

Trade, Aid and Debt – the three pronged approach to ending global poverty!

Proliferation of Free Trade Agreements

Negotiations of bilateral Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) are proliferating in Australia. The Australian government is aggressively pursuing these country-to-country agreements to the detriment of multilateral agreements through the World Trade Organisation (WTO). These bilateral FTAs discriminate against other trading partners and are creating what a 'spaghetti bowl' of FTAs, each with differing and complex rules and social impacts. Unlike negotiations at the WTO, bilateral agreements do not allow weaker countries to join together to mitigate power differences. These bilateral agreements allow more powerful countries to sidestep the WTO and forge agreements with more stringent clauses than current WTO agreements.

Australia has recently signed FTAs with the United States, Thailand and Singapore and we are in negotiations with China, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates and the bloc of 10 ASEAN countries. Many of these FTAs are with countries that have low wages and poor enforcement of workers' rights and environmental protections. These agreements are being hastily negotiated behind closed doors without proper community or parliamentary debate about their social and environmental impacts.

For more information on Australia's trade policy and its social impact in Australia and in developing countries, please see the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (www.aftinet.org.au). AFTINET is a network of 90 community organisations supporting fair regulation of trade consistent with human rights and environmental sustainability.

Trade Justice - by Sister Suzette Clark and Dr Pat Ranald

This booklet is No 54 in the Catholic Social Justice Series published by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, which was launched recently to coincide with the Global Week of Action for Trade Justice. It gives a concise, authoritative summary of the key issues connected with the current global trading system. This system which benefits the rich and powerful and keeps the rest in a position of poverty and inequity is what the late John Paul II called a "structure of sin". Catholics are called to work with others for change to a system of fair trade.

Budget and Aid

The recent Federal budget increased Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 12% taking Australia's overseas aid to 0.28%, a welcome increase, but still far short of the United Nations agreed target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI). Australia, as a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals, must keep its commitment to halve global poverty by 2015. Therefore a lot more is needed if those words are going to become reality.

Crucial Time for Debt Campaign

We hope that the G8 Summit to be held at Gleneagles, Scotland July 6 – 8 is a historic one in the life of the debt campaign. 100% cancellation of the unpayable debt of poor countries is on the agenda.

Take Action: A letter faxed to the heads of the G8 countries would let them know how much the world wants this. For addresses of their Australian embassies see: http://www.jubileeaustralia.org/360_jubilee_actions_detail.php?id=15

Debt Cancellation: Historic Victories, New Challenges - by Mark Engler.

This article tells how debt cancellation for poor countries was transformed from an implausible demand into a winning issue and names some future barriers. Researched by Jason Rowe for Mark Engler, an analyst with Foreign Policy in Focus – A Think Tank Without Walls, it can be read at <http://www.fpif.org/index.html>



World Debt Day 2005 – Hyde Park

Dr Ann Wansborough, Uniting Church and Chair of Jubilee Australia National Working Group.

Five politicians – Peter Garratt, Anthony Albanese, Tanya Pliberseck, Aden Ridgeway and Lee Rhiannon broke down a wall of debt made from postcards calling for debt cancellation. Jubilee Australia needs your support

www.jubileeaustralia.org

Columban Connections

The Columban Centre for Peace Ecology & Justice



The Centre responds from a Gospel perspective to the regional and global challenges associated with peace, ecology and justice.

JUNE 2005

*The late Pope John Paul declared October 04 – October 05 as the **Year of the Eucharist** - a time for reflecting on its implications for Christians who call themselves Eucharistic People*

President George W. Bush was visiting a nursing home. As he was shaking hands with an elderly resident he said: "Sir, do you know who I am?" To which the old man replied: "No. But if you ask one of the nurses she'll be able to tell you."

We gather around the table of the Lord to break bread, listen to Christ's words *Do this in memory of me*, and to remember who we are. Ideally the Eucharist tells us who we are and what we are about; - what the *this* is and its wider meaning. More often than not it is others who tell us and help us to refocus, dragging us from our complacency and presumptions.

In the Eucharist we bring bread and wine, products of the earth and a sign of God's desire that all are to share equally in creation's bounty. These things tell us of the goodness of God's creation, but also remind us of the ineptitude with which we have treated creation due to our defiant and deficient stewardship.

So, too, the bread and wine, staple fare for the ordinary people in Jesus' time, are a reminder of those with whom Jesus celebrated meals. The poor and marginalised, in justice, have a special place at the table. It also recalls the painful fact that, whenever we celebrate, as long as "there is hunger anywhere in the world then our celebration of the Eucharist is incomplete everywhere in the world." (*Fr Pedro Arrupe, former Jesuit General*).

The *this* challenges us to remember to whom Jesus was betrayed: to the political powers of his day. It remind us that following him will sometimes put us at odds with the political, economic and even the religious powers of our own time.

"Ultimately the Eucharist is an unambiguous reminder that the church is called to build itself on relationships of love and mutuality..... as a political witness, as a harbinger of the Kingdom of God." (Dr Brian Wren, www.christiancentury.org)

Jack Evans

What We've Been Up to!

Settling in... The new office is extremely comfortable and ready to welcome visitors.

Gospel of Life... No 7 *Acting Justly* was distributed in May and No 8 *Liberation* will be available in July. For back copies of these or earlier issues, contact Kath Boyle - 03 9379 3544

Growing Peace ...Four more Christian Muslim Forums on Peace and Active NonViolence with Local Government Councils are currently in the planning stage.

Advocating...

- The Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer to ensure that at the Review of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Australia affirms Article VI which obliges nuclear states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

- The Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone to allow the 50 East Timorese under threat of deportation to stay in Australia

The Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer to be fair in negotiating with East Timor over the oil resources.

- The G7 Finance Ministers to finance the 100% debt cancellation of the unpayable debt of poor countries at the next G8 Summit.

Doing workshops

- Spirituality in the Pub
- Religious Education Coordinators Sydney
- Social Justice Educators Broken Bay
- Debt Campaign across Sydney
- Mission and Justice education in schools.

Providing Resources

- World Environment Day Liturgy
- E-newsletters to schools.

Networking with the Nature Conservation Council (NSW), NetAct, Aidwatch, AFTINET and Pace E Bene.

Never Forget Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On August 6th 1945, 90,000 people were killed by an atomic bomb dropped by the USA military on Hiroshima. Three days later 40 000 people were killed the same way in Nagasaki. By the end of 1945, over 145,000 people had died in Hiroshima, and another 75,000 people had died in Nagasaki. Tens of thousands more suffered serious injuries. People and the environment have continued to suffer from the effects of radiation.

That date 60 years ago marked the beginning of the “nuclear arms race”. With the end of the Cold War, it was generally believed that the use of nuclear weapons for geopolitical purposes was abating. Not so! Sixty years later and the threat from nuclear weaponry to the very survival of the planet is all too real.

Steps taken to end this threat should include:

- Nuclear disarmament by all countries that maintain stockpiles of nuclear weapons.
- The elimination of weapons of mass destruction by all nation states, including USA and the UK.
- No more use of depleted uranium weaponry.
- The support by Australia of the strengthening of nuclear free zones, the creation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention and other international agreements to abolish nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.
- The end by Australia of the mining of uranium which fuels nuclear proliferation.
- The closure of the US military bases in Australia that support nuclear warfare.

(Victorian Peace Network <http://www.vicpeace.org/>)

On this anniversary we must never forget the lessons from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Action –Hiroshima Day Events

NSW <http://nswpeace.com/resources>
TAS <http://www.peacetasmania.org/>
SA <http://www.peacecourier.com/>
ACT <http://www.actnow.canberra.net.au/>
QLD <http://www.qldpeace.org/>
VIC <http://www.vicpeace.org/>
WA Email: mckeague@iprimus.com.au

UN Review Conference on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty

The Conference to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which has been in force since 1970, will end on May 27th as Connections goes to print. It will have brought together delegates from 188 countries. It is to be hoped that the smokescreen of terrorism will not be used to weaken the treaty. It is imperative that those countries which have not been living up to the commitment made five years ago to work towards total nuclear disarmament are given a strong clear signal that their actions are totally unacceptable to the world community. See UN Peace and Security through Disarmament <http://disarmament2.un.org/> or Website of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation <http://www.wagingpeace.org/>

Live Up to Nuclear-Disarmament Treaty, Urges Holy See

In his address on May 5th to the UN Review Conference on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, permanent observer of the Holy See to the UN said, “The time has gone for finding ways to a ‘balance in terror.’ The time has come to re-examine the whole strategy of nuclear deterrence.” Zenit, www.zenit.org ZE05050506

‘On a Paper Crane’ Teaching Kit

‘On a Paper Crane’ is a gently told, animated story of Sadako, the girl who was told that if she could make 1000 paper cranes she would survive the leukaemia which she contracted as a result of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. Available from the Australian Peace Committee (SA Branch) <http://www.peacecourier.com/> Phone / Fax (08) 8177 0490

The Nonviolent Alternative

On September 2004, the world was stunned when 330 children and their teachers were killed by Chechen rebels during a siege in Beslan, Russia. The violence of the Chechen conflict continues, but it barely makes news coverage or the public agenda of the world’s political leaders. However, the Russian NGO, Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, has managed to bring opposing groups together to begin dialogue about the causes of the war and to discuss solutions. It is too early to tell if this process will succeed, but non-violent intervention brings more hope for peace than the destructive violence has so far. See “Europe is risking silence to end its longest war” by Jonathan Steele in the Guardian Weekly <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/01445526,00.html>

GM Products and Secrecy

The Nature Conservation Council NSW - www.nccnsw.org.au – sends this alert about the possible import into Australia of animal grade Bt10 Corn mixed with Bt11 which is used in processed foods for human consumption. Although Bt10 is banned in Europe because of its antibiotic qualities, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), using information supplied by the chemical company Syngenta, is taking no action (Graham Peachey <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>).

A Kitchen Revolution

(adapted from Rose Prince in The Tablet, 30.04.05 p. 13).

Amazingly, food does not play a great part in political policy battles. Keeping food cheap in the First World seems to be the unspoken law since WWII. The result is problems with human and animal disease (salmonella, BSE and genetic engineering) as well as environmental damage (DDT, water pollution and bio-diversity). Most food in Australia is sold by supermarket chains. Buyers have power:

- Captive to Buyers – Make it illegal for supermarket contracts that pressure suppliers to produce more for less. An ombudsman is needed.
- Local Suppliers – Supermarkets should be required to buy a percentage of food locally to prevent importing purely on price.
- Developing Countries – Retailers might pay fair prices for imported specialty- goods, or conversely, stop Australian suppliers dumping cheap food on the global market.
- Sustainable Farming – Natural means of integrated farm management would yield more nutritious and safer food.
- Sustainable Fishing – Overfishing of the oceans and the sale of less than safe aquaculture fish products needs better control.
- Genetically Engineered Food – Pharmaceutically based agricultural companies want to control food production to make money, not more or cheaper food for the world.
- Food culture – Encourage parents to introduce a good food culture into their homes, backed up by government sponsored education.

- Food Manufacturers – The use of artificial food additives needs tighter control.
- Food Heritage – Manufacturers of traditionally made foods need to be granted special status.

A group at the Catholic parish of Bentleigh, Victoria, in cooperation with True Food, has helped change food choices on supermarket shelves. bbga_safefoodcampaign@hotmail.com PO Box 2336 Morrabbin 3189

Government Funding for Environmental Groups

On April 8, without any notice, the Federal Government cut critical funding to Nature Conservation groups. For the last three decades grants to Voluntary Environment and Heritage Organisations (GVEHO) have provided funding. Now the Federal Government will only help groups that engage in ‘on-the-ground’ activities such as tree planting or creek restoration. Lobbying activity has been outlawed, for example: to stop the building of a new coal-fired power station; to strengthen environmental laws. How about voicing concern to your local member?

TRIPs Reform Network

The Columban JPIC Office in Australia is forming a network of interested people to support an international movement to protect biodiversity and promote local food economies. Its motto is No Patents on Life. A coalition of groups is working towards a rewrite of Article 27.b of the Trade Related Intellectual Properties (TRIPs). This article opens the way to trans-national companies to control seeds and genetic material, a privatisation of the world’s biodiversity. For more information about joining No Patents on Life Contact Charles Rue charlesdrue@netscape.net or Sandra Menteith menteith@bigpond.com.au phone 9352 8000.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment

You can find 20 pages of colour and facts on the Ecological state of the world by 1,360 experts in New Internationalist May 2005 www.newint.org

“God, our Creator, you have given us, the earth, the sky and the seas. Show us the way, to care for the earth, not just for today, but for ages to come. Let no plan or work of ours damage or destroy the beauty of your creation.

Send forth your spirit to direct us, to care for the earth and all creations.”

Coming Events

June

- 7th Sydney: *Season of Creation* – **Dr Norm Habel**
Floor, 379 Kent St, Sydney. Contact:
02-9299-2215.
- 14th **7.30 PM** *The Church is not a Democracy, but..* **Dr Paul Collins**. Nth Sydney Leagues Club.
- 16th East Timor Studies Symposium -Victoria
University Conference Centre, 13th floor, 300
Flinders Street, Melbourne. See
http://www.deakin.edu.au/arts/icg/e_timor/et_index.php
Ph.: **Dr. Michael Leach** (03) 9244 3923
- 17th **Christian-Muslim Public Forum to Promote Active Non-Violence**. Pennant Hills Community Centre, 7.30– 9.00pm. Contact: Anne Lanyon 02 9352-8000
- 17th-18th International Conference Cooperating with EAST TIMOR Ideas for good development practice. Victoria University Conference Centre Ph: **(03) 9919 7885** E-mail: VUevents@vu.edu.au
- 20th World Refugee Day www.unhcr.ch
- 26th International Day in Support of Victims of Torture www.un.org/rights
- 26th Jubilee Sunday jubileeaustralia.org For details contact Anne Lanyon 02 9352 8021.
- 30th ATSI Amendment Bill comes into force, disbanding ATSI. Info: HREOC **(02) 9284 9880** www.humanrights.gov.au

July

- 1st **International Armband Day**. Wear a white armband in support of **Make Poverty History**. www.acfid.asn.au/makepovertyhistory
- 11th World Population Day www.unfpa.org

August

- 6th **Hiroshima Never Again**. Details to follow. Contacts see **Peace** page.
- 6th-7th **Conference - Nuclear Terror: 60 Years On**. Medical Association for the Prevention of War National Conference. Further information and registration here: www.mapw.org.au/conferences/mapw2005/2005conf_index.html. Ph. (03) 8344-1637
- 9th International Day of the World's Indigenous People www.unhchr.ch
- 12th International Youth Day www.unesco.org/youth
- 13th **United Nations Association of Australia National Conference, Canberra**. Theme "A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility". Keynote speaker **Professor**

Ramesh Thakur from the UN University. Ph **David Purnell (02) 6259 5078** e-mail: administrator@unaa.org.au

- 14th-17th International Conference on Engaging Communities 2005, Brisbane. A joint initiative of the Queensland Government and the United Nations. Phone: **(07) 3854 1611** www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au,
- 23th International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition www.unhchr.ch & www.unesco.org
- 17th **Christian-Muslim Public Forum to Promote Active Non-Violence**. Pennant Hills Community Centre, 7.30 – 9.00pm. Contact: Anne Lanyon 02-9352-8000
- 24th-27th 17th Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine; Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart www.ashm.org.au/conference2005
- 29th Refugee and Migrant Sunday. Call **(02) 9299 2215** website: www.ncca.org.au
- 29th-30th International Year of Microcredit Conference 2005 — *Towards an End to Global Poverty*. Melbourne. Hosted by United Nations Association of Australia (Vic) UNAA.VIC@bigpond.com

September

- Parishes/congregations from major denominations across Australia will launch *A Season of Creation* with four Sundays having titles linked to the readings: *Forest, Land, Outback* and *River* Sundays. Readings and materials will be available from OpenBook, Adelaide. (www.openbook.com.au)
- 8th International Literacy Day www.unesco.org
- 15th-16th Impacts of Climate Change Conference - The Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. Contact: Melinda Cook at NCC Ph (02) 9279 2522. Email: mcook@nccnsw.org.au
- 21st International Day of Peace www.un.org/peace

I would like to go on the mailing list for Columban Connections.

Name-----

Address-----

-----Postcode-----

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I enclose a donation of \$----- for the work of the Columban Peace, Ecology and Justice Centre.
Cheques etc payable to: Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice. (Address details of Centre on front page of Newsletter).

Dysfunctional Communication - Barrier to a Sustainable Future

This table of a comparison between prevailing assumptions and practices and ecological understandings within industrial societies is from a paper “Enabling Redesign for Deep Ecology and Personal Values Transformation: A Social Ecology Perspective” by Dr Stuart B.Hill, School of Social Ecology and Lifelong Learning, University of Western Sydney, NSW.

“Dysfunctional communication is, in my experience,, a much more common barrier to making progress in most areas of industrial ecology than is the need for technological innovation. Because of this, it is imperative that much greater attention be paid to improving communication.” Stuart Hill

Prevailing assumptions and practices	Ecological understandings and biases
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wait for crises 2. Linear material flows 3. Unlimited growth (unsustainable) 4. Production overemphasized 5. Reliant on fossil fuels and nuclear power 6. Competition emphasized 7. Simplified, highly controlled systems . 8. Few specialists and roles valued 9. Structures and processes universalised (everything the same, everywhere, all the time) 10. Rapid, forced change with few beneficiaries and many ‘casualties’ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsive to early indicators 2. Cyclical, regenerative relationships 3. Growth subject to limiting factors 4. Most resources used for maintenance 5. Based on solar and renewable energy 6. Mutualism favoured 7. Functional diversity and complexity confer stability 8. Rich diversity of specialists, generalists roles and niches within communities 9. Uniqueness of time and place (reflected in all structures and processes) 10. Gradual co-evolutionary structural change, with occasional bursts of creativity
Cultural Imperatives	Personal Imperatives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inequitable and accumulating personal wealth (unsatisfiable and unsustainable); living off the capital 2. Growing consumption (increasingly emphasizing compensatory wants) . 3. Mega, powerful resource consuming; structures process and technologies that are waste producing and impacting 4. Market forces (political and consumer anipulation through advertising and exclusion; short-term narrow focus, with neglect of externalities) -monetary system of values (economic rationalism) 5. Trans global corporate managerialism and hierarchical control; homogenized designs, products and services 6. Mobile, disposable workforce (loss of sense of purpose, meaning, connection to place and community) 7. Controlling and problem solving, specialized science and technology (understanding science and arts as disposable luxuries) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building personal, social and ecological capital and well-being, and a sense of enough; living off the interest 2. ‘Conserver Society’ (equitably meeting basic and aesthetic needs) 3. Appropriate scale, resource efficient (solar, renewables); structures processes & technologies minimizing waste and impact 4. Values-based decision making by an informed, participatory population (public education, access, transparency and inclusion) -for the greatest good (social justice) 5. Regional self-reliance, shared leadership and responsibility; and context sensitive and specific designs, products and services 6. Right to meaningful work (sense of purpose, place and valued roles within vibrant communities) 7. ‘Understanding’, creative, and design- focused science, technology and arts, and their integration