



Connecting peace, ecology and justice from the Gospel perspective

June 2009

## Co-ordinators Comments

Casual comments in medical waiting rooms or after Mass, can be quite revealing of community attitudes - what's not on the public agenda as much as what is! In Australia, the global financial crisis, stimulus packages, recession and jobs are! Climate change issues are not! Yet the underlying structural causes of climate change and the global financial crisis are part of the same problem - the current industrial economic system is not working for the good of the all people, or for the health of our one and only home - Earth!

We need strong leadership to point the way forward. That is not happening in Australia. There is no sense of urgency from our leaders. Instead, it's a pragmatic approach that allows those who have contributed most to the financial and environmental crises to continue with their ways. While investments in green energy are growing and this is a better option, unless and until people and the resources of the earth are valued for themselves and not as economic tools, then destruction will continue until it has reached the point that life on Earth will be very difficult. The shift to a world view that all creation is a gift from God which must be respected is one of hope and one of necessity. And it is happening. As Pope Benedict said recently, world leaders must do what it takes and that means those with the greatest market share must be willing to let go of it for the good of all.

**Anne Lanyon**

*All the creatures of Earth are looking to us for their destiny. Among these are our children and our grandchildren, who depend on our decisions for the sustenance and flourishing of the life-systems of the planet. This remains one of our primary challenges in the twenty-first century. Fr Thomas Berry cp, prophetic gift to the world, died June 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.*

## What we've been up to!

- **Preparing** a CMI resource, "*St Paul in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Doing Mission Today*".
- **Presenting** FEN to the Congregation of Religious Leaders Assembly.
- **Promoting** the Culture of Peace Formation Program

- **Conducting** workshops on "Chocolate, Slavery and Debt" with school groups.
- **Involving** Church groups in Jubilee Australia's "*Digging to the Roots of Poverty*" Campaign.
- **Participating** in the Climate Emergency Rally.
- **Letter Writing** to:
  - the *Pontifical Academy of Sciences*, critiquing the closed door study week on GM food held in May,
  - the *President of Peru* objecting to the violent suppression of indigenous peoples who were protesting the decree allowing access by loggers and the oil industry to their Amazon forest homelands.

## Catholic Social teaching and the 'universal destination of goods'

"God destined the earth and all it contains...for all peoples so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity." (Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes* # 69).

Catholic social teaching appreciates the institution of the market, profit and competition, but at the same time it also demands that the desire for material success be restrained by virtue and that authorities responsible for the common good limit the market in its exercise. In doing so it emphasizes that the worker is always the subject, sharing in the responsibility of the work, not the object of production.

However, when the market becomes dislodged from the morality that sought to both contain and guide it we have the current situation. For years the prophets of globalization trumpeted a new age where no one would live in want and where everyone would have a more equitable access to the world's goods. For millions of people none of this has materialized.

Dwight D. Eisenhower once said "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signals, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." Obviously he had the military-industrial complex in his sights. Could not what he describes as 'theft' be applied in some way to certain elements manipulating the market?

**Jack Evans**

## Columban Mission Institute

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### **Demilitarising the Economy**

As the links between militarism and the economy seem to grow, the need for the recognition of how much war and conflict contributes to carbon emissions and environmental damage must grow. The culture which accepts the huge amount of resources that go into the military and security industry should change. In making the connections between peace, ecology and justice, the PEJ Centre promotes a Culture of Peace. We say that the prevailing practice of billions of dollars of spending on large-scale military projects is now outdated. The earth and its people are of more importance.

### **Global Perestroika?**

Mikhael Gorbachov, ex Prime Minister of the USSR recently called for the demilitarization of the global economy, *“The time has come to strike the right balance between the government and the market, for integrating social and environmental factors and demilitarizing the economy....a global perestroika”* (SMH, June 10<sup>th</sup> 09). Green Cross International [www.gci.ch/](http://www.gci.ch/)

### **A Booming Industry**

The recently released annual yearbook from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, states that global military expenditure in 2008 is estimated to have totalled US \$1464 billion. This represents an increase of 4 per cent in real terms compared to 2007, and of 45 per cent since 1999. Military expenditure comprised approximately 2.4 per cent of global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2008. All regions and subregions have seen significant increases since 1999, except for Western and Central Europe. [www.sipri.org/yearbook](http://www.sipri.org/yearbook)

### **Budget Increase for Australia’s Military**

The recent federal budget commitment for Defence was for \$43 billion over 10 years, with an increase of 3% pa. Over the decade, Defence will receive approximately \$308 billion. While saying that the overseas aid budget has increased, it actually includes the cost of military interventions in Afghanistan and the Solomon Islands. [www.budget.gov.au](http://www.budget.gov.au). Members of the PEJ Centre made submissions to the Defence White Paper. Several organizations have critiqued the White Paper released in March, saying that voices calling for more resources to be put into peacekeeping and diplomacy have been kept quiet. See Medical Association for the Prevention of War [www.mapw.org.au/news/huge-budget-increase-military](http://www.mapw.org.au/news/huge-budget-increase-military)

### **SA – The Defence State**

The South Australian Government has declared itself “The Defence State”, seeing a close liaison with the military as part of its economic strategy. A newly built precinct called Techport Australia is promoted as a

military industry hub. [www.techportaustralia.com](http://www.techportaustralia.com) It is an interesting exercise to explore its links to educational facilities. One of the tenants in this military business park is Raytheon Australia. Raytheon is one of the five largest military conglomerates in the world, involved in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. A news release following the Defence White Paper announcement expressed their satisfaction with that document. [www.raytheon.com.au/](http://www.raytheon.com.au/) They will benefit from the increase in the Federal Government’s Defence budget. Their mission statement reads “Customer Success is Our Mission”. Customer success in this business is death.

A look at Raytheon on Wikipedia shows some of the controversies surrounding the organization: *“As the vast majority of Raytheon's revenues have been obtained from defense contracts, there has been a necessarily tight relationship of cooperation between itself and the U.S. Department of Defense and other U.S. government departments and agencies.”* Other controversies mentioned have involved relationships with governments in other countries and lawsuits related to disputed claims, contracts, bidding practices, environmental and health situations. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raytheon>

### **Talisman Sabre War Games in July**

During July 6<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> July, US-Australian war games will be practiced with live munitions, planes and warships in northern Queensland and the NT. Approximately 33,000 personnel will be involved. The costs given to a June 11<sup>th</sup> Senate Estimates committee were Aus \$48 million for the Australian portion and US \$212 million for the USA. The costs involved are environmental as well as financial – one of the key focus areas is Shoalwater Bay close to the Great Barrier Reef which is already under threat from climate change. Source: Hansard. For easy access, see [www.scottludlam.gov.au](http://www.scottludlam.gov.au); [www.defence.gov.au/opEx/exercises/ts09/index.htm](http://www.defence.gov.au/opEx/exercises/ts09/index.htm) A peace convergence will take place at Shoalwater Bay [www.peaceconvergence.com/news/59](http://www.peaceconvergence.com/news/59)

### **Do these activities meet the Catholic social teaching principle of the universal destination of goods?**

#### **The Way of Nonviolence**

Brendan McKeague is a practitioner of Christian nonviolence. In a recent speech to the Australian Ecumenical Spiritual Directors Conference, he describes his journey in understanding how the myth of redemptive violence works in our society. *“how this is played out in the cultural patterns that surround us, and exploited skillfully by those who have vested interests in maintaining division, holding on to power and control over socio-cultural constructs, those who benefit from the militarization of the world and perpetuate the need for wars and weapons”*. Pax Christi <http://paxchristinsw.blogspot.com>

## **Bushfires**

In the Victorian bushfires courage, trauma, sadness and generosity abounded. The fires can also be seen as prophetic, an indication of more of the same to come if our nation does not take climate change seriously. *Let the Sun Shine: An Australian Catholic Response to Climate Change* can help us. Many of the dire impacts of rising temperatures and less rain can be mitigated if we act now. This book shows a Catholic way forward to better honour our God as Creator.

Copies can be ordered at [cmi@columban.org.au](mailto:cmi@columban.org.au) Ph. 02 9352 8000

## **Finance**

The architects of the world's financial melt-down need to be condemned for the risks they took in the name of greed. They often graduated with MBAs. As architects of carbon trading, subsidies will be given free to carbon polluters. This is a new example of bad risk management and greed. History shows what they did with the allocation of water-rights and tax breaks for agri-investor schemes. It is time to wrest back some control over our money. Credit unions once were run in parishes and Catholic institutions as one answer to manipulators of money. [www.abacus.org.au](http://www.abacus.org.au)

## **Food**

The Sydney Food Fairness Alliance (SFFA) has launched a series of regional events leading up to a 'Food Forum' in Sydney this 22-23 October to set criteria for state and local food policies. The Alliance is made up of people from health, nutrition, agriculture, local government, social justice and other community based NGOs. Food was the focus of recent publication by Caritas, *The Right to Food*. It probed the way the production and distribution of food has been taken over by big business. Not just shouting in the dark, it documented success stories of alternatives. Hopefully Catholic institutes for health and social services will take an active part in the Food Forum.

[www.sydneyfoodfairness.org.au](http://www.sydneyfoodfairness.org.au)

## **Vatican and GM Food**

May 15-19 last, members of the *Pontifical Academy of Science* gathered at the Vatican for a Study Week to laud the role of 'Transgenic Plants for Food Security in the Context of Development'.

They spoke of working GMO food miracles for the poor. These promised miracles are at odds with both Pope Benedict XVI and scientists. The working document for the 2nd Synod for Africa explicitly criticises the invasion of Africa by globalised companies promoting GM [http://columban.org.au/Our-works/jpic/about\\_jpic.html](http://columban.org.au/Our-works/jpic/about_jpic.html)

## **Spin Watch**

Groups monitoring the push to insert genetically modified food into the human food chain include GM Watch and the Melbourne based mothers group MADGE. In a referenced report, Spin Watch exposed the role of the organizer of the Vatican Study Week. Dr Ingo Potrykus is a promoter of 'golden rice' for his Swiss company. It quotes a group of scientists who questioned its benefits and condemned its experimentation on children as Nazi like.

<http://www.spinwatch.org/-articles-by-category-mainmenu-8/46-gm-industry/5283-sp>

## **Information on Green and related Social impacts in all Media**

Since the airwaves belong to the Australian people and are used under licence, could a condition of their licences be that they support a more pervasive system of free public service announcements? Bad policy thrives on ignorance. Punchy messages prepared by responsible government bodies could be systematically played in every media outlet - at the same time and in the language of the broadcaster.

## **Soil carbon**

Farmers and gardeners deal with soil all the time. They both have an important role to play as Australians face up to climate change. A coalition of farmers, gardeners, scientists, community groups and local government has banded together to put more carbon rich organic matter back into the soil. It is a way of burying carbon. (The fancy word for it is 'sequestration'). Removing carbon from the atmosphere reduces the green house effect. It gets better. Increased soil fertility is a major added benefit. [www.carboncoalition.com.au/](http://www.carboncoalition.com.au/)

## **Transition Towns**

An exciting new way for communities to come together and create sustainable communities is the *Transition Towns movement* started in the UK. In Australia you can check out these websites for: local government [www.seac.net.au/main/](http://www.seac.net.au/main/), local initiative [www.transitionkatoomba.org.au/transition\\_towns.htm](http://www.transitionkatoomba.org.au/transition_towns.htm), community action

<http://nswcommunities.org.au/setts.html>

## **Ecological Vocation**

"*Learn from St Paul*," said Pope Benedict XVI (22.09.08). Working in China, Roland Allen did just that (*Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* Wm B Eerdmens 1912, 1962). St Paul allocated only a short time for training before baptism and appointing responsible leaders in the local communities (I Cor 12:28, Acts 16:5, Rom 15:23). These ordained local elders made the churches complete, permanent and charismatic - self financing and self ministering. For today's ministry, forming and testing their ecological vocation needs to be part.

**Training for Transition Town Workshops**

**8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> August, Bowral NSW**

Contact: Sandra Menteith 0403 790 777

### GFC: Opportunity for New Economic System

There are many working for a new more just economic system who see the global financial crisis as a time of opportunity. Learning about these people and organisations, telling others about them and strengthening the networks between them will help.

#### Rethink Economic and Financial Paradigms

Pope Benedict XVI in a message aimed at the UN Conference on the global downturn being held this week said that the financial crisis shows the need to "rethink economic and financial paradigms that have been dominant in the last years." The pope's new encyclical entitled "Caritas in Veritate" (Charity in Truth) due to come out at the end of June will focus on the economy and labour issues and how to make globalization work better for the poor. [www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aid=14445](http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aid=14445)

### The Poor Pay the Price

The Amnesty International 2009 Report present facts and figures which support Pope Benedict's assertion that it is unacceptable that millions of people go hungry. *"In the current crisis rich and powerful governments are suddenly able to find many more times the sums that cannot be found to stem poverty,"* says Amnesty International Secretary-General Irene Khan. *"As with climate change, so too for global economic recession: the rich are responsible for the damaging action, but it is the poor who suffer the worst consequences...The consequences are clear, growing inequality, deprivation, marginalisation and insecurity; voices of people protesting suppressed with audacity and impunity; and those responsible for the abuses - governments, businesses and international financial institutions - largely unrepentant and unaccountable...The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's October 2008 report places the US - the world's richest country - 27th out of 30 member states in terms of entrenched poverty and income disparity."* [www.amnesty.org.au/2009\\_report/article/21071/](http://www.amnesty.org.au/2009_report/article/21071/)

### Involve the Developing World

The UN Conference on the Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, dubbed the G192, will be held in New York from 24–26 June. To be discussed is a set of proposals which are far more comprehensive and coherent than anything the G20 has been able to come up with. But in Australia, and in other wealthy countries, neither the Government nor the mainstream media have paid much attention. There can be no recovery from the global economic crisis without a plan involving the developing world. The UN provides a unique forum for this. Jubilee Australia, along with civil society organisations and people movements around the world, are calling for wealthy governments to give the UN conference the political weight it deserves. [www.jubileeaustralia.org](http://www.jubileeaustralia.org)

### The People Take Action

People's movements in 14 countries across Asia have declared their own People's Year Of Rice Action (YORA). It has been organized by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) because small farmers have been driven deeper and deeper into poverty and hunger as agribusiness corporations gain increasing control over rice production. "This is the people's way of reclaiming their rights over their rice heritage, to life and livelihood," says Sarojeni Rengam, executive director of PAN Asia/Pacific. [www.panna.org/resources/panups/panup\\_20090416](http://www.panna.org/resources/panups/panup_20090416)

### Human Rights and Business Practices

The Australian Human Rights Commission has developed four short fact sheets setting out five basic steps towards integrating human rights into everyday business practices:

1. Relevance of human rights and their integration to business as well as links to practical tools;
2. Specific human rights issues and practical tools relevant to: the Australian finance sector (Fact Sheet 2); the Australian mining and resources sector (Fact Sheet 3); the Australian retail and manufacturing sector (Fact Sheet 4) For these and further information on Corporate Social Responsibility go to [www.humanrights.gov.au/human\\_rights/corporate\\_social\\_responsibility/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human_rights/corporate_social_responsibility/index.html) **Anne Lanyon**

#### PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

##### Sydney Pre-Parliament Event

Lachlan's Garden Marquee  
Old Government House  
Parramatta Park  
Cnr Macquarie & Pitt Street, Parramatta  
Sunday 2 August 2009  
10.00 am - 4.00 pm



**10am – 11.30am:**

#### **Fasting and Feasting: Food, Faith and the Environment**

A forum drawing on various faith traditions, hosted by FEN, the Faith Ecology Network  
Keynote speaker: The global food situation, its impact on the environment and ways forward.  
To Register Telephone: 02 9299 2215  
Email [kmoroney@ncca.org.au](mailto:kmoroney@ncca.org.au)