



## Co-ordinator's Comments

The New Year began with a significant challenge from Pope Benedict XVI in his 2010 Peace message, **“If you want to cultivate peace, protect Creation”**. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) This is encouraging for us in our work of connecting peace, ecology and justice.

Pope Benedict's language is quite strong, stressing that the preservation of God's creation is *essential* for the peaceful co-existence of all people. So much of the conflict around the world is over access to natural resources: water, oil, minerals, forests, food, land. Trillions are spent bombing, mining, logging, polluting, wasting, destroying while people and other living species are hungry, homeless, dislocated and killed. The rich diversity of life will continue to decrease – unless we change! First must come our conversion to a sense of wonder and awe at the glory of God reflected in nature's diversity, interconnectedness and interdependence. Then comes our active engagement suggested by the Pope's use of the words “Protect Creation”.

**The UN has declared 2010 the Year of Biodiversity.** Australia supports almost 10 per cent of the biological diversity on earth. In 200 years it has the largest documented decline of species mainly due to human activities: exploitation, habitat loss and climate change. There's plenty we can do to support biodiversity. [www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/index.html)

**Anne Lanyon**

## What we've been up to!

### Education

- Held a successful pilot formation program for teachers in November. It will be run again at CMI June 1<sup>st</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>
- Launched a new monthly bulletin for parish and school newsletters called “Growing a Culture of Peace”. To subscribe email [pej.cmi@columban.org.au](mailto:pej.cmi@columban.org.au)

### Faith Ecology Network (FEN)

- Attended part of the Parliament of World Religions to support other FEN members with their workshops.
- Spoke at a Sydney candlelight interfaith prayer vigil for the Copenhagen Summit.
- Co-ordinated the publication of an article in Greenpages magazine on scripture and ecology and wrote the Catholic section. [www.the.greenpages.com.au](http://www.the.greenpages.com.au)
- Planning an enrichment day for FEN members.

## Jubilee Australia

■ Involvement at board level including support and promotion of the report “Risky Business”. (See over page)

■ Advocated for Haiti's aid to be in the form of grants and not loans which would have to be repaid.

## Internships

■ Welcomed **Jessica Ruth** who did some research on developments in the production of chocolate and fair trade.

## Columban Youth Theatre of the Oppressed

■ The **St Peter's College** students and teachers who did the Columban Youth Theatre of the Oppressed immersion program to the Philippines have done a debriefing and have formed their own group. Called “Upon This ROCK” they are preparing a dance and workshop to take out to the local and rural areas.

## Celebrate Diversity

I am always intrigued by British Naturalist David Attenborough, in his eighties but forever young in his enthusiasm. For me his documentaries portray a man in whom science and poetry seem to joyfully dance around each other, someone utterly in awe of both the diversity of nature and the interconnectedness of everything on this planet including us humans!! The zeal for his ‘mission’ makes the Christian Church sometimes appear to be a reluctant latecomer to the cause! At the beginning of the Second Vatican Council Pope John XXIII invited all Christians and all people of goodwill to “read the signs of the times”, to look at the world as it actually is and to discern what it is that God is saying to us in the diversity of voices and events. Often times we, as Church, need to be taught and need to listen, particularly in regard to issues such as the environment. In more recent years our acknowledgement of such need, albeit slowly but surely and sometimes painfully, has been reflected in a number of documents on this aspect of the Church's social teaching, two examples being John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* (1991) #36 - 38 and Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) # 48-52. It is to our own detriment when we ignore the prophets both within and outside the Church.

**Jack Evans**

Peace is not a passive state where there is absence of conflict. It is about accepting the reality of conflict and learning to deal with it nonviolently. Jesus is our model. "There is no way to peace, peace is the way." [www.ajmuste.org](http://www.ajmuste.org)

As US **President Obama** heads for Australia in March, what kind of peace will be on the agenda of talks with **Prime Minister Rudd**? Will it be the allocation of resources to dialogue and peace education? To justice for the majority global poor? To adaptation and mitigation of climate change? To a more just global financial structure? There may be talk about the strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty up for negotiation this year. [www.un.org/NPT2010/](http://www.un.org/NPT2010/) But more likely there will be talk of increasing the military option in Afghanistan and more activity at US bases in Australia due to the endless "War on Terrorism!". Let us all exert greater pressure on our leaders to turn away from militarism.

### **U.S. nuclear weapons policies headed in opposite directions**

The Obama administration is moving ahead with the development of new nuclear weapons components at three key weapons facilities at the same time it is conducting a sweeping review of U.S. nuclear weapons policies that could lead to further slashing the U.S. nuclear arsenal. For the moment, U.S. nuclear weapons policies appear to be running in contrary directions, and while some critics of U.S. nuclear policy are cautiously optimistic, they are also worried President Obama's nuclear disarmament vision is not yet being supported by concrete policy actions. New nuclear weapons projects are planned at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee and the Kansas City Plant in Missouri. In fact, the pace of nuclear component development at these sites appears to be increasing. <http://ncronline.org/news/peace/contrary-directions-nukes>

### **War Is Irrational, Italian Bishop Affirms**

War is irrational and inhuman, and non-violence needs to become a language, reconciliation a style of life. These were some of the conclusions at the Italian Episcopal Conference's convention last month on "*For a World of Peace: the Dream of Isaiah and the Proclamation of Christ.*" An official from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, **Tommaso Di Ruzza**, told the conference participants that disarmament is an ethical question that involves everyone, not just governments. Though each person must cooperate according to his role and responsibilities, the Vatican aide encouraged the faithful to work for peace, in a world where arms expenditures in 2008 were almost \$1.5 billion, and there are some 16 to 20 medium to high intensity conflicts ongoing around the globe. [www.zenit.org/article-28295?l=english](http://www.zenit.org/article-28295?l=english) Feb. 8, 2010

## **Actions Around the World**

### ***1. Australian Women Walking for Peace***

Led by grandmother, **June Norman**, a group of women will begin walking from Brisbane to Canberra on March 13<sup>th</sup> and plan to speak to **Kevin Rudd** when they get there on May 25<sup>th</sup>. In the **Footprints for Peace Women's Walk Australia** both women and men can participate in a non-violent action for peace by: a) Promoting the walk; b) Encouraging local involvement on the way c) Assisting walkers and supporters.

[http://footprints.footprintsforpeace.net/australia\\_walk/walk\\_for\\_peace.htm](http://footprints.footprintsforpeace.net/australia_walk/walk_for_peace.htm)

### ***2. Doctors call for Inquiry into Australia's War on Iraq***

Inquiries into the invasion of Iraq have been occurring in Britain, the USA, and the Netherlands. Thousands of Australians opposed Australia's involvement. The Medical Association for the Prevention of War has called for an independent inquiry into Australia's part. Contact your local MP and support this call. [www.mapw.org.au/](http://www.mapw.org.au/)

***3. New Website: For Peace and Human Needs: Nuclear Disarmament Now*** - dedicated to rebuilding a grassroots campaign against nuclear weapons. <http://peaceandjusticenow.org/wordpress/>

### ***4. UK : Security for the Common Good – A Christian Challenge to Military Strategies***

**Pax Christi and Fellowship of Reconciliation UK** have been supported by 12 bishops in a call for resources to be used for human rather than military security. Of course human security depends on a healthy environment.

### ***5. Multi-religious Consensus to Ban Cluster Bombs***

**Religions for Peace**, the world's largest and most representative multi-religious coalition, has helped advance the ban against cluster munitions. In February two more countries—Burkina Faso and Moldova—ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, reaching the required 30 countries for the ban to become a binding piece of international law. **The Guide for Faith Leaders on Cluster Munitions** is at <http://religionsforpeace.org/resources/toolkits/clustermunitions.html>

### ***New monthly bulletin for parishes and schools Growing a Culture of Peace***

This ready-to-use monthly bulletin is for parish and school newsletters. It focuses on topics connected with peace, ecology and justice, and includes a brief **Reflection** related to the scripture of the first Sunday of each month, a **Fact File**, an **Action**, and a **Link** to more information. As well as being in Word to copy into bulletins, it is available in PDF format as a handout. Inquiries to the PEJ Centre 02 9352 8021

## Ecology – Biodiversity

Charles Rue

There are two major factors which cultivate biodiversity and on which action for biodiversity might best focus: (1) **Habitat Preservation** and (2) **Genetic Contamination**.

### (1) Habitat Preservation

- **IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature** supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world and brings governments, non-government organizations, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practice. [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)
- **Cartagena Biosafety Protocol** - In April 2002, the Parties to the Convention committed themselves to *achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth*. - endorsed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development and incorporated under the Millennium Development Goals. [www.cbd.int/2010-target](http://www.cbd.int/2010-target)
- **Nature Conservation groups** in each State have campaign specific to local needs: [www.nccnsw.org.au](http://www.nccnsw.org.au)  
[www.environmentvictoria.org.au](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au)  
[www.qccqld.org.au](http://www.qccqld.org.au)
- [www.conservationwa.asn.au](http://www.conservationwa.asn.au)

### (2) Genetic Contamination

- **GM Watch** has monthly bulletins on specific aspects of genetic engineering of food worldwide that are all referenced – technology, etc.
- **MADGE** is a network of individuals interested in how our food is grown and the effects it has on our health. They are concerned about the lack of adequate labelling and testing of GM foods. It was initiated by concerned mothers. [www.madge.org.au](http://www.madge.org.au)
- **TASMANIAN TREE PLANTATIONS AND CANCER** was investigated recently on ABC TV. A medical doctor has teamed up with a marine scientist over ten years, and few backers to find the cause of the high levels of strange cancers in people and oysters. The level of a particular poison coming from genetically selected eucalyptus plantations seems to be the culprit. However, the State government has ridiculed the idea.
- **GENE ETHICS** is part of an alliance of Australian organic growers, Greenpeace, farmers, Columban Mission and others working on strategies, often legislative, to combat genetic proliferation in the local food production. [www.geneethics.org](http://www.geneethics.org)
- **GMOs do not Combat Hunger**. Go to [www.banGMfood.org](http://www.banGMfood.org) for useful pamphlet.

## RESOURCES

- A DVD **Stations of the Forest** can be purchased for 7 pounds from the Columban UK office. [JPICSSC@btconnect.com](mailto:JPICSSC@btconnect.com)
- **Christian Ecology** has a simple resource for the Year of Biodiversity as a model for one more relevant to Australia. [www.christian-ecology.org.uk](http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk)
- **The Earth Charter** provides an integrated set of principles – economic, social, environmental, spiritual – for environmental engagement. The very first says: *Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life*. [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)
- **Food Waste hits \$5 billion** Prof Phillip O'Neill UWS [www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/09/2709253.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/10/09/2709253.htm)
- **Religious** provide eco-spiritual programs - The Mercy Sisters [www.earth-link.org.au](http://www.earth-link.org.au) / Christian Brothers Alliance [www.earthsong.org.au](http://www.earthsong.org.au)
- **Columban JPIC** has 4 page summary of GM issues and a DVD *Unjust Genes* costing \$20.
- **GUMBURU** is a dedicated education centre. [www.tsv.catholic.edu.au/about\\_us/environmental](http://www.tsv.catholic.edu.au/about_us/environmental)

**Vatican Biotechnology Scandal** – 24 Sept 2009 a symposium was held at the Vatican 'For a Green Revolution in Africa'. Legionaries of Christ members from the Pontifical Regina Apostolorum University were prominent. In spite of warnings coming from Africa - economic ruin of small landholders, destruction of traditional seed retention, dependence on seed companies - participants promoted *seed intervention in genetic makeup* (GMOs). Sarah Delaney, 29.09.09 *Catholic News Services*

Explore the **Spirituality, Theology and Justice** in the challenge of Pope Benedict's New Year Message

**Rev Dr Sean McDonagh**

Columban missionary writer, teacher, and international campaigner on **Ecology**.

**Time:** Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April, 5pm - 7pm

**Venue:** The Thomas Aquinas Centre, Santa Sabina College, 90 The Boulevard, Strathfield, Sydney. 2135

Respondents:

**Most Rev Julian Porteous**, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Sydney

**Ms Sandra Menteith**, Lecturer in Environmental Ethics, Catholic Institute of Sydney

**Ms Emily Aitken**, Waitara Parish Youth Leader, "Greensteps" participant

Wine and cheese. Entry by donation (suggested \$10)

**Inquiries:** Columban Mission Institute 02 9352 8000

The dominant economic and aid paradigm is not working for the good of all people or for the diversity of God's creation.

### **Haiti: Cursed or Brave?**

With the US, international institutions, and other western donor governments turning a blind eye, the **Duvalier** reign in Haiti (1957 -1986) used foreign aid to pay for Manhattan shopping excursions, fur coats and government death squads. When that ended, Haiti was left with an external debt totalling more than one billion dollars, while 900 million dollars worth of expropriated funds awaited them in French and Swiss bank account. In the 1980s and 90s the **IMF** was used to bail out the commercial banks who'd lent more money to developing countries like Haiti than the countries could ever afford to repay. The IMF forced the Haitian government to drop tariffs on agricultural production. As a result, the USA began to dump their own subsidized agricultural production on the Haitian market, putting most local rice farmers out of business. As many as two million people relocated from farming areas to the slums of Port-au-Prince, and this desperate pool of workers become the cheapest labor in the world.

The IMF has offered the Haitian Government a new loan of \$102 million: attached to which are the same harmful economic policy conditions that have to date undermined the country's ability to chart its own development future. The private sector is preparing to seize the opportunity, with a '**Haiti Investment Summit**' to take place in Miami soon. Corporations will be pressuring their governments to make sure they win reconstruction contracts through tied bilateral aid, or through influence in the international development banks. In terms of foreign debt, Haiti's deficit still stands at over one billion dollars. The **G7 Nations** have agreed to cancel 100% of the bilateral debt owed to them in response to massive public pressure. Now we must put weight on the international financial institutions, particularly the IMF, to do the same. Extract from article by **Adele Webb**, National Co-ordinator, **Jubilee Australia** [www.jubileeaustralia.org.au](http://www.jubileeaustralia.org.au)

### **"Risky Business"**

This report shines a spotlight on **EFIC**, Australia's export credit agency, and its support of risky extractive projects in developing countries. It aims to make EFIC more accountable to Australians, asking a number of tough questions surrounding EFIC's social policies and its responsibilities to the Australian taxpayer. *Are EFIC's human rights, environmental and social standards adequate? Are systems of accountability in place? How do they function? How transparent are EFIC's operations? Does the Australian public even have enough information to answer these basic questions?* **Two case studies are the Gold Ridge mine in the Solomon Islands and the PNG LNG project.** See [www.jubileeaustralia.org.au](http://www.jubileeaustralia.org.au)

**Book Review: *Seeds of Destruction: The Hidden Agenda of Genetic Manipulation* F. William Engdahl, Global Research, 2007** [www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca)

In 1970, **Henry Kissinger** said: "*Control oil and you control nations; control food and you control the people.*" This book is a detailed chronicle of the writer's thesis of a deliberate plan to use food to control the world. It is not a book about the dangers of genetically modified seeds, but about the agenda of a "small socio-political elite" in Washington to take and maintain power after World War II by dominating the use of the world's resources. The GM food project is part of that blueprint for power.

**Engdahl**, in researching for this book, found that the history of GM food had its origins with the Rockefeller family. **John D Rockefeller III**, with an attitude that the poor masses were a problem, established the **Population Council** in 1952. This eventually led to the paradigm of development and population control adopted by the **World Bank** and the **IMF**, both of which the Rockefellers had an influence on. **The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations** funded the "Green Revolution", and the establishment of the **International Rice Institute** which consolidated the industrial agricultural system of food production. The work is being continued by the **Gates Foundation** with its funding of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

Engdahl's research takes the reader into a web of connections between the USA military machine, chemical warfare, the Pentagon, Government bodies, giant agribusiness/chemical companies, food patents, education, economics, trade, development and foreign policy. He tracks the development of the powerful group of key figures which over the years have implemented the project begun by the Rockefellers. He details the plan for the "Bio-Revolution", tracing "the spread and proliferation of GMO... with the aim of the ultimate control over future life on this planet". He describes how, following the bombing and occupation of Iraq, the President of the USA made GMO a strategic issue. Through the implementation of the **Coalition Provisional Authority Order 81** by **Paul Bremer**, the agricultural system of the whole country was brought under the domain of GMO agribusiness. It was changed from a system of traditional seed-saving to one of farmers being beholden to **Monsanto** for their seeds.

There is special symbolism in the book's dedication to **Gottfried Gloeckner**. Gloeckner wanted the benefits of GMO corn for his cattle, so became the first approved German farmer to plant Bt corn. However, his cattle died. In attempting to show the GM corn as the cause, he has endured relentless pressure from the GM industry. The same pressure has been applied to independent scientists who find adversely against GMOs.

This is a confronting read. But it is an important one. In his introduction, Engdahl invites the reader to a careful reading, then independent verification or reasoned refutation. Either way, this book challenges a response.

**Anne Lanyon**