus. They exchanged farewells and tears before returning running to their homes under the sounds of gunfire and explosions ... Damascus was spared for 16 months from the violence that tore the other cities of Syria ... here comes our turn to suffer and die... We just managed to fit in a corner under the stairs to shelter with our neighbours from the bombshells...

Let us pray that the first draft of history comes to a happier conclusion, and let us remember all the peoples of the strife torn Middle East that they may come to enjoy the true Salaam or peace.

Tim Duffy

'The most important thing the Arab spring brought us was to give women leadership roles. When women become leaders of men, and men are following, when women sacrifice themselves and get killed in front of men, when they get detained for political issues and men don't feel ashamed of women who are arrested, this is a change."

Tawakkul Karman, Yemeni activist who won the Nobel Peace Prize for her part at the forefront of the popular revolution against the former dictator Saleh's rule. (Source: Guardian)

### Ground the Drones

There will be a Week of Action 6 - 13 October 2012 against these pernicious high technology weapons, which have become an accepted and normal part of the modern arsenal.

he use of unmanned drones to launch attacks from great distances continues to grow. Over the past years Britain, the US and Israel have used armed drones in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Libya and Gaza. Drones have become the new way to wage war.

While politicians and military commanders argue that these new weapons enable armed strikes to be targeted and precise, there are numerous, reliable and corroborated reports of civilian casualties. But perhaps the greater concern is that drones make war more likely. Drones mean that politicians and military commanders can now launch armed attacks and undertake military intervention anywhere around the globe at little or no cost. Remote warfare will mean more warfare.



Around the globe opposition to drones is growing. Here in the UK, as part of International Keep Space for Peace, there will be a second Drone Week of Action from 6th - 13th October. Leaflets, petitions and other resources will be available to download from the website soon, but why not plan what you are going to do now? Suggestions include:

- Sign and promote the national petition being launched in the week
- Hold a public meeting on the issue (they can help with speakers)
- Write to your local MP about the issue and encourage others to do so

For more information and resources see: www.dronecampaignnetwork.org.uk

Welcome for Hadeel Visitors

he White Sisters, a Franciscan Order of Nuns in East Jerusalem, welcomed visitors from the Palestinian Fair Trade crafts shop in Edinburgh during their study tour of suppliers and producers in Israel/Palestine. Members of the Order have created a garden of peace and tranquillity around their building.

Staff and volunteers of the Hadeel centre were in the West Bank, Gaza and the Negev to meet the creators of the popular designs which are sold in the crafts shop set up in 2004 by the charity, Palcrafts and stayed for a short time in the guest house run by the Order.

For many of the groups the sale of their products is their sole source of income. Many are disabled and few have state support. Bureaucracy in the occupied areas makes importing and exporting difficult for Palestinians while, in turn, it is hard for Hadeel to transfer payments to the craft workers, having sold their products.

Hadeel, is currently looking for new premises following the closure of the old St George's West Church building in Shandwick Place, Edinburgh at the end of the year.

### Peace through Prayer in the Holy Land

### Molly McGavigan reports on the recent visit to Scotland of Father Raed Abusahlia from Palestine

octor Father Raed Abusahlia has been the parish priest of the Latin church of Taybeh since 2002. Behind this straightforward statement lies an account of an amazing, inspiring, multi-faceted, epic journey.

Born in Zababdeh in Palestine, Abuna Raed was ordained priest by the Latin Patriarch in 1990 and began his priestly ministry in parishes in Jordan. After completing higher studies in philosophy at the Lateran University

in Rome, Father Raed served as Professor of Philosophy at the Latin Seminary at Beit Jala and as Chancellor of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem until appointed parish priest of the Latin Church in Taybeh in the Palestinian West Bank.

From early on the morning of Thursday June 14 until midday on Saturday June 16 some of us in Scotland had the pleasure and the privilege of meeting this Palestinian priest who gave us such insight into how the practice of justice and peace is integral to Christianity. Father Raed was in Scotland for only 50 hours but during this time he managed to speak at a meeting of the World Mission Council of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, meet with Rev Donald Reid at St John's Episcopal Church, Edinburgh, give two presentations to open meetings, one in Freeland Church of Scotland, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire and one in St Simon's Catholic Church, Glasgow and fit in a school visit to Inverclyde to the shared campus of Port Glasgow and St Stephen's High School where he met staff and pupils during lunch and then spoke to senior pupils of St Stephen's. He even managed a brief trip to enjoy and admire the beauty of the Clyde estuary and the Cowal Hills.

Father Raed was invited to the UK as a guest of Living Stones, an ecumenical trust seeking to promote contact between Christian communities in Britain and those in the Holy Land and neighbouring countries. One of the founders of this organisation was father Michael Prior CM. Since his death, there is each year The Michael Prior Memorial Lecture and Father Raed was invited to deliver the lecture this year at Heythrop College, University of London and to fulfill speaking engagements in the London area before and after this lecture. We were indeed very fortunate that he accepted the invitation to visit Scotland which was 'squashed' into the middle of his London tour. In Scotland he was the guest of Olive Tree which is a small organisation run by Juliet and Donald Robb to provide outlets for the sale of Palestinian goods, educate about the true situation in Palestine and provide financial aid to those most in need in the Occupied Territories. Both Juliet and Don had visited Father Raed in Taybeh and been excited and motivated by the positive work being done.

Ephraim is the biblical name of present day Taybeh and is now the only Christian town in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. During his presentations Father Raed explained how Taybeh was suffering as are so many towns in Palestine. There is little or no work with the result that many, especially the young, leave. There was a real sense of a just anger in the way Father Raed told us of the dangers, lack of dignity and even loss of life caused by the wall of separation being built to enclose the occupied territories, the great difficulty people have in obtaining passes to cross the check point through the wall and the long delays often suffered to go through these checkpoints. One of his very great concerns was that he would be a priest with no parishioners if he did not act to help. 'If people have the opportunity to have a job, a house and a family,



then they will stay. So we have to make sure we create those possibilities here.'

What he found when he arrived at Taybeh was that people could not afford the fees which the Christian schools have to charge because they are not state schools but they could pay in olive oil! So one year, when it came time to pay for school, he decided that the villagers could pay with olive oil. The fee for each student was six 16-litre barrels of oil for the year. In the end, there were 800 gallons of oil left at the

school door. So he set about helping to find markets for them. This he made sound very simple but much work, energy, help and faith must have gone into this scheme before money was obtained for an olive press and for all that is necessary to turn olives into oil and arrange for it to be sold in the supermarkets of France and Italy (with the fairtrade mark). Some also comes to the UK.

Other enterprises which have been set up in the village of Taybeh under the leadership of Father Raed include a home for seniors built by the community of the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence. This also provides day care for seniors and rehabilitation and entertainment for children with special needs and a ceramic workshop which provides work for local people in producing ceramic lamps of peace.

During his talk to St Stephen's pupils Abuna Raed explained very simply but most effectively to the school pupils the injustice being delivered to his people by the occupation of land and the settling of properties by Israelis. By comparing the situation of the young people in his school with those in Port Glasgow and challenging them as to what they would do if their houses were occupied, a very enlightened debate followed. The Scottish pupils showed mature understanding of their rights in the actions they would take to obtain redress through legal means but when they realised that they were to be denied justice the eventual, and almost inevitable, rumblings were about defending their properties and families. At this point Father Raed played his trump card: prayer and action.

Throughout all of his presentations Abuna Raed was exciting, inspiring and exhausting to listen to. His energy is enviable. Having told us of the injustices, he then set about explaining his coping strategies by helping his people in practical ways but he left his most important message to last.

As with all his ideas it is simple, if ambitious: Taybeh's Peace Lamp Initiative 'In the terrible conflict that harms the Holy Land, Israelis and Palestinians have tried all possible means of action to put an end to it, using both violence and non-violence, but with little success. As our last resort, we address a prayer for Peace in the Holy Land to our Lord with a simple and symbolic idea: unite over 100 000 churches, through our lamps, in a common prayer for peace in the Holy Land. Thus, the lamp, together with the oil and the light, becomes a message of peace from our side and a sign of solidarity towards the Holy Land from the churches all around the world' Doctor Father Raed Abusahlia asks that every Christian Church should have a peace lamp and pray for peace in the Holy Land.

Olive Tree wish to thank World Mission Council, Church of Scotland, Rev Donald Reid, Rev Kenneth Gray, Father Willie Slavin and Staff and pupils at St Stephen's High, Port Glasgow. Further information available: Olive Tree don\_juliet@talktalk.net www.taybeh.info www.livingstonesonline.org.uk

## Understanding the Riots and Rioters: An Exodus Sign?

Ian Fraser, Church of Scotland minister, first Warden of Scottish Churches' House and (incidentally) WCC Chaplain to the 1972 Munich Olympics, looks at some recent reports of last year's riots in an attempt to discern some deeper currents.

n 9 July 2012 three reflections on the riots of August 2011 were put before the public. One was produced as a result of Partnership between the Guardian and the London School of Economics - Reading the Riots - an investigation which started three weeks after the riots had taken place and involved 100 researchers, academics and analysts. On BBC3, Riots the Aftershock examined the effects, culled over nine months on three young people who were arrested; on two of the victims; and on those associated with them. The third report concerned the presentation to the General Synod of the Church of England, meeting in York, of research highlighting the effect of government cuts. It recognised the 'appalling evil and criminality' let loose, but also that 'Where hope has been killed off, is it surprising that their (the rioters') energies erupt in anti-social and violent actions.

The enquiries reveal insights which do not appear to add up. For me, this was best expressed by a man who was accepted as a role model for younger lads. He had given way to some urge of the moment and had not only indulged in wrecking but in looting. Interrogated on his actions he said he deeply regretted the part he had played, but did not regret that riots had broken out. He had taken part in the smashing up of a café whose owner had spent ten years sacrificially building it up. There would be compensation to restore it, but in the meantime the owner was getting into serious debt because he had no other means of surviving in the time in between. Elsewhere, an old woman's house had been wantonly burned down. When she claimed compensation it was refused because she could not produce receipts for the contents. She was left with nothing. Have you heard of a fire that burnt everything else and spared receipts?

As Bishop Peter Price said in his report to the Synod, he had no intention of being sentimental about the rioters and the laying waste of other peoples' lives which they produced. But he also said that the disturbances could be 'a kind of spiritual escape' for those whose lives had been severely deprived. In all three investigations wrongs are not covered over or treated lightly. Yet, in all the mayhem, there is identified an element which sounds right. Maybe the Passionist priest from Liverpool, Austin Smith, who died last year, and I could throw some light on seeming ambiguities.

We were pals for many years, taking part in an annual Roman Catholic sponsored theological conference near Crewe. At a time when the phrase 'One foot in the grave' was current in speech and song we were found sitting on a step together sharing thoughts and delighting in one another's company. One member christened the picture 'Four feet in the Grave' (though at that point I was just getting into my early 80s). Austin's reflection was included in the Synod report: such rioting could be 'literally an ecstatic experience'! A strange remark? Maybe not.

My own insight, which was forced on me rather than came to me, belonged some time ago to a very different time and place. The Policy and Programme Committee of Scottish Churches House decided that something more concrete should be done by the churches about the gangs of Easterhouse, in what Billy Connolly would call 'a desert wi windaes situation'. I was asked to contact the gangs and invite representations to meet in the House for a think through of the situation. Three of the four gangs accepted. At the end as I was farewelling the participants, one stopped in front of me and said, 'You've fairly spoiled things, sir'. I asked how. 'Ach', he said, 'you canna stick a knife in a boy if you have lived under the same roof wi him'. I rejoiced in the remark at first - till it dawned on me what it had meant: 'you have taken colour and excitement out of our lives and done nothing to change the situation'. I now recollect that, in my report I wrote: 'You heard them speak about the drabness of their lives; and of the colour and excitement provided if you belong to a gang and find gang fights could flare up at any moment.'

Jesus called those who exercised control of others' lives – 'to steal and kill and destroy' – life robbers. He said that he had come to give people life in its fullness. I think of van Gogh's dehumanised potato eaters – and of those in our time on whom a deprived, colourless life is willed by others.

If people find themselves controlled by authorities who prescribe for them a blighted existence, is there not, in a rupture of rapture, an affirmation of title to a more human life in all its colourful fullness? Was that not expressed in the regret expressed by the man who was 'role model' for his own conduct, but not for the fact that the rioting had broken out?

What are we to make of a government whose blinkered reaction was to crush and jail mercilessly without dealing with the root of human deprivation – all the time letting financial manipulators off scot free though their wrongdoing was of an utterly different dimension, bringing the world to the brink of an abyss.



## Newsbrief . . . Newsbrief

UN International Day of Peace takes place on Friday 21 September. As the International Day of Peace is on a Friday, special activities and celebrations will take place all across the world over the 2012 Peace Day Weekend. 'Peace Day' provides an opportunity for individuals, organisations and nations to create practical acts of peace on a shared date. It was established by a United Nations resolution in 1981 to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly. The first Peace Day was celebrated in September 1982. In 2002 the General Assembly officially declared September 21 as the permanent date for the International Day of Peace. During the discussion of the U.N. Resolution that established the International Day of Peace, it was suggested that: Peace Day should be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples...This day will serve as a reminder to all peoples that our organisation, with all its limitations, is a living instrument in the service of peace and should serve all of us here within the organisation as a constantly pealing bell reminding us that our permanent commitment, above all interests or differences of any kind, is to peace. www.internationaldayofpeace.org

**Poverty Truth Commission:** Glasgow's Kinship Care support groups have joined together to launch a new website called Glasgow Kinship Justice. They feel that too often it is charities and public agencies that speak on behalf of them and don't always represent the issue as they would. The website aims to get their voice directly to the media, researchers, government and other carers. It covers their stories, the plight of the children in their care, their demands for change and news on their on-going campaign. Please share far and wide!

www.glasgowkinshipjustice.wordpress.com

Mobile phones: The New Scientist has written a very interesting article on the ethics - or lack of them - behind mobile phones. You can read it at http://tinyurl.com/ c8sbmcc It could be used as a teaching resource for older pupils and would work nicely with the resource 'Global Mobile' by Just Business, a project by Norfolk Education and Action for Development (NEAD). The 'Global Mobile' resource, which has been given to the SFTF by kind permission of NEAD and the Project Director, Stephen Fairbrass, can be downloaded from www.sftf.org.uk/assets/86

**Tax Justice Bus Tour 2012:** Seven weeks, 50 towns and cities across Britain and Ireland, one goal: Tax justice for the poorest communities locally and globally. This autumn, Church Action on Poverty and Christian Aid are joining forces to take the campaign for Tax Justice on the road, with a seven-week Tax Justice Bus Tour. Their bright red London bus will be touring the length and breadth of Britain and Ireland, to promote the simple message: It's time for Tax Justice for the poorest communities at home and globally. In an age of austerity and spending cuts, tax avoidance is morally unacceptable: tax dodging costs lives. Find out more at **www.church-poverty.org.uk/taxbus** If you could host the bus when it passes through your region – or if you just want to be kept informed of our plans – sign up via the website.

**Glasgow Women's Library** celebrates 21 years with a new programme of events across Scotland. Glasgow Women's Library is a vibrant information hub housing a lending library, archive collections and contemporary and historical artefacts relating to women's lives, histories and achievements. To find out more visit their website at http://womenslibrary.org.uk **The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty** takes place on the 17th October. There is usually an event to commemorate this day at the poverty plaque in George Square Glasgow. We are still awaiting details of this year's event as we go to press, but as soon as we have them we will put them on the website. The stone plaque stands as a permanent reminder that in Glasgow, as in so many parts of the world, 'poverty is neither inevitable nor acceptable'. After years of campaigning by Glasgow Braendam Link, this Commemorative Stone plaque, carved in granite and similar to the one in Paris, was laid in earth brought from Paris (the Headquarters of ATD Fourth World).

### The Big Fair Bake: Buy it. Bake it.

**Share it:** 24 September – 4 October 2012. Take your next step for Fairtrade: Bake a campaign cake! The Fairtrade Foundation thanks everyone who has taken steps for Fairtrade so far – help-



ing get to nearly 700,000! Lots more steps are still needed to reach the target of 1.5

million so why not join in 'The Big Fair Bake' this autumn. In your community, home, business, school and place of worship, baking tastes better when you share, and it tastes even better with Fairtrade ingredients! All you need to do is to buy Fairtrade ingredients, bake a campaign cake and share it. More info at the Fairtrade Foundation

### http://step.fairtrade.org.uk/?dm

**Still on Fairtrade:** The Scottish Fair Trade Forum have informed us that FT cotton uniforms can be ordered from Cotton Roots (**www.cottonroots.co.uk**). Cotton Roots are improving the construction of their garments so that they are even more durable with a softer honeycomb knit rather than the chunkier pique knit. It is now possible to tumble dry them. Cotton Roots have introduced 'mini sites' for schools. Parents pay on line, but with no delivery charge as they deliver to the school with the child name and class on each package every month. It has been working well.

International Day of Democracy: takes place on 15 September and provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world. Only with the full participation of and support by the international community, the national governing bodies, civil society and individuals, can the ideal of democracy be made into a reality to be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere (ACSJC) www.un.org/events/democracyday/

The United Nations' International Day of Non-Violence is a global observance that promotes non-violence through education and public awareness. It is annually held on October 2 to coincide with Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. The principle of non-violence, also known as non-violent resistance, rejects the use of physical violence to achieve social or political change. Many groups throughout the world use this method in social justice campaigns. There are three main categories of non-violence action: Protest and persuasion, including marches and vigils; Non-cooperation; Non-violent intervention, such as blockades and occupations. Education resources for this day can be found at www.educationscotland.gov.uk/resources/i/ internationaldayofnonviolence.asp

**Peace Pledge Union White Poppies:** With the magazine you will find a flier and order form from the PPU. As well as White Poppies there are other resources that might be of interest. The flier also tells the White Poppy story.

## Obituary

Grace Buckley, the vice Chair of the Commission gives an appreciation of the life of Fr Bob Bradley, one of the founding fathers of Justice and Peace in Scotland.

P

r. Bob Bradley, who died peacefully on Monday 16 July 2012, aged 88, was a stalwart of the Justice & Peace movement in Glasgow and nationally. His funeral Mass was held on 23 July at Our Lady & St. George's Parish, and the esteem in which he was held was witnessed by the crowded church, with the congregation spilling over into the choir loft and the concelebrants filling the sanctuary and the front pews – and that despite the pouring rain. Archbishop Conti was principal concelebrant, and members of the St. Mungo Singers and the parish choir led the music of the liturgy.

Archbishop Conti, in welcoming those present (including, he noted, a number of priests who had come out of retirement to be present), highlighted Fr. Bob's significant contribution to the Archdiocese, particularly his substantial support for the reforms of Vatican II, the role of the laity and the work of Justice & Peace.

In many ways he could be thought of as the godfather of the national Justice and Peace Commission founded in 1979. He was a regular attender and participant in the annual conferences of Justice and Peace until prevented by his health. He never complained when asked if he would bring vestments and vessels to ensure that there was a priest able to say mass for us.

His was a deep personal faith and as a Spiritual Director, he was demanding but also caring and sensitive. He subsequently became Parish Priest of Our Lady & St. George's where he served for 21 years until his retirement, and a further 6 years in residence there. He had vision balanced with reality, and was a major figure in the development of the Pastoral Plan in the Archdiocese, and in spreading its influence into other dioceses. His life was grounded in the Beatitudes and the vision of Vatican II.

At the end of the funeral service, as Fr. Bob's favourite hymn *City of God* was sung, the congregation lined the exit from the church and there was a spontaneous outbreak of clapping as the hearse left the grounds. One lady was heard to express what was doubtless the views of those present: 'We'll not see another priest like him'.

Mary Cullen, who was the second lay Chair of Justice and Peace in the mid 1980s adds:

Bob played a key role in developing awareness of justice and peace issues in the church in Scotland. He believed that working for justice is central to the church's mission. As Vicar Episcopal, he encouraged people to

o Mark Nelson Mandela International Day ACTSA Scotland sent off another 9-tonne container-load of donated books, sorted and packed by ACTSA

volunteers, to school libraries in South Africa. The books were sent off from George Square by the South African High Commissioner, H.E. Zola Skweyiya and the Scottish Minister for Local Government and Planning Derek Mackay. The First Minister Alex Salmond called into Hillhead Library to see the books being packed and loaded.

18th July was declared as Nelson Man-

dela Day in South Africa in 2009, and each year people are encouraged to give 67 minutes of voluntary service to the community on that day, to mark Nelson Mandela's 67 years of public service. (No one is forced to stop after 67 minutes, of course.)

In November 2009 the United Nations General Assembly declared the date the annual Nelson Mandela Inmeet, reflect on the gospel, and read the Council documents. He promoted parish groups, using a handbook for groups published by the Catholic

Institute for International Relations and Pax Christi in 1978. He set up an archdiocesan group, and within a short time a national commission for Justice and Peace was established, on which he served. It met in each diocese in turn to take its message across the country.

Fr Willy Slavin, first National Secretary adds his recollections:

I owe more than most to Bob Bradley. In 1979 I was coming near to the end of a 5 year stint in Bangladesh. Since I had learned Bengali the Italian Xaverians were keen enough for me to stay on. In all respects the needs of Khulna Diocese were greater than my own Archdiocese of Glasgow.

Out of the blue I got a letter from Bob saying he had at last managed to persuade the Scottish Bishops to put some money into creating a part-time post of National Justice and Peace Secretary. Was I interested?

During the summer of 1980 I visited England, Ireland, the United States and Canada to see the different approaches of English speaking countries. This suggested it was opportune to try something similar in Scotland and I was appointed as the first full-time J&P secretary with Bishop Monaghan, auxiliary in Edinburgh as President. The pastoral side of my ministry was to be in prison chaplaincy in Barlinnie.

In the years after Vatican II the various national Justice and Peace Commissions had taken different approaches to their overseas development agencies which often (like SCIAF) partly funded them. I should say that it was typical of Bob, and to his immense credit, that although he might have been inclined to a different approach in this respect from me, he never pushed his own view.

At the national JP weekend gathering in Coodham in 1982 I proposed that it was important that Justice and Peace have a lay chairman. He immediately and gracefully stood aside to make way for Jim McManus.

Latterly I visited him several times in the Nazareth House where he seemed to be diminishing steadily, readying himself as it were to disappear into the Just One. May he rest now in the fullness of peace.

ternational Day in a resolution sponsored by 165 countries and adopted unanimously.

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The overarching objective of Mandela Day is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the

world for the better, and in doing so build a global movement for good. Ultimately it seeks to empower communities everywhere. 'Take Action; Inspire Change; Make Every Day a Mandela Day.' www.mandeladay.com









### **SEPTEMBER**

- Scottish Fair Trade Forum Campaign Day, the day includes celebrations to mark the 10th anniversary of 'Rainbow Turtle' Paisley's Fairtrade shop, and Traidcraft will be present with the 'Traidcraft Roadshow'. A day not to be missed for all interested in Fairtrade. All events at the Town Hall, Paisley.
- 8 International Literacy Day
- 9 Racial Justice Sunday
- 10 Reading for Rights Evening, Irvine, 6.30pm
- 16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 18 The Economics of Killing: How the West Fuels War and Poverty in the Developing World, Edinburgh.
- 20 Take One Action film festival (till 6 October)
- 21 UN International Day of Peace
- 22 International Migrants Day

### OCTOBER

- 2 International Day of Non-Violence
- 6-13 Drones Week of Action
- 6-18 Edinburgh World Justice Festival 2012! Join the Fight for a Fairer Future

### **OCTOBER CONTINUED**

- 13 International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
- 15 UN International Day of Rural Women
- 16 World food day
- 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- 18 UK Anti-Slavery Day
- 20 STUC nationwide demonstration in Glasgow to concide with the TUC's national demonstration 'for a Future that Works' in London on the same day.
- 24 United Nations Day

### **NOVEMBER**

- 6 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict
- 20 Universal Children's Day
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 29 UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

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

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