

'Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business.



# Editorial

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is one of my all-time favourite books – not just for Christmas. At the centre of the work is a paradox. Marley is dead, or else nothing wonderful can come of the story. While it is the living Scrooge who attests to this fact, Scrooge himself is to all intents and purposes dead to humanity; and it is the dead Marley who will be responsible for the redemption of the living Scrooge.

When the estimable gentlemen arrive at Scrooge and Marley's seeking Christmas charitable relief, they are unaware whether they are addressing Scrooge or Marley. 'It's not my business...' Scrooge tells them, 'It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's.'

It is an argument he falls back on later when the ghost of Marley comes to haunt him, trailing the long chain of 'cash-boxes, keys, padlocks, ledgers, deeds, and heavy purses' which are part of his punishment. Scrooge is bemused: 'But you were always a good man of business, Jacob...' 'Business!' cried the Ghost, wringing its hands again. 'Mankind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were, all, my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business!'

There is a tendency in the modern world to try to accommodate everything under something called the 'business model'. It is an outgrowth of a certain kind of economic mentality which claims to focus on 'efficiency' as a way of improving company performance. The efficiency is aimed at producing a 'leaner and meaner' operation. The end product (although rarely admitted as such) is the priority of profit over people. It is in short the unredeemed Scrooge business model.

Of course profit is a part of any business; although a purely financial measure will probably be inadequate. The folly of such a measure can be found in GDP, the statistical measure of economic production of a state. Anything that can be seen as contributing to production is counted: so the more packaging you use for instance, the more work created manufacturing, packing and of course waste disposal and the greater the GDP. At its most perverse, prostitution (£5.3 billion) and illegal drugs (£4.4 billion) are now estimated by the

Office for National Statistics (ONS) to be a part of GDP, contributing around £10 billion a year to the British economy.

The pursuit of profit in purely financial terms also leads to what Dickens' contemporary Karl Marx termed 'commodity fetishism'. Human relationships are simply reduced to economic and mechanical elements, costs and commodities, in the process of work. At its extreme, it is the Mafia hitman's justification: 'Nothing personal, it's just business'. On the contrary, Marley's agonised realisation expresses the priority of the human and relational dimensions, which the narrative artfully turns into the means of Scrooge's redemption and conversion.

Then there is the reverse of this process which turns a process into a product. Here, the whole sorry procession of everyone, from Michael Parkinson and Sun Alliance to Wonga and its ilk offering 'financial products' threatens to turn us all into Marley, dragging our products behind us. Meanwhile, 'welfare' and 'benefits' are not seen as the means of improving life, but rather as ill-gotten gains.

In a very entertaining article (for reference see our Facebook page) economist Jerry Bowyer sees Dickens launching a full frontal attack on the economic views of Rev Henry Malthus. For Malthus, fallen humanity would always produce surplus population and want, for which the only remedy is mortality. Bowyer rejects the economics of the miser for the entrepreneurial prosperity he finds represented by the Ghost of Christmas Present.

For the UK, however, the problem is that so much business produces imaginary goods. It may be the flickering figures of financial services that privatise profits for the wealthy and nationalise loss on to the taxpayer. Or it may be replacing manufacturing – actually making something – with duff service industries on part time and zero hour contracts, which turn people into skivvies, robbing them of the means to live a dignified life, all under the guise of 'austerity'.

There is a succinct description of our attachment to a 'business' model in a recent article by the broadcaster Derek Bateman: 'The underlying truth is that Britain is bankrupt, living on sovereign debt and personal credit cards, buying imported goods instead of equipment for industry, creating low

paid jobs which need benefits to eke them out, still borrowing massively because tax receipts are too low while opposing the immigration that can boost economic activity and dividing the country by stripping away the benefits that are the glue of British society'.

A collection of Christmas facts and surveys (also to be found on J&P Facebook page) analyses the 'business' of Christmas – almost £75 billion in expenditure, £2.4 billion wasted on uneaten, discarded food and unwanted gifts. Just 10% of adults (and only 4% of 25-34 year olds) think that its religious meaning is the most important thing about Christmas. Two thirds of all adults say spending time with family is the most important thing about Christmas.

Just over half (51%) agree with the statement: 'The birth of Jesus is irrelevant to my Christmas'. C S Lewis has pointed to the absence of specifically Christian reference in *A Christmas Carol*. G K Chesterton, however, said, 'in fighting for Christmas, Dickens was fighting for the old European festival'. For the Christian feast incorporates and baptises the celebration of a time long held sacred; not least for the emergence from the darkness of midwinter solstice and the feasting with which we celebrate it as communities.

Scrooge may have business acumen, but it is a poor, pinched and miserable thing that brings him no happiness. In an age of religious revivalism his conversion is not religious but moral. But then Jesus did not found a religion: rather he called us to repentance, compassion and love – life in all its fullness. Scrooge's journey is a kind of spiritual exercise, with the spirits directing him into rediscovering that life and allowing us to share in the joy of rediscovery. 'If you grasp and cling to life on your terms, you'll lose it, but if you let that life go, you'll get life on God's terms' (Luke 17:33, The Message).

It has been a long time since this particular Tim could be described as tiny. Nevertheless, I am happy to join my illustrious predecessor, contemplating the prospect of a brighter future, in wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and of course, 'God bless Us, Every One!'

Tim Duffy





# SERMON FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

*Here is a very slightly edited text of the sermon preached by Bishop Hugh Gilbert OSB at the Kirk of St Nicholas, Aberdeen*

Today is Remembrance Sunday. It falls, as we all vividly aware, during the centenary of the First World War. This takes our memories in a certain direction. That war was to end by Christmas, everyone said. Instead it opened a new and terrible chapter in history.

May I quote three stanzas from John Masefield's *August 1914*, set in the quiet of the Malvern Hills.

*How still this quiet cornfield is to-night!  
By an intenser glow the evening falls,  
Bringing not darkness, but a deeper light;  
Among the stooks a partridge covey calls.*

*The windows glitter on the distant hill;  
Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold  
Stumble on sudden music and are still;  
The forlorn pinewoods droop above the wold.*

*And silence broods like spirit on the brae,  
A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight runs  
Over the grasses of the ancient way  
Rutted this morning by the passing guns.*

Well, the guns kept passing. We talk of a World War. It would become that, and its successor even more so. But we should remember that the origin of these wars and their main focus was in our own continent. In the 19th century, Europe had been what one historian calls 'the powerhouse of the world'. A century ago, it suddenly turned in on itself like some creature from mythology and began to devour itself. 'There are shades of barbarism in twentieth-century Europe', writes Norman Davies, 'which would once have amazed the most barbarous of barbarians... The totalitarian horrors of communism and fascism, when added to the horrors of total war, created an unequalled sum of death, misery and degradation' (Norman Davies, *Europe*, p 897).

Out of the First World War came the Second, and out of the Second the Cold one, in the strange light of which the more senior of us were reared. Recent events in eastern Ukraine suggest that War still simmers. And since the end of the Cold War, even before, other areas of the world have turned toxic, and in quite new ways. The music is the same, but the orchestration very different.

But all the time, through the exponential of violence, the population of the deceased - humanity's other continent - has been growing at a rate beyond the natural. It has been estimated that between 1914 and 1991, some 187 million people lost their lives through violence. Each of these is an individual, complete in his or her-self. Each of these has family, friends. Each of them bereaves. Each of them, however unintentionally, has left behind tears and pain. Each local community, in a country like ours, has felt the loss. And on it goes.

This story is not the whole story, of course. But it is the one we remember today. In the Catholic tradition, November in general is a month when the departed are remembered, prayer offered for them, for the repose of their souls, and cemeteries are visited, candles lit and so on. And this is not morbid; it's healthy and human. On the 11th, next week, I'll be privileged to be with some 25 or so bishops from the European Union, to visit the cemeteries at Verdun and to take part in Evening Prayer for the dead in the Cathedral there.

And today is Remembrance Sunday for our whole society, believers or not. And this is not morbid either. There may be something pale and incomplete about our ceremony, and we feel a little ill at ease. But it isn't morbid; rather, sobering, appropriate, respectful, wise. And it moves our memory a certain way.

At Easter 1900, the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, in a book about the dawning century, asked this prophetic question: 'Is evil simply a natural defect, an imperfection which will disappear as good grows, or is it a real power which reigns over our world by means of temptations, so that if we are to fight against it support must be found in another sphere of existence? This is the vital

question.' Indeed. Is evil a real power? It would seem crass to deny it. And if so, is there support from another sphere of existence? And if there is, how can we access it?

Coming back to Europe, to the UK, to Scotland, to the house of our own society, is there – in the attic or the cellar or in a locked cupboard, as it were, in our memories or hearts or traditions – a resource which will enable us to fight the power of evil? I think there is. It is a second memory. It is a backdrop to today, enshrined in readings and prayers and our presence here in St Nicholas'. It is the memory of a particular death and of a resurrection. 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

In the Gospel of Mark, which we heard, this is the only word from the Cross. It could be the cry of swathes of humanity since 1914.

Of the four Gospels, Mark is the bleakest, suitable therefore for today. But suitably also the voice that breaks the silence is a soldier's, a Roman officer's: 'In truth, this man was son of God.' He must have seen many men die, that centurion. But he says what he says when he hears and sees *this* death. And the next scene but one, after the hurried burial, is the discovery of an empty tomb, and another voice: 'He has risen, he is not here.'

On the horizon, on the edges of our first memory, of this vast loss of life, beyond our sense of the evil, there glimmers this other memory. It's a memory of a death mysteriously capable of embracing every other death and of opening a passage through it to another sphere of existence, a passage accessible to anyone. It's the memory of an event at once in history: 'under Pontius Pilate', and from another sphere of existence: 'Truly this man was God's son.'

Above all, it's a memory that generates hope. It can take away any sense of pale incompleteness to our commemorations. It generates a hope both for our departed and for us still in the battle. A hope both for the beyond and for the now. It is that resource from another sphere of existence, which can sustain our efforts for the common good of neighbourhood, city, shire or country, the local and the global.

Vaclav Havel, the Czech playwright, philosopher, statesman, and one of the heroes of 1989, described it thus: 'Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Either we have hope or we don't; it is a dimension of the soul, and it's not essentially dependent on some particular observation of the world or estimate of the situation. Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, and orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons ... Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good, not just because it stands a chance to succeed... Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.'

Wasn't the resurrection of Europe post World War II the fruit of such hope? Or consider the tearing down of that Wall 25 years ago this year, the almost bloodless end of Communism. The guns go on rutting the roads and churning the cornfields.

The world's sky is not a bright one currently. But there is this something other, mysteriously irrepressible; this hope. It's the source of the unexpected resolution of intractable problems, of surprising reconciliations, of outbreaks of peace that weren't anticipated. It's a hope with deep roots in the human psyche, with a long ancestry in our Scottish and British and European culture. It's a hope with deeper roots still in the nature and purposes of God, in an empty tomb on the fringe of Jerusalem. It's legitimate

*...because the Holy Ghost over the bent*

*World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.*

'On this mountain he will remove', we heard Isaiah say, 'the mourning veil covering all peoples, and the shroud enwrapping all nations, he will destroy death for ever. The Lord will wipe away the tears from every face.'

So let us remember and let us hope.

# A Busy Weekend



**T**he weekend of 29/30 November was a busy one for J&P activists. There was the STUC St Andrew's Day Anti-Racism March and Rally; the St Andrew's Day Scrap Trident event at Faslane and the St Andrew's Day Solidarity Gathering at Dungavel. Add to that the Glasgow Archdiocese Day of Reflection on Slavery and Human Trafficking and the launch of Just Faith in Dunkeld Diocese it was an eventful weekend.

## St Andrew's Day Anti Nuclear Demonstration

*Ellen Charlton, Chair of Justice and Peace, spoke at Faslane. This is her account of what happened and what she said*

**O**ne of the biggest demonstrations at Faslane in recent times took place on St. Andrew's Day this year. It was encouraging to see so many younger people involved and it was obvious that many were there as a result of the huge amount of awareness raised by the last two years of Referendum debate. There were the old faithfuls as well as many who had never been to Faslane before but were well informed and engaged with the nuclear issues as a result of their participation in the matter of Scotland's future. I was asked to speak on behalf of SCANA (now Scottish Christians Against Nuclear Arms).

I compared the similarity of the facility at Faslane and that at Dungavel, the Detention and Removal Centre in South Lanarkshire. Both are surrounded by high metal fences, topped with razor wire. In one case to keep people out and in the other to keep people in.

St. Andrew's Day is traditionally a day when a gathering is held outside Dungavel as a witness to our opposition to this establishment in Scottish. At the same time as we were standing outside Faslane many of my friends from Motherwell Justice and Peace Group and Ayrshire Friends of Refugees were standing outside Dungavel. We both brought the same message.

Jesus said, 'I come that they might have LIFE'. As Christians we believe in a Kingdom of Justice, Peace, Hope and Love. Both these facilities are symbols of Fear, Terror, Hate and Death.

If it is morally wrong to use nuclear weapons then it is also morally wrong to threaten their use.

Nuclear weapons are not a deterrent to war; they represent a failure to work for peace.

Dungavel is not a deterrent to immigration; it is a failure to welcome the stranger.

The values expressed on our Scottish Mace are Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity.

These values are in direct contradiction of all that Faslane and Dungavel represent. Both facilities need to be removed from Scottish soil.

## St Andrew's Day at Dungavel

*Carol Clarke describes the solidarity gathering*

**W**hen we arrived at Dungavel we found to our surprise that there were no police around, although we had written to them in August letting them know we planned to be there for St Andrew's day as usual.

Arthur West, one of the organisers, went up to the front gate to see what was going on. There were two vans outside the main holding pen and Arthur could hear a lot of shouting inside the grounds. When the police failed to arrive, we decided to march up to the car park. Arthur phoned the centre to let them

know our plans and was given the go ahead. We were a small group, and we were led up the drive by a young piper, Calum, playing Scottish tunes.

When we were about halfway up the drive one of the guards came running down to say we could go no further and that we would have to wait till the police arrived. We were informed that the police had been phoned and were on their way. After some discussion amongst us and not knowing how long the police would be, we asked the guard to take in the gifts and cards we had brought with us, and we held our gathering half way up the drive.

I was reminded of our last solidarity gathering at Dungavel, when we were asked to move away from the car park at the front of the building to allow an ambulance entry for a detainee to be taken to hospital, though we saw no ambulance arrive.

We began as usual with two minutes silence in solidarity with those who were being detained and remembered also all who had passed through these gates.

Linda Fabiani MSP, a regular at these gatherings spoke, but like everyone else words failed her that this monstrosity was still with us, when we had been given a glimmer of hope that had the referendum gone the other way it would have been closed. She confirmed that we were unable to go any further up the drive without permission as it was deemed to be Crown Property and the Scottish Government had no jurisdiction over Crown Property. Linda also recalled the many gatherings over the years, some quite large but most small like ours, and she confirmed she would still be going to Dungavel until its doors closed for good.

I also spoke remembering our colleagues who were at Faslane and like Ellen I mentioned a previous J&P magazine front cover with a picture of Faslane and Dungavel - One with barbed wire to keep people out and one with barbed wire to keep people in. Both must go and go soon. Dungavel and all detention centres to my mind are evil, and good always triumphs over evil in the end, so in the words of the song - 'we will overcome'.

One last thing when we were about to leave and Calum was getting ready to pipe us back down the driveway the same guard came running out and told Arthur we were not allowed to take any photographs. We had been told this the last time by a guard (after 13 years of taking photos) and I asked the police (who were present) why not and they said there was no reason not for taking photos and I should just continue. I wonder what is going on that now we are not supposed to take photos.

I am worried about this change in tone, and hope it is not a precursor to the general election next year, when I am even more afraid that asylum seekers will be made scapegoats for everything that ails society in the UK. We must be vigilant and be ready to rebuff all attempts at this scapegoating and scaremonger. 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'.

One final thing, the vans that were mentioned at the beginning had the logo Tascor on the side, and as we were chatting at our cars before leaving we saw three vans coming down the driveway leaving the centre. A look at the Tascor website tells us all we need to know 'Tascor has extensive experience in frontline Border and Immigration work and is the largest private sector provider of secure immigration detainee escorting worldwide.' I wondered how many people were being removed in the vans we saw.

Scottish Detainee Visitors offer support, understanding and a vital life-line to the outside world for people being held in immigration detention in Scotland. If you would like to find out more about their work and how to become one of their volunteers visit their website <http://sdv.org.uk/> tel: 0141 248 9799





# Old People

Advent and Christmas...are about old people.  
Shall I say that again?  
Advent and Christmas are about old people.

But what about the children? Don't they feature in the story?  
The Advent stories begin with an elderly couple, Elizabeth and Zechariah, he a priest helping out in his retirement years, she a childless senior citizen.

The Christmas stories end with another elderly couple.  
One is Simeon, a God-fearing man who regularly visits the temple.  
The other is Anna, an 84-year-old widow and prophetess. They are the people who witness Jesus being dedicated to God by his parents in accordance with Jewish tradition, and who recognise his uniqueness.  
And in between, we have three wise men, of indeterminate age, though if Eastern tradition is to be acknowledged, Wisdom should be considered as the gift of the years, not of youth.

I claim Advent and Christmas as a time for adults, not out of any dislike for children, but because I fear that by viewing these seasons as if they were devoted to and for toddlers, we avoid one of the quirks of God's nature. God expects old dogs to do new tricks. God expects people whom the world would deem past it to initiate.  
The beginning of Jewish-Christian history involves an old man, Abraham, a nonagenarian, and his equally aged wife Sarah, from whom God maintains a nation will spring. He could have chosen a fertile upwardly mobile pair of newlyweds. We would have.

But God is not us. God expects old people –  
to be the sowers of new seed;  
to be midwives of change;  
to be the ones who recognise and name the new directions which society has to take;  
to be the ones who applaud and encourage young potential.

Elizabeth and Zechariah become parents in their old age and Simeon and Anna recognise the uniqueness in Mary's tiny baby because God will not have people marginalized or written off on account of age.  
And when we see three wise men worshipping Jesus and then going home by another way, we see God's belief and expectation that older folk can change and will change when they recognise the truth.

*From an Advent Talk on Radio 4 by John Bell, 2001, WGRG, Iona Community, 140 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2 3DH (<http://iona.org.uk>). Reproduced with permission. Also reprinted in 'Celebrating the Gift of Years', URC booklet, and 'What Price Christmas', Alternativity.*

# Just Faith Update

The Just Faith project, which seeks to combine and strengthen the agendas of Justice and Peace, SCIAF and Mission Matters, continues to grow. Events and workshops have been continuing in the diocese of Argyll and the Isles, coordinated by Marian Pallister and more are planned. In Paisley, John Seenan is following the launch of Just Faith in the diocese, by developing contacts with the parishes preliminary to establishing what they feel they need.

On Saturday 29 November, Just Faith launched in the Diocese of Dunkeld with a Conference held in the St Ninian Institute in Dundee with the cooperation of the Institute's Director David Meikeljohn. Almost thirty people turned out. The aim of the day was not to impose a set of ideas or parachute in some alternative; but rather to hear something of local work already being done as well as local needs. Bishop Robson was present for the entire morning and spoke approvingly of the aims of the project as a part of the work for growth and formation he would like to see in his diocese.

David Meikeljohn gave a concise account of the mission of the St Ninian Institute, rooting it in the overall mission of faith outlined in the *Catechism* as well as Pope Francis' recent exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

There followed some contributions from those attending, followed by reflections from John Seenan and representatives of the three agencies involved in Just Faith.

We then heard a very interesting and powerful presentation from SCIAF partner Mr Mam Sambath, the Director of Development and Partnership in Action (DPA) in Cambodia. He spoke of the difficulties faced by a predominantly rural and poor culture faced with the fairly unbridled activities of logging and mining multinationals.

After a pleasant lunch people seemed more inclined to pursue discussions begun over the lunch table. Rather than pushing on with the organised programme it seemed in keeping with a low key and non interventionist approach to let this continue before listening to an evaluation by the participants in the day.

Sometimes, especially in a church setting, an undirected approach can be a bit perplexing. So it is interesting to leave an acknowledgement of this, but also an awareness of the wider implications, to one of those attending. Anne Meiland, from Newport noted that some people remained unsure of what Just Faith is actually about and even 'voiced the concern that no blueprint had been given to take forward to the parishes. However,' she continues, 'I think this was to miss the point about the new Just Faith initiative. A blueprint at this stage, would simply have stifled the power and width of further prayerful reflection and open discussion on how best to create a living, lasting and worthwhile relationship with the agencies and parishes'.

There is a workshop based resource available for groups entitled *Rediscovering Mercy*, specially prepared for people who might want to extend what Anne calls 'prayerful reflection and open discussion'. This has been seen as a possible basis for a Lent study group and there is a proposed diocesan training day on 7 February.

Further details as well as more information can be found on the Just Faith Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/justfaithscotland](http://www.facebook.com/justfaithscotland)

# TRAFFICKING - MODERN SLAVERY

*Combating human trafficking is a major concern for modern society. Here we review some recent developments, particularly those involving Pope Francis and Justice and Peace*

The United Nations estimates that 2.4 million people are being trafficked at any given time and their exploitation generates \$32 billion in annual profits for criminals. According to the 2014 Global Slavery Index published by the Walk Free Foundation, nearly 36 million people are currently victims of modern slavery, which includes people who have lost their liberty and are being exploited for personal or commercial interests. Up to a third of trafficked persons assisted in 2011 were less than 18 years of age.

According to the International Labour Organisation, the total profits obtained by forced labour in the private economy throughout the world amounts to \$150 billion every year. As of April 2014, the Council of Europe *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings* has been ratified by 42 states, with another 2 states having signed but not yet ratified. There can be little doubt that - exacerbated by the unsettling of people, patterns of migration, climate change, local and ethnic conflict, as well as the fluidity of population movement in a globalised world - opportunities for trafficking are constantly increasing.

Pope Francis has long expressed the need to combat trafficking. As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he celebrated an annual Mass with the victims of trafficking. Soon after his election as pope in 2013, he asked the pontifical academies of sciences and of social sciences to study the problem of modern-day slavery and ways for the church to work with others to stop it.

In March 2014 he was a signatory to a multi faith document (see box) affirming the need for religious communions to face up to the problems of trafficking, affirming it as 'modern slavery... an offense against humanity with victims from every walk of life, but above all amongst the poor'. And he announced in August that trafficking would be the theme for *World Peace Day 2015*.

Describing why Pope Francis chose trafficking as the theme, a statement from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace said, 'Many people think that slavery is a thing of the past, [but] this social plague remains all too real in today's world' with child labour, forced prostitution, trafficking for organs and a variety of forms of forced labour.

Human trafficking is 'a crime

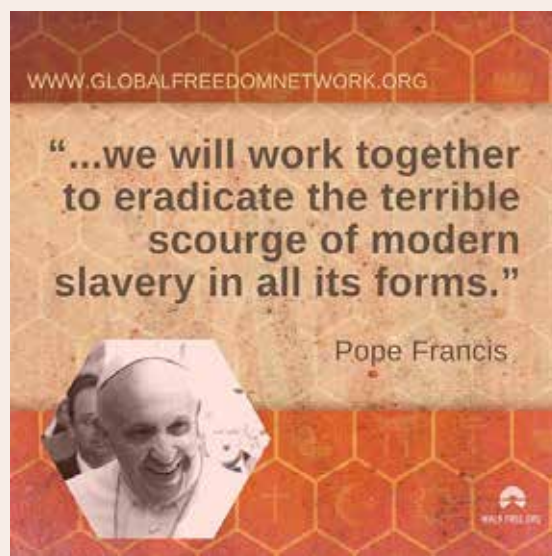
against humanity' and 'an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ', said Pope Francis, who chose to send the title of his *Message* on Twitter on 2 December: *No more slavery. We are all brothers and sisters.* The full message will be put on the website and referenced on our Facebook page as soon as it is available.

Police chiefs and Church representatives from across the world came to London to join Home Office ministers for a Conference aimed at developing strategies to combat human trafficking. The guiding principle of the Santa Marta Group is always to keep the welfare of the trafficked victim at the heart of all law enforcement. The conference, which took place in London on 5-6 December, was organised by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the Home Office. The delegates came at the invitation of Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, and MPS Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe. The conference was organised with the full support of the Home Office, which hosted the event at Lancaster House, and was addressed by the Home Secretary Theresa May, and the Minister for Modern Slavery and Organised Crime, Karen Bradley.

We, the undersigned, are gathered here today for a historic initiative to inspire spiritual and practical action by all global faiths and people of good will everywhere to eradicate modern slavery across the world by 2020 and for all time. In the eyes of God, each human being is a free person, whether girl, boy, woman or man, and is destined to exist for the good of all in equality and fraternity. Modern slavery, in terms of human trafficking, forced labour and prostitution, organ trafficking, and any relationship that fails to respect the fundamental conviction that all people are equal and have the same freedom and dignity, is a crime against humanity. We pledge ourselves here today to do all in our power, within our faith communities and beyond, to work together for the freedom of all those who are enslaved and trafficked so that their future may be restored. Today we have the opportunity, awareness, wisdom, innovation and technology to achieve this human and moral imperative.

(Santa Marta Group Statement March 2014)

There was an introductory message from Pope Francis: 'Your labours to promote ongoing dialogue on the legal



remedies to human trafficking and on the essential care of those who suffer this enslavement are especially important because of the hidden nature of this crime'. Cardinal Nichols commented: 'The work against trafficking lies at the heart of the Church's pastoral concern and ministry. There is much to be done, but the emergence of the Santa Marta Group's international network is an important step towards helping the victims and fighting this crime.'

Scotland was represented at the meeting but has already been involving itself in the issue of trafficking as a high priority. Jenny Marra is the Labour MSP for NE Scotland who put forward a private member's bill but, thanks to an extraordinary public response, a dedicated *Human Trafficking Bill* for Scotland will be considered by the Scottish Parliament. The proposals aim to: Consolidate and strengthen

existing criminal law against human trafficking; Enhance the status of and support for the victims of trafficking; Give statutory responsibility to relevant agencies to work with the Scottish Government to develop: and to implement a Scottish Anti-Trafficking Strategy.

Jenny Marra and Canon Robert Hill were the speakers at a Day of Reflection on 29 November on the issue of trafficking organised by the Glasgow Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Group. There is an excellent report by Grace Buckley on the archdiocesan Justice and Peace website. Those present were very clearly affected by Jenny's presentation, especially her obvious passion to act and not just talk, and there was general agreement that Justice & Peace at national as well as diocesan level should write to the Bishops' Conference, asking them to support the legislation and to make public statements on the issue.

Look out for the papal message on the website.



## Putting Our Trust In People



*At the end of October, Martin Johnstone, The Scottish Churches Priority Areas Secretary, spent three days in Rome in the midst of some very esteemed company. He was there with waste pickers, slum dwellers and small farmers from across the world. Oh – and a few bishops, cardinals; and Pope Francis were there too. It was the first gathering of the Global Meeting of Popular Movements, an extraordinary meeting*

*hosted by the Vatican, looking at how People can change things. Here are some of his observations.*

**A**t the Global Meeting of Popular Movements, Pope Francis committed the Catholic Church to walk alongside the poor in their struggle for justice. He also stated clearly what I certainly know to be true: those who struggle against poverty have clear insights into how it can be effectively addressed. And over these last days I heard –at first hand and on a global scale:

- the wisdom of waste pickers who talked about the contribution that they are making to recycling and care for the planet;
- the experience of slum dwellers about how to make our homes and lifestyles much more sustainable and community-focused
- the experience of rural farmers warning about the dangers of genetically modified crops which are designed to feed profits rather than stomachs.

We also heard from Evo Morales, President of Bolivia. President Morales would not be on the Christmas card list of too many western leaders but his government – now in its 9th year – was re-elected with 60% of the popular vote. What I found most inspiring about his speech was that he spoke about how he had needed to change his views (and his government's policy) in the light of insights from those who are amongst the very poorest in his country. He seemed to talk about a genuinely participative democracy at work – and one where real change and progress was happening. Democracy is too important to be left to politicians!

Meanwhile, back at home, the Church of Scotland and Faith in Community Scotland both made submissions to the Smith Commission which has been given the task of getting agreement on the specifics of the new powers that will come to Scotland following September's Independence Referendum. At the heart of both submissions lies a plea: 'Let's make our democracy better, stronger and much more engaging.' My heartfelt plea, emboldened by what I heard in Rome, to the Smith Commission is that we must have the courage to trust the people.

See more at: <http://tinyurl.com/mh2n3jg>

### A PRAYER FOR THE END OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

*God of freedom, beauty and truth  
we believe that your deepest desire,  
your most powerful energy,  
is that all creation might know abundant life.  
We raise our voices in anguished prayer  
for our sisters and brothers,  
women and girls, men and boys,  
who are modern day slaves;  
They are your beloved daughters and sons,  
exploited sexually or forced to work  
because of human violence and greed.*

*Fill us with your holy anger and your sacred passion  
that those who are trafficked might know healing and justice;  
that traffickers will come to repentance and conversion;  
that all of us might live in such a way  
that others are not made to pay the price  
for our comfort and convenience.  
Hasten the coming of the day when all people  
and our precious Earth itself  
will be treated, not as a commodity,  
but as radiant images of your freedom, beauty and truth.  
Amen. May it be so.*

Prayer as shared by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J.

## When the World was Dark

*When the world was dark  
and the city was quiet,  
you came.  
You crept in beside us.*

*And not many knew.  
Only the few  
who dared to believe  
that God might do something different.*

*Will you do the same this Christmas, Lord?*

*Will you come into that darkness of  
today's world;  
not the friendly darkness  
as when sleep rescues us from tiredness,  
but the fearful darkness,  
in which people have stopped believing  
that war will end  
or that food will come  
or that a government will change  
or that the Church cares?*

*Will you come into that darkness  
and do something different  
to save your people from death and despair?*

*Will you come into the quietness of this city  
Not the friendly quietness  
As when lovers hold hands,  
But the fearful silence  
When the phone has not rung,  
The letter has not come  
The friendly voice no longer speaks,  
the doctor's face says it all?*

*Will you come into that darkness,  
And do something different ,  
Not to distract, but to embrace your people?*

*And will you come into the dark corners  
and the quiet places of our lives?*

*We ask this not because we are guilt-ridden  
or want to be,  
But because the fullness our lives long for  
depends on us being as open and vulnerable to  
you  
as you were to us,  
when you came,  
wearing no more than nappies,  
and trusting human hands  
to hold their maker.  
will you come into our lives,  
if we open them to you  
and do something different?*

*When the world was dark  
and the city was quiet  
you came.*

*You crept in beside us.*

*Do the same this Christmas, Lord.  
Do the same this Christmas.*

*Amen*

Source: Iona Community, Cloth for the Cradle, p92  
taken from What Price Christmas by Alternativity



# Seven Reasons to Object to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

*Ailbhe Maloney of the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, has produced a very useful summary of a proposed trade agreement with potentially dire consequences*

Over the last few months the public has slowly become aware of a new trade agreement between USA and the EU that raises concerns about regulations. With the negotiation documents, for the most part, being treated as 'classified', these agreements are seen as surreptitious to many. TTIP only came under public scrutiny in March 2014 when a proposed draft was leaked; following this the European Commission initiated a public consultation on a restricted number of clauses. The talks have been highly criticised for their lack of transparency, notably by Noam Chomsky and world-renowned Professor of International Law Martti Koskeniemi. Proponents say the agreement would result in multilateral economic growth, while critics say it would increase corporate power, thus making it more difficult to regulate markets for the benefit of society.

On the one hand, former EU President Barroso predicted that this trade deal would be hugely beneficial to the European economy. Even our own First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, has described the prospect as 'especially good news'. Anthony Gardner, US Ambassador to the EU, claims that every European government has expressed support for these discussions. TTIP is touted by its proponents as having the potential to offer significant economic stimulus for a recession-ridden Europe. Some argue that there is as much as £100bn in growth to be gained from this project. With such prosperous potential, why then do these deliberations face huge opposition?

**1. Benefit:** There is a strong argument that the possible fortune that could be derived from this agreement is grossly overstated. The Centre for Economic Policy Research based in the UK stated that a more realistic outcome is that the agreements would boost the economic growth by a mere 0.015 percentage points annually, a nearly negligible amount. Furthermore, the economic barriers between the EU and USA are relatively low due to their membership of the World Trade Organisation. The barriers in place have been placed there by democratically elected representatives of different nations.

**2. Democracy:** One proposal in TTIP is to have investor-state dispute settlement. This effectively would grant corporations the same legal position as a nation state. It also allows corporations to sue states that may interfere with profits of a business by legislating certain government policies. Australia offers an example of what this may mean for European nations. Australia introduced plain packaging for cigarettes and is now facing a lawsuit from the Philip Morris Tobacco Company. A coalition of over 200 environmentalists, labour unions and consumer advocacy organisations on both sides of the Atlantic submitted a petition to have the investor-state dispute settlement clauses of the agreement removed but whether they have been listened to is yet to be known.

**3. Monopoly:** The US and EU together represent 60% of global GDP, 33% of world trade in goods and 42% of world trade services. A free trade area between these two could cause an unprecedented control of the global market by a regional agreement.

## 4. Privatisation:

Under TTIP public services are vulnerable. According to the Huffington Post, the UK Trade Minister Lord Livingston admitted that talks about the NHS were still on the table. Furthermore, TTIP has the potential to open up public health, education and water services to American companies.

**5. Food law:** We, as Europeans, are used to being able to find out what is in our food. We are also safe in the knowledge that certain chemicals are outright banned for the benefit of our health. However, if TTIP were to come into place the regulations surrounding food and labelling would be loosened. Europeans would be exposed to harmful substances that are currently banned. For example growth hormones are still permitted in American beef; however they are

banned from European meat due to its links to cancer. Furthermore, approximately 70% of processed food sold in US supermarkets contains genetically modified ingredients. These GM foods effectively don't exist in Europe.



**6. Environment:** First, fracking. Under TTIP, the proposed investor-state dispute settlement could give corporations the ability to sue countries for banning fracking. Furthermore, Europe is far tougher on pesticide use than USA. The rule in Europe is that a company must prove the safety of a substance before it is used, in America a substance can be used until it is deemed unsafe. Therefore, if an agreement is reached on TTIP, Europeans may be exposed to dangers they are currently protected from; for example the EU bans 1,200 substances from use in cosmetics, the USA just 12.

**7. Banking Regulations:** US banking regulations are tougher than those in the UK. TTIP will seek to loosen the American restrictions on bankers, thus making Europe and USA more vulnerable to another economic downfall.



All of this makes for a frightening possibility that could arise from an agreement being reached on TTIP. Unfortunately, due to the format in which it is being conducted, people who will be hugely affected by this potential floodgate opening do not get to express an opinion on the aforementioned issues. Find out more at the Trade Justice Movement [www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk) and the World Development Movement [www.wdm.org.uk](http://www.wdm.org.uk)

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



## Fr Gerry W. Hughes SJ, 1924-2014

**M**any of those reading this will have found themselves either introduced to Justice and Peace, or will have had their commitments affirmed, through contact with Fr Gerry Hughes. Through his writings, his retreats and his intermittent presence in Glasgow in the 1970s (when he wasn't being sacked by the Archbishop) he was one of the unofficial chaplains to the Justice and Peace movement.

His writings mixed a mature Ignatian spirituality with a motivation to get involved. To many who felt themselves increasingly uncomfortable with an institutional church that seemed to have stalled, Fr Gerry gave a basis for persevering in the work of formation. And unlike some of the attempts at renewal that relied on discarding elements of faith, he held out a way of rediscovery.

His re-appropriation of the protest march as pilgrimage, especially in his own epic journeys; his recommendation of saying the rosary rhythmically while walking; and his sense of his own formation which comes across sometimes as 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' are all impressive. Most of all, perhaps, an accessible approach to the hallowed methods of prayer and contemplation from Ignatian spirituality made him a continuous link between the church many of us had grown up in and a church at odds with itself.

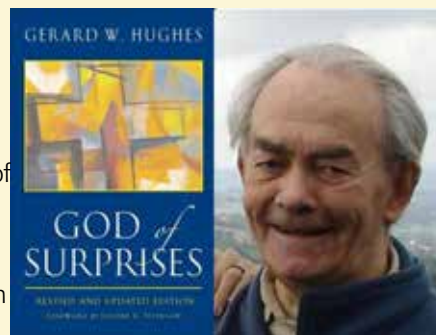
It was here that the notion of the God of Surprises allows us to let go of the images of God rooted in fear, to follow and deepen our relationship with a God of love who may be different

from what we had come to expect. Those who want a cosy armchair spirituality which doesn't ruffle preconceptions are likely to be unsettled. Those who think spirituality is just an add on extra to give a bit of gloss to what you are already doing are likely to be even more disappointed.

Fuller appreciations can be found online. I particularly commend *Gerry of Surprises* by David Stewart SJ in *America* and the Funeral Homily given by Brendan Callaghan SJ on the Jesuits in Britain website. But the last word should be Fr Gerry's:

*'There is no such thing as a spirituality of justice; there is only a spirituality of the Gospels, of which justice is an integral component.'*

TD



## Glasgow Night Shelter 2014 Winter Appeal

**S**ince its opening in December 2011 the Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers has provided over 16,425 overnight emergency accommodation spaces in Glasgow by providing somewhere warm and safe for up to 15 destitute asylum seekers to stay every night. Overseen by a paid coordinator, the night shelter is run by a dedicated team of over thirty volunteers who give up their time to make sure the shelter is run smoothly, has hot food available and is kept clean and tidy.

The people they look after are refused asylum seekers who are not eligible for support and homeless non-EU migrants who because of their immigration status cannot access normal homeless services. This group of people face multiple difficulties: often unable to speak English; without any family or friends who can help them; unable to do paid work; and with an insecure immigration status. Not knowing their rights and often scared to draw attention to their plight

for fear of coming to the attention of the authorities, they are blocked from accessing any support that is funded by public money.

Every night of the year the volunteers provide somewhere warm and welcoming for them to stay overnight and a hot evening meal - even on Christmas and Boxing Day and on Hogmanay. This year will be no different. But quite often during the winter holidays they face gaps in their rota of volunteers as many of them leave Glasgow to spend time with friends or family.

They are looking for volunteers to help cover the gaps in their weekly rota so the regular volunteers can get a break over the holiday period. If you think you might be able to help, get in touch through the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/people/Glasgow-Shelter/100005446426344>

**C**hurch Action on Poverty, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action have decided to bring their Action Week partnership to an end. Action Week 2014 was the final year of operation.

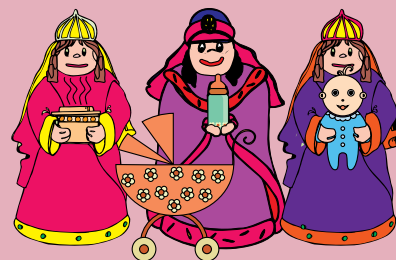
This Action Week was established in 2008, linking Homelessness Sunday with Poverty Action Sunday. Over the seven exciting years of activity, there have been significant achievements. However, it has proved impossible to cover the costs of coordinating Action Week, and the partners are no longer in a position to subsidise this activity. They have decided therefore that they will now each focus on their own fundraising. Relationships remain strong, and they will work jointly as appropriate. The worship resources produced will remain available for anyone who wishes to use them - sadly, it looks as if they will remain relevant for some years to come. See [www.actionweek.org.uk](http://www.actionweek.org.uk)

In 2015, Homeless Sunday (note shorter name) will be on January 18 ([www.churches-housing.org/](http://www.churches-housing.org/)) and Poverty Action Sunday on February 15. ([www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday)) It is hoped as many Action Week supporters as possible will take part in both.

Scottish Churches Housing Action will be 20 years old on 17 January 2015. They will mark the event with a service of celebration, challenge and commitment at St Andrew's RC Cathedral, Clyde St, Glasgow at 2.30 pm. Worship will be led by our Associate Convener, Rt Rev Bruce Cameron, and the sermon will be given by Very Rev Dr Andrew McLellan. All Welcome.

### **Do you know what would have happened if it had been Three Wise Women instead of Three Wise Men?**

1. They would have asked for directions, not followed a star.
2. They would have arrived on time, not twelve days late.
3. They would have helped deliver the baby.
4. They would have cleaned the stable.
5. They would have brought a casserole.
6. They would have brought more practical gifts.



# NEWSBRIEF

**2015 Housmans Peace Diary** with dates, anniversaries and quotes. Feature article 'A Century of Women Resisting War' and the founding of 'Women's International League for Peace and Freedom', the 'Women's Peace Crusade' and 'The Peace Ship'. Order by post (cheque made payable to Network for Peace) for £10.45. Network for Peace, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DY 07794 036602

[mail@networkforpeace.org.uk](mailto:mail@networkforpeace.org.uk) web: [www.networkforpeace.org.uk](http://www.networkforpeace.org.uk). Multiple orders to sell available from Housmans Bookshop [www.housmans.com/diary.php](http://www.housmans.com/diary.php)

Educational Resources on December 1914 Christmas Truces: New resource pack helps teachers mark WW1 centenary in their 2014-17 Christmas programmes. As the UK commences four years of commemorations of the centenary of World War 1, the Martin Luther King Peace Committee has released a set of resources to help schoolteachers mark the December 1914 Christmas Truces as part of their World War 1 teaching. The resources are intended to be used in the half terms before Christmases from 2014 until 2017. The pack contains lesson plans, hand-outs, worksheets and PowerPoint slideshows for a range of subjects. It also contains complete outlines and materials for Christmas Truces-themed assemblies and school carol services. All resources can be downloaded for free at [www.mlkpc.org](http://www.mlkpc.org)

**New report:** Food banks – emergency use only? Food banks should be a last resort. But in the last few years their number has increased exponentially. What's been lacking so far is concrete evidence on why people end up at the food bank doors. A new report from CPAG, Oxfam, The Trussell Trust and the Church of England, changes that by revealing that while ill health, bereavement, caring responsibilities or relationship breakdown had brought users to the edge, it was gaps in the social safety net which forced them to turn to food banks for help. Sanctions, delays in decisions on payments and being declared 'fit for work' for people receiving ESA were all common reasons for referral. This is the first in-depth study into the personal experiences of recipients of emergency food aid in the UK. While UK-wide policy is pushing up the use of food banks, interviews carried out in Scotland also highlight a role for the Scottish Government and local authorities in preventing income crisis. You can read the report at [www.trusselltrust.org/foodbank-report](http://www.trusselltrust.org/foodbank-report)

**Universal Credit Roll Out:** It has been announced that universal credit is available to parents making new claims in pilot areas. From February to April 2015,

universal credit will roll out in certain Scottish local authorities: Scottish Borders, City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, North Lanarkshire and North Ayrshire. One Parent Families Scotland has information and help on this [www.opfs.org.uk](http://www.opfs.org.uk)

**Pope Francis says global warming is a 'social justice' issue.** Pope Benedict was dubbed the first green pontiff, because of his sermons on protecting the environment and the installation of solar panels at the Vatican. Pope Francis is keen on maintaining this relatively new tradition, telling the UN's lead climate official Christiana Figueres that the environment will be one of his priorities for 2015. In a meeting with Figueres at the Vatican, the Pope confirmed he will deliver a Papal Encyclical on the environment and climate change next year. Figueres' spokesperson Nick Nuttall said: 'They discussed the challenge of climate change... which he sees as a social justice and human rights issue'. Further information at <http://tinyurl.com/pqw5oyl>

**Open Bethlehem** a new film from Palestinian director Leila Sansour, went on general release in the UK on 5 December. Channel Four News presenter Jon Snow, described the film as 'One of the most remarkable and moving documentaries I have seen about this unreported story. The tragedy of the Palestinians encapsulated in the life of one family and one town - Bethlehem. See the film, then go to Bethlehem and see for yourself'. Read ICN's review of the film at [www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=25637](http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=25637) Find a screening near you at <http://independent.powow.com/gb/open-bethlehem>

**Fairtrade Fortnight is 20 Years Old!** Fairtrade Fortnight will take place from 23 February - 8 March 2015. Much has been achieved since the first Fairtrade Fortnight in 1995, educating the public on why to choose Fairtrade and increasing sales on Fairtrade terms for marginalised producers. Over the past 20 years, the Fairtrade mark has become the biggest and best known ethical label in the UK. 78% of the UK public recognise it. From UK sales alone, £26m of Fairtrade premiums has been invested by producers. But there is still a long way to go to make all trade fair – sadly just 1.2% of cocoa and less than 10% of tea globally is traded on Fairtrade terms. So for Fairtrade Fortnight 2015, we are asked to celebrate the impact of Fairtrade and to turn a spotlight on the producers who grow the products we love. By sharing their stories in a fresh and compelling way, we can remind the UK of the dramatic difference choosing Fairtrade makes and how much it is still needed. Find out more at [www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight)

**Second Hand Books:** If you want to buy and read second hand books but don't want to support Amazon Marketplace

go to [www.greenmetropolis.com](http://www.greenmetropolis.com) All books cost £3.75 to buy (no extra for postage) and you can sell books too and receive £3 in your account. By re-using and recycling books you keep them in circulation for longer which in turn helps reduce demand for new books and helps save existing trees. Green Metropolis works with the Woodland Trust and has already raised over £25,000 from book sales and created over 22 acres of new forest. The Woodland Trust protects existing woodlands, create new woodland and bring about improved biodiversity. Trees and forest are crucial to life. They stabilise the soil, generate oxygen, store carbon and play host to a spectacular variety of wildlife. [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)



**Britain Isn't Eating:** A politician learns an uncomfortable truth about food-bank Britain. Katherine Parkinson stars in a microplay written by Laura Wade. It is the first in a series of plays made in collaboration between Guardian journalists and Royal Court theatre-makers. *Britain Isn't Eating* satirises the coalition government's approach to food banks and the 'feckless poor'. Director Carrie Cracknell and social affairs writer Amelia Gentleman explain how they worked with Laura Wade and food blogger Jack Monroe to cook up the play's store-cupboard challenge. The bleakest moment of this play comes when the politician turned TV chef realises that she cannot actually cook the austerity meal she is trying to promote as wholesome fare - because she has no electricity, having been cut off for non-payment of bills. This is a grim nod to an Oxfam report released



earlier this year, which noted that food bank users have been giving back items which require cooking – rice, spaghetti, soup – because with no money to pay the bills, they have no means of cooking it. Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/mhxurlh> Watch the film on Church Action on Poverty's blog: <http://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/2014/11/18/britain-isnt-eating-the-movie> (Source NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin)

**Sustainable Faith: A Green Gospel for The Age of Climate Change** by Nicola L Bull and Mark McAllister ISBN: 978-1-291-90020-0 £4.25. Foreword by Rev. Steve Chalke. Bible-based, this book demonstrates that an important element of 21st century Christian faith is about engaging with the big challenges of climate change and sustainable living. A duty of loving care for the planet and all its inhabitants should be a central feature of the Christian message in today's church, accompanied by scriptural backing and practical guidance, encouraging God's people to be at the forefront of change. Available from: [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)



# Just Trading

*Iain Robb is the marketing officer for Just Trading Scotland, a charity-owned social enterprise in Paisley. Here, he and some colleagues describe their work*

**J**ust Trading Scotland (JTS) has its roots in over thirty years engagement with friends and colleagues in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Those working at JTS, including myself, would point variously to moments when the deep injustices of our world, with its hugely unequal divisions of wealth, power and life-chances, dawned on them.

In 2008 JTS decided to start working in Malawi. The Scottish Government was keen for businesses in Scotland to work with producers in Malawi and JTS founder and chairman, John Riches, visited Malawi to meet with rice farmers and heard of their almost superhuman efforts to provide a decent life and education for their families.

The outcome was that JTS ordered a container with 18 tonnes of rice which we then had to set about selling. Since then we not only continue to import rice but also assist the farmers through a crop development project in Karonga, Northern Malawi.

I asked John if he would explain the broad task that JTS has set itself and why this is important.

'Well, what we have set ourselves is to use the power of UK and wider European markets to support smallholder farmers in the developing world. This means selling their products at a fair price and it increasingly means engaging with the farmers to ensure that their products are appropriate and attractive to European markets. This also means contributing to combatting the effects of climate change while at the same time helping to feed the rapidly growing world population.

Within sub-Saharan Africa some 80% of people are smallholder farmers, often barely able to feed their families. It has been shown that quite modest interventions: training in better farming techniques, access to better seeds and access to reliable markets at fair prices can make a huge difference to their prosperity. Rather than living in a downward cycle of poverty, they can turn their farms into viable small businesses, feed and educate their families, and contribute to their communities.

Improving crops could also make a significant contribution to meeting the growing world food needs. Smallholder farmers already contribute to feeding over 2 billion people in the world. If their production were to be doubled then this would feed the world in ways which would be low carbon (little fertiliser or heavy machinery) and directly benefit rural populations. Other ways of feeding the world, setting up large plantations with high levels of mechanisation and application of fertilisers and pesticides would aggravate climate change and

also drive many smallholder farmers off their land and increase the number of refugees seeking to find their way into the more developed countries.'

I then asked John how this task relates to his faith:

'First and foremost it's a justice issue. The Bible says, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God." It is also a peace issue. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peace-makers." If African countries slide further and further into poverty, that will in turn generate conflict and violence. We need to combat the growing inequalities in the world so that all can live lives of dignity and respect and live at peace with each other.

And it's about compassion. How can we stand by when we know that millions go to bed hungry every night; that children are so undernourished that they don't develop properly; and when farmers toil under harsh conditions only to produce less than their families need?

One of our Directors, Malcolm Shannon, has recently returned from a visit to our development project in Karonga. I asked Malcolm how important partnerships are to helping the smallholder farmers make a sustainable living from their rice crop.

'Partnerships and co-operation are absolutely vital. JTS relies very heavily on its partnerships with local organisations and aid agencies. It's important that we understand what agencies are doing so that our work is complementary. Everyone's overall aim is to improve the life of the people in the area and by co-ordinating our work we can make the whole greater than the sum of the parts. Even more important is to involve the farmers themselves in the partnerships.'

I asked Malcolm what the local farmers felt about the help we are able to provide.

'There is no doubt that they value the help. I was told about how crop yields and quality had already increased thanks to the better seed and the difference that rotavators, ox-carts and tarpaulins were making. One farmer told me that before being given an ox-cart (which he shares with his neighbours) he and his family sometimes had to walk over 20 miles to the market carrying 50kg loads on their heads. Another told me how he hoped to send his eldest child to school next year thanks to the yield and fair price he was expecting next year.'

Malcolm also visited a number of schools and I asked him what they are like.

'Although the schools are very basic and lack resources, the children

all know how vital education is to their life chances and work as hard as they can to do well. Even though they may have to walk miles to school they will be in their places every day for their lessons. During my visit I asked some of the children, including orphaned boys and girls for whom JTS is paying the school fees, about their lives and what school meant to them. One primary school girl who told me that her parents' lives were very hard and she wanted an education so that she could live a better life. She would like to be a nurse or a teacher so that she could help others. She had to walk a long way to school but didn't mind that.

In Malawi, secondary education is not free and only one in three children attends high school. During one visit to Malawi, John Riches discovered that in order to fund one year of secondary education a farmer had to sell 90kg of rice. This was the beginning of the 90kg Rice Challenge.

Gourock Primary School is just one of over 700 groups who have taken on the challenge. They recently have just taken on their fourth batch of Kilombero rice. I asked teacher Laura Falconer how her pupils have taken to the challenge.

'We first embarked on the 90kg Challenge earlier this year and we have a dedicated team of pupils who market the rice to our school community. Our Global Citizen group are very enthusiastic about the challenge and are passionate about selling because they believe they can make a huge difference to a Malawian child's life.

'The Gourock pupils were very creative with the challenge. They decided to produce a rice recipe book to accompany each bag sold, along with an information leaflet which educates customers about the benefits of buying. The pupils have gained many skills for learning, life and work. They are only too aware of how important education is for creating opportunities in a child's future. This has been a huge success.'

I know that a number of people in Justice and Peace have taken up the 90kg challenge. For most households nowadays, rice is a staple of the food cupboard. If you are going to have it anyway, why not opt for rice, and indeed other food and drink that improves the basic life chances of producers and their families.

Further details <http://jts.co.uk> email [info@jts.co.uk](mailto:info@jts.co.uk) 0141 887 2772



## DECEMBER

- 18 International Migrants Day
- 20 International Human Solidarity Day
- 25 Christmas Day – Rejoice, Rejoice!!
- 28 Holy Innocents

## JANUARY

- 3 First loans by the Grameen Bank (1977)
- 10 1946: First UN General Assembly opens with 51 nations represented
- 17 20th Anniversary service for Scottish Churches Housing Action
- 18 Homeless Sunday
- 18 Mass for Migrants and Refugees - Edinburgh
- 27 UN International Day of Commemoration for Victims of the Holocaust
- 30 1948: Mahatma Gandhi Assassinated

## FEBRUARY

- 2 World Wetland Day
- 11 Nelson Mandela released from prison 1990
- 12 2005: Murder of Sr Dorothy Stang SND in Brazil
- 20 UN World Day of Social Justice
- 21 UN International Mother Language Day

## MARCH

- 1 International Death Penalty Abolition Day
- 1 1999: International Treaty to Ban Landmines becomes effective
- 8 International Women's Day
- 15 World Consumer Rights Day
- 21 UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21 World Forestry Day



## MARCH continued

- 21 World Meteorological Day
- 21 UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 22 World Water Day
- 24 1980: Assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero

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

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