



ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION COMMISSION

2012 SPRING ASSEMBLY

Feed the World

**Speakers from CAFOD, World Development Movement,
Traidcraft and the Medway Food Bank**

The Southwark JPIC 2012 Spring Assembly was held in the New Barn, Aylesford Priory on Saturday 19th May. Fr. Michael Scanlon, Chair of the Commission, welcomed members of Justice & Peace groups, and organisations involved in the day, from across the diocese. We were also delighted to welcome Bishop Howard Tripp and Bishop Pat Lynch who joined us for part of the day until he had to leave for another engagement.

The meeting started with a lively table discussion which resulted in some interesting feedback, facilitated by Phil Kerton. Picking up early on the theme of the day, and perhaps a sign of the difficult economic times, several of the groups reported back concerns about homelessness and relevant activities including soup runs. "We must not be afraid of criticism for helping immigrants and should be working together with other parishes and with other faiths to improve our understanding" was one comment.

South London Inter-faith peace walks were mentioned as an idea which could be taken up elsewhere, the walks visit various places of worship and are being held, for this Jubilee year, in each London borough.

The need to reach out to youth and establish better communications was emphasised, also the need to work with troubled families and encourage respect. A number of tables mentioned their active involvement in the CAFOD water campaign and also the prospective involvement in the Hundred Days of Peace.

Perhaps the best line was "How do you eat the elephant?" answer "in the same way as you start working for Justice and Peace in your parish - in small bites".

Traidcraft: Our first speakers were Susan Findlater-Dainton and Bernard Dainton from Traidcraft. Susan is a Traidcraft speaker and active Fair Trader. Traidcraft was set up 30 years ago as a Christian response to systemic injustice. Half of the world's population survive on under \$2 per day, 925 million are chronically hungry and 6 million children die of malnutrition related diseases every year and yet in the west 20% of us are obese.



Fair Trade is trade with a bias towards the poor. As an example the breakdown of the cost of a 30p non Fair Trade banana was given. Of the money we pay 13p, almost half goes to the supermarket, 5p to the plantation owner but only 1p to the grower. Fair Trade sets out to correct the trade imbalance by paying guaranteed minimum prices to growers, including a social premium which can be spent within their communities by discussion. It promises fair conditions for workers, enables people to work their way out of poverty and challenges unfair trade rules.

As a practical response to the unfairness of current global trade the Fair Trade movement offers us a simple way to make a small difference to people's lives. On our own we can, of course, buy fairly traded goods and many take this a step further by promoting sales in their parishes. It may not sound a great deal but the UK sales of Fair Trade goods were £1.17 billion in 2010 and are growing year on year.

Traidcraft itself has 450 products and a £20 million pa turnover. It prides itself on helping to set up co-operatives which can outgrow Tradicraft and move into bigger markets. Devine chocolate is an example of how a small venture in Ghana, encouraged by Traidcraft, has grown into a major brand.

As well as buying their goods and donating to their charitable arm we can also help poor producers by taking an active part in campaigns. A recent effort has been made to get the appointment of a supermarket watchdog and this looks to have born fruit. A wider campaign is against the EU to stop the establishment of EPAs (Economic Partnership Agreements) these are stacked the wrong way, in favour of the importer not the exporter.

Fair Trade is about making trade work for the poor. Traidcraft offers practical assistance to help producers lift them selves out of poverty. Together we can make a difference!

CAFOD: Our second speaker was Mike Noyes who is a senior member of CAFOD's Humanities Team.

The United Nations Development Programme defines Food Security as the ability to consistently acquire sufficient calories and nutrients for a healthy and productive life.

There is enough food produced in the world to meet everybody's needs so why, asked Mike, do a billion people go hungry every day? A major cause is the uneasy relationship between food and power.

Food security remains a recurring problem across Africa, despite hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid each year. The Horn of Africa endured a severe draught last year that turned to famine in Somalia and several countries in West Africa are now undergoing a food shortage that aid agencies have warned needs immediate international attention. The 2012 United Nations Human Development Report for Africa tells us that dehumanizing hunger remains pervasive in the region, despite abundant agricultural resources, a favourable growing climate, and rapid economic growth rates.

Governments certainly shoulder some of the blame. In Somalia the drought affected farming and herding but poverty and conflict coupled with the failure of the world to act in time turned it into famine. In North Korea almost one in two children are severely malnourished. Going back even as far as the Irish potato famine when those in power thought that exporting food was more important than feeding the people, it is all about power and control.



People lack food because there is an imbalance of power that favours the big over the small.

The Food system is broken and unsustainable. It works for the few, not the many with the biggest impact on the world's poorest. This is why CAFOD's work to support people as they earn a living and grow food to feed their families is vital.

But we also need to get to the roots of the problem. We need a rebalancing of power where the scales aren't tipped in favour of the rich at the expense of the poor. Increasing production and giving more aid to agriculture can reduce the problem but will not fix the fundamental unfairness.

CAFOD
Just the world

Small farmers produce 50% of the world's food and provide employment for 40% of its workers and yet a few hundred companies control 70% of the food market and the water and land needed to produce the food. Then there are ongoing land grabs where rich countries, by buying and leasing land in the developing world, are ensuring their own food security at the expense of those already suffering from food insecurity.

We need to rebalance the power and create a fair just and sustainable food system throughout the world. So what can we do? Mike called upon us to challenge the influence that global companies have over the food system by calling on them to operate fairly and transparently and limit the activities of their corporate lobbyists who put profit before people.

We should be urging governments to provide better and more effective support for small producers, helping them to cope with climate change and making markets work for them. Mike thanked all present for their support of the CAFOD water campaign. Their next campaign will concern food security and so we will have plenty of opportunities to work with CAFOD and make a difference.

And finally should we perhaps look at our own lives. How does our behaviour help or hinder the poorest in the ways we buy and consume food and treat our planet?



Raising Awareness about Trafficking: Immediately before lunch Bishop Pat Lynch shared his concerns with us over the need to raise awareness in all our communities about the dangers of people trafficking. This involves not only sex workers but domestic workers and even children who may be brought in for domestic work or even to run cannabis growing farms.

The Metropolitan police have set up a help line and ask that anybody who suspects trafficked victims are being forced to work within their community to contact to pass on information in confidence on 0800 783 2589.

A report on an excellent seminar held in the Amigo Hall in December is at <http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/Human-Trafficking-Seminar>.

World Development Movement: Our first speaker after lunch was Christine Haigh who is their Food Policy Officer. The World Development Movement (WDM) is a membership organisation which campaigns on issues of global justice.

Christine reminded us that the world produces enough food to feed 12 billion people, 85% of this is grown and consumed within national boundaries and 70% of people are fed without reliance on industrial food production. 50% of the world's food is produced by small scale farmers and these people are fighting for food sovereignty which was defined by the Declaration of Nyeleni as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agricultural systems"



A fundamental cause of food price inflation has been speculation. The concept of farmers selling their crops in advance of the harvest, known as futures contracts, goes back to the 19th century and, at its simplest, enabled wheat farmers and bakers, as an example, to agree a fixed price in advance to their mutual benefit. However it was then discovered by bankers, and became another financial asset subject to investment and speculation. Regulations were put into place in the 1930s to limit speculation but deregulation in the 1990s allowed speculators back in to the market.

Now food speculation, buying these agreements not to obtain supplies at a fixed price but to be able to sell at a profit without any intention of taking delivery, is rife. Graziano da Silva, Director General of the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation was quoted by Christine. He said "Speculation is indeed an important cause of the heavily fluctuating and very high prices. It only benefits banks and hedge funds, but not producers, processors and buyers - and certainly not consumers"

Marcel Barnier, European commissioner for the internal market has said "Speculation in basic foodstuffs is a scandal when there are a billion starving people in the world. We must ensure markets contribute to sustainable growth. I am fighting for a better world and I want Europe to take the lead on that.

So what can we do? Christine circulated action cards to be sent to Treasury minister, Mark Hoban, demanding that the Treasury backs tough rules on food speculation.

Christine also suggested that we may join WDM as members or sign up to get their latest actions and updates at www.wdm.org.uk

Who are WDM?

- Promoting the right of poor communities to determine their own path out of poverty
- An end to harmful policies which put profit before people and the environment

Justice for the world's poor



Our final speaker was the chief executive of the **Medway Food Bank**, Paul Robinson. In the past, Paul reminded us, people would have had direct contact with food producers but times have changed. Where there were lots of local bakers now there will be one vast bread factory employing a few people but supplying a vast area.



To get food for your family today you need money but many are in a position of having no savings and there is therefore a growing need for emergency food provision. You may be only one pay cheque away from crisis.

The Trussell Trust was set up to support the people of Bulgaria by collection donations of food but were approached by a woman in desperate need who asked "but what about me?" This led to the establishment of the Salisbury Food Bank and from there a model was created to enable other, mainly Christian, organizations to do the same. The outcome is that there are now around 200 food banks in the country and the number is growing rapidly.

The Medway set up is slightly different in that it has established several outlets throughout the five towns but with one overarching organization coordinating the functions centrally. Food is donated by the general public who may be given a shopping list as they enter local supermarkets to let them know what is most needed.



For I was hungry and you fed me,
thirsty and you gave me drink, I was
a stranger and you invited me in...

Matthew 25:35

Care Professionals such as Health Visitors, Social Workers, Doctors, Schools, Care Centres, Police or Church Pastoral Workers are able to give vouchers to families which they identify as being in great need and these are then brought to one of the Food Bank Centres where a parcel of 3 days food is given. At the same time the Food Bank can also provide a listening ear and signposts to legal, health or learning advice, housing support, debt counseling or advocacy.

www.medway.foodbank.org.uk

The three days food gives time to bridge the gap before the authorities get on the case. There is normally a maximum of three consecutive food parcels.

To emulate this excellent work you will need volunteers, space and venue and some funds. The Trussell Trust can then provide training and a fantastic template.

I don't suppose they were really listening to us but, in the week after our meeting, the House of Lords debated the issue of food security. Baroness Miller of Chilthorne Domer, who tabled the debate, said 'We have only recently begun to understand the importance of the concept of global food security rather than seeing it as an issue only when there is a regional famine or shortage far from these shores.'

The Earl of Selbourne, former chair of the Royal Agricultural Society of England and current chair of the Foundation for Science and Technology, stated: 'Our present food system is clearly unsustainable, inadequate and failing in some respects.' He listed reduced dependence on fossil fuels and exploitation of natural resources, economic use of water, increased use of biomass and reducing carbon leakage as essential components of sustainable agriculture. 'It will not be agricultural science that delivers totally. Financial services, the communications sector and a whole raft of interventions - political, economical, sociological and technological - will be involved,' he said.

Lord Giddens added: 'Three of the biggest new-style risks are climate change, population growth and world urbanisation.' In the case of food security these risks overlap and it's time 'to make far more of a dent in these risks than we have so far'.

Food Security and Food Sovereignty: The likely emphasis in Rio+20 is "food security" which concerns only the amount of food produced rather than how it is produced. So the likes of Monsanto can claim, albeit probably erroneously, that they are working towards it. Should we not be fighting for "food sovereignty" which gives farmers the rights to control their own food, agricultural, livestock and fisheries rather than being subject to the whims of GM Producers, global markets and land grabs?

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