**The Multifaith Project News Archive**

The Multifaith Project was hosted by the Jubilee Debt Campaign between 2009-2014 to raise awareness within a range of faith communities about tackling the issue of International Debt and global poverty. Here are some of the highlights collated in 2017 as the project website was drawn to a close.

**News Stories**

**2010:** On Saturday 18th September members of the JDC Multifaith project joined the regular congregation at their regular Saturday church service at St Martin’s in the Bullring. The service was concluded with a very noisy demonstration by over a hundred campaigners of different faiths. The Faiths Act Fellows of Birmingham and many Jubilee Debt Campaign supporters from the city joined forces to stop shoppers in their tracks and make a big noise about the Millennium Development goals (MDG’s).

The aim was to draw attention to the fact that world leaders are about to meet in New York and we want them to deliver on the promises made in the Millennium year of 2000 to end extreme poverty by 2015.



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**Birmingham campaigners quiz Poverty Minister, Saturday 02nd October 2010**

Rainbow scarves and high passion filled Birmingham’s Nishkam Centre on Thursday, as John Cooper from Birmingham JDC reports.

Campaigners were given the chance to quiz Andrew Mitchell, local MP and now Secretary of State for International Development, on Thursday at a meeting organised by Birmingham Jubilee Debt Campaign. It covered a wide range of subjects and gave the audience a clear indication of the priorities for DfID under the new Government.

Proceedings started well with Bhai Sahib Bhai Dr Mohinder Singh addressing both Minister and audience. He welcomed all to the centre, outlined the work of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha organisation and its role in delivering spiritual and practical help and guidance to the West Midlands.

Using inspiration from his religious beliefs, Dr Singh challenged all to do good and act justly, concluding that we should all be focussing on spiritual development of the self, a missing key component in current global action for true economic, environmental and social justice.

This rousing call to action was focused onto specifics by Samia Ahmed of Islamic Relief. After outlining the key principles which should guide development work (Justice, Stewardship and Jubilee) she reiterated key calls from a recent JDC/Islamic Relief report Fuelling Injustice: The cost of ‘third world debt’ to Muslim countries:

“*In summary, the key issues are around: the cancellation of unjust and unpayable third world debt; the moral obligation from the rich polluting countries to pay ‘climate debt’; the need for aid for countries facing disaster to be in the form of grants, not loans; the establishment of an international debt court; and the reform of the operation of the World Bank and the IMF*.”

After such a clear and conscientious start it was the Development Minister’s turn to talk. After briefly grounding the meeting in political reality he outlined the upcoming priorities for his department. These will form the principles by which work is both judged and funded under his watch:

* Donor coordination and transparency,
* Commitment to MDG4 AND MDG5, particularly reducing childbirth mortality of children and mothers,
* The fight against malaria with a commitment to reduce deaths by half in the 10 worst affected areas,
* An emphasis on nutrition for young children and mothers.

Now it was time for the audience to shine and challenge the Minister on issues of their concern. A full, frank and challenging forty minutes was filled by multiple topics. These included: the role of peace-building in development, which Mr Mitchell saw as key; debt and the environment – the Minister arguing that the World Bank will give some grants through so-called “Fast-Start Finance”; funding of UK action to tackle global injustice – he responded that a Poverty Impact Fund is in the pipeline which will provide matching funds to proven NGO projects; and policy on corporate investment in developing countries – he said it will be announced in an upcoming speech at a London University. Meanwhile, questions on the Robin Hood Tax were swiftly batted away as a concern for the Treasury.

The most disappointing part of the questioning was when it turned to JDC’s End Britain’s Dodgy Deals campaign. The campaign calls for three significant changes at the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD). Firstly that it does not turn UK exporters failed deals into debts for developing countries. Secondly that the department ceases using taxpayers money to provide subsidised insurance for arms exports, polluting industries or projects that use forced or child labour. Thirdly that the ECGD publicly audits all outstanding debts owed to it by developing countries and cancels any found to be unjust.

While the minister obviously knew about the department, explaining to the audience why development wasn’t its only focus, he then surprised all by asking for ‘more information’ on why the department is of concern to campaigners – despite his own speech last year condemning its support for fossil fuels, and the letter he has received from JDC outlining our concerns. Consider this a call to action to pin him down next time!

Overall, while the Minister clearly has a passion for his subject, his avoidance of detailed answers to several questions suggests he isn’t won over on crucial issues for campaigners, from climate debt to the Robin Hood Tax to the need for a debt audit. However, the Spending Review has yet to be delivered and no new poverty White Paper has been announced, so we will need to keep up the pressure and shape his agenda.

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**Sound the Trumpet – Stephen Rand - Wednesday 20th October 2010**



On the Great Day of Forgiveness sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you…’ Leviticus 25: 9 – 10

The experts say that our word ‘Jubilee’ comes from the Hebrew word for the sound made by the rams horn trumpet. And that’s the sound that announces God’s intervention in human history. It was the sound heard by the citizens of Jericho before the walls of their city collapsed; it is the sound that will announce the second coming of Christ – ‘the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.’

The year of Jubilee was enshrined in God’s law as a time of intervention on behalf of the poor. Every fifty years the trumpet would sound, and herald a new start, new hope for those who were in debt and destitute. Imagine that you were one of those struggling against the odds, every meal eked out of back-breaking labour on unresponsive soil – but knowing that there was a promise of a new start. Your ears would have strained for the sound, the moment when things would change. When Jesus began his ministry, he referred to this same moment when he quoted Isaiah: ‘the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.’

This is why Jubilee became the inspiration for a movement that longed for a new start for the world’s poor: to celebrate the start of a new millennium by setting them free from the chains of debt. Jubilee 2000 set out to change the world; its story is a testament to the power of biblical inspiration to motivate ordinary people to make a difference.

Politicians and economists thought world debt was too complicated for people to get excited about. But towards the end of the 1990s it was summed up in one simple fact: that for every pound that was given in aid to the developing world, three pounds were coming back to pay off debt. This was sufficient to create a burning sense of injustice, a determination that something must be done. People were scandalised that there were countries spending more on debt payments to the rich than on the health and education of their own people.

The problem stemmed from oil. The price rises of the 1970s left the banks full of cash they wanted to lend – what could be better than loans to poor countries to help them become wealthy? But then interest rates spiralled and commodity prices fell, and many countries were left effectively bankrupt, owing far more than they could earn. In some cases this was exacerbated by corrupt dictators, whose families were enriched beyond their wildest dreams. Even when their citizens ejected them from office they were left to pay off the debts from which they had seen little or no benefit.

This was no abstract mathematical problem. It meant that as countries became desperate to raise the money to pay their debts, charges were introduced for healthcare and education. Mothers suddenly had to choose between feeding their family or sending their children to school. Life-saving medicine was only available if you could afford it. The debt crisis was a crisis of poverty: poverty that means 30,000 people die every day, unnecessarily.

So what could be done? How could the leaders of the world’s richest nations be convinced that action was a moral imperative in the face of such injustice and suffering? It was an enormous challenge. The 1990s were years when the richest nations got richer, and their willingness to help the poorest lessened.

But a small group of Christians took up the challenge. They knew it needed the support of people in the churches and outside them. They knew that it needed a global movement to bring global change. They knew it needed a unique coalition of religious organisations, aid agencies, trade unions and campaigning groups to get the message out.

Consciously seeing debt as a modern form of slavery, they picked up a strategy that had been key to the anti-slavery campaign two hundred years earlier: a petition. The Jubilee petition called on the G8, the leaders of the world’s richest nations, to cancel the unpayable debt of the world’s poorest nations under a fair and transparent process.

I can still remember carrying box after box of petitions from a boat to the location of the G8 leaders meeting in Cologne, Germany, in 1999. I was one of a chain gang, linked by shackles on our ankles, symbolising the message of the petition that the chains of debt would be broken. It had been signed by 24.3 million people from over 160 countries – the world’s first global campaign. 233,000 signed the petition on European Election day in Britain.

The petition reinforced the impact of the human chain created by 70,000 campaigners that welcomed the G8 leaders to Birmingham in 1998. It was peaceful, cheerful, determined and unprecedented – and it made a difference.

The world has been changed. Poverty is on the world’s agenda as it never has been before. There is an expectation that world leaders will act on behalf of people in need. In 2000 at a special session of the United Nations the world’s countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals, promising action to halve world poverty by 2015.

And there was specific action on debt – an enhanced debt relief initiative intended to set countries free of the burden of debt. In 2004 I read a letter from the President of Tanzania to the annual conference of Jubilee Debt Campaign. He wrote to express his thanks for the campaign – and the difference it had made in his country: ‘When I became President in 1995, we were witnessing a serious deterioration of social services, and a high and unsustainable debt burden. One of my first priorities was to reverse these trends through increasing government revenue and asking for debt relief…Now the primary school population has increased by 66 per cent; we have built 45,000 classrooms and 1,925 new primary schools; we have recruited 37,261 new teachers between 2000 and 2004, and retrained another 14,852.’

What an encouragement to know that there are such tangible results to the campaign. In 27 countries billions of dollars have been redirected to make a real impact on the lives of poor people. In many countries new ways have been established of involving ordinary people in ensuring money is spent where it makes the most impact. Research has shown that it really has been spent on the priorities of poverty, not on the army or corruptly lost to bureaucrats and politicians.

So why is Jubilee Debt Campaign still campaigning? President Mkapa’s letter went on: ‘Together we have achieved much; but much remains to be done.’ Children are still dying unnecessarily because of poverty. Poor countries are still being sued by commercial companies for the repayment of debt. There are heavily-indebted countries still outside all debt relief programmes. There are lives being ruined by the

economic policy conditions being demanded as the price of debt relief. The debt relief plans of the richest nations have failed to bring the new start for the poor that was needed. The trumpet sounded – but not nearly loud enough or long enough.

So the need for action is still great. In 2005, Gordon Brown, then Chancellor of the Exchequer and who made this issue such a personal crusade, emphasised the remaining challenge: ‘And at best on present progress in Sub Saharan Africa: primary education for all will be delivered not in 2015 but 2130 – that is 115 years too late; the halving of poverty not by 2015 but by 2150 – that is 135 years too late; and the elimination of avoidable infant deaths not by 2015 but by 2165 – that is 150 years too late. So when people ask how long, the whole world must reply: 150 years is too long to wait for justice; 150 years is too long to wait when infants are dying in Africa while the rest of the world has the medicines to heal them; 150 years is too long for people to wait when a promise should be redeemed, when the bond of trust should be honoured now in this decade.’

In 2005 there was a new coalition of faith groups, aid agencies, trade unions and others: Jubilee Debt Campaign was a major player in the campaign to MAKE POVERTY HISTORY. We knew that if there really is to be a new start for the poor, then there has to be the political will for the richest nations in the world to stand for justice and act with generosity. Debt still has to be cancelled. There still needs to be more and better aid. And there still needs to be a new recognition of the need for trade justice, that will see the poorest nations given the opportunity to use their resources for the benefit of their own people.

Jubilee Debt Campaign has shown that when people raise their voice against injustice, change is possible. But it is not inevitable. The calling of all Christians is to make the commitment to the long haul, inspired by the vision of what could be and should be. We pray ‘Your Kingdom come, your will be done.’ It’s such a great discovery when we realise that God wants to empower us to fulfil his will and become part of the answer to our own prayers.

Now we have explicitly united people of faith in our Multifaith Project, working to ensure that the sound of the trumpet is heard. As President Mkapa said at the end of his letter all those years ago ‘On to the Jubilee!’

*Stephen Rand former Co Chair of Jubilee Debt Campaign and former Chair of the Multifaith Project.*

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**Islam Awareness Week 2010 - Friday 12th November 2010**

 In the first week of November the JDC Multifaith project took part in a series of events as part of Islam Awareness Week.

The week sees local faith and community group putting on events to raise awareness and understanding of Islam. This year the JDC Multifaith project attended several events including the JDC speaker event with Cllr Salma Yaqoob on the Pakistan debt crisis.

In 2011 however, the week will be moving from the first week in November to March 28th – 3rd April. If you would like to be involved in Islam Awareness Week then please contact Audrey Miller who is attending planning meetings on behalf of the JDC and JDC Multifaith project. Audrey can be contacted on jubileedebt@blueyonder.co.uk

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**Message from Gordon Brown MP- Thursday 17th February 2011**

On Wednesday 16 February 2011 The Archbishop of Canterbury hosted a lecture given by the Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP entitled “Faith and Politics?” In his opening remarks, the former Prime Minister said:

*“My arguments tonight are the result of several months of reflection since May. Or should I say… enforced reflection…*

*But my arguments tonight are also the latest chapter in what has been a long conversation between us, because many of you here attended the regular events for faith groups and NGOs that I convened throughout my years at the Treasury and many of us are veterans together of those long-shared endeavours to secure for the poorest of the world debt cancellation and increased aid and fairer trade.*

*So when we talk about faith in politics let me say first of all that you should be proud that it was Churches and faith groups that created the momentum –and the mass membership, the mass crowds – for the Jubilee Debt Campaign and for Make Poverty History, answering in a modern way the injunction of Isaiah that we should ‘loose the chains of injustice and let the oppressed go free’.*

*And you should be prouder still that your efforts changed the world – and that because of your voice there are men, women and children whose names you will never know and whose faces you will never see but who are alive today because of what you did. Every day through both your work in the field and the generosity of your congregations you show by both example and inspiration the good that can result when people of moral purpose work together for shared objectives.”*

We were thrilled to receive such a mention in this important speech. You can view the rest of the speech by visiting [www.archbishopofcanterbury.org](http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org)

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**Message from Karen Armstrong - Friday 18th February 2011**

“In this polarised world the ever increasing gap between rich and poor nations is a scandal that reflects upon us all. Jubilee Debt is addressing one of the most urgent issues of our time and deserves our support”.

The JDC Multifaith Project has been commended by Karen Armstrong the noted author and columnist on world religions. She is the author of 12 books on comparative religion including: A History of God: The 4,000 year quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam; Muhammad, a biography of the prophet; Buddha; and The Case for God.

In 2008 she was award the TED prize of $100,000 and devoted it to the inauguration of a Charter for Compassion in 2009; signatories include the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Queen Noor of Jordan. The Charter is based on the spirit of the Golden Rule (to treat others as one would like to be treated oneself) which is at the heart of the great religious traditions and intended to foster global understanding and a peaceful world.

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**International Women’s Day - Wednesday 16th March 2011**



Jubilee Debt Campaign Multifaith Project marked International Women’s Day with its first Women’s Event: Women’s Voices against Global Poverty on 10 March 2011.

The 70 women of 9 different faiths shared their common concern for global poverty, taking forward the new JDC Multifaith Project. The powerful message was that they are women united by faith to end global poverty. Women of different faiths were inspired to make a difference globally, by acting within their own communities. The evening began with poetry, singing, drama and music on the theme of global poverty which inspired delegates to come together to talk about the injustices of global poverty.

Speakers from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu backgrounds shared how they were motivated by faith to respond to global poverty.Faith and acts of kindness run side by side. The theme of shared faith values was highlighted by all the speakers – loving our neighbour and carrying out our obligations to end global poverty.

One of the speakers Pritpal Kaur spoke of her work as a FaithsAct Fellow, campaigning for the eradication of malaria worldwide. Those attending the conference were inspired to hear from someone so young about her generation’s interest in the fight for social justice. The Dean of Birmingham Cathedral, The Very Rev. Catherine Ogle gave a Christian perspective on unity of voice and real faith harmony.

The final speaker was Shabana Mahmood, MP for Birmingham, Ladywood, who spoke eloquently of the way her Muslim faith had motivated her to get involved in politics as a way of serving the whole community. She urged the other women present to be more confident and courageous in standing up for their beliefs in justice and common humanity.

The evening was held at the West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters, generously donated by their Interfaith department. Delegates left inspired to take part in the Jubilee Debt Campaign.

“Best event I’ve been to for a while.”

“Pure inspirational total love”

“It’s been great!”

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**Unjust debt goes to the heart of inequality. We need a new jubilee - Tuesday 09th October 2012**



Only far-reaching changes to the global economy will stop the burden of debt falling on the poorest in our societies.

This article first appeared in The Guardian on 9 October 2012.

Ten years ago I was part of a movement called Jubilee 2000, which changed the way people think about debt. It challenged a deeply held principle that “debts must always be repaid” by showing how, in the case of many debts owed by impoverished countries, the consequences of repayments were creating nearly unimaginable suffering.

We were not calling for an act of charity, but a realisation that the economy we had created was structured in a way that was deeply unfair, exaggerating inequality and poverty in many parts of the world. We didn’t want donations, but a change in the rules of engagement.

The change in values that the jubilee movement effected forced decision-makers to enact policies that went some way to redressing this injustice. About $125bn of debt was wiped out, and governments were able to start spending money in ways that benefited their people.

Yet only 10 years later we find ourselves at the centre of a debt crisis that suggests we were not as successful as we’d hoped. Certainly many were freed from “debt slavery”, but globally debt boomed, as it was used as a means of papering over the cracks of inequality created by our ever-more global economy.

Today, the poorest in our own societies are paying a very high price for a crisis created by reckless lending by banks and over-the-top borrowing. Little has been done to reform a system based on greed and speculation which is creating an even greater chasm between the haves and the have-nots.

Of course there is no question that poverty in Europe, even post-crisis, is nowhere near as widespread as it was, and is, in some African countries. However, people in the most indebted European countries such as Greece are suffering rapidly rising poverty, homelessness, unemployment, violence and levels of inequality. For example, six months ago medical researchers reported a sharp rise in rates of suicide, murder and HIV/Aids in Greece as a result of the response to the economic crisis there.

Ten years ago, we convinced people of the need for a different approach to debt by bringing to mind a very ancient concept – a jubilee, recognising the damage that very large debts can do to society. The Hebrew scriptures speak of a jubilee year in which debts are cancelled. They also call for restitution to be made for the damage done by debts – freeing those sold into slavery to help repay debts, returning lands that had been handed to financiers of debt.

The importance of what might be called “debt justice” to a wider notion of fairness is not limited to Christianity and Judaism. The Qur’an condemns usury and requires zakah (almsgiving) as an essential duty to prevent wealth being accumulated only among the rich. Dharmic faiths from the Indian sub-continent teach similar principles, teaching that wealth is held not for oneself but on behalf of all human beings.

In very different times, all of these faiths have tried to create solutions and to repair the damage that deep inequality can cause to our communities and societies. We would do well to adapt their solutions to the present day.

What would a jubilee look like today? First, as we said 10 years ago, when the payment of debts causes suffering, impoverishment and growing inequality, it cannot be right that they are paid. Debt is not simply the responsibility of the debtor, the burden of debt needs to be shared. The institutions that created the crisis cannot simply return to making profits with no care for the trail of devastation left behind by their decisions.

Secondly, although debts can be just, when taken out in a democratic fashion for productive investment, they are not the only way for governments to raise funds. Taxes can ensure companies and investors in a country pay a fair share for being there. It provides a means of redistributing wealth in a global economy which, it is almost universally acknowledged, is too unequal. Progressive taxation is an important element of solving the problems of economic injustice.

Finally, we must introduce rules to ensure financial markets work for people. Regulating flows of money will help move us away from an economy based on speculation and “making money from money”. It will help control the lenders and will remove the control that financial markets have over every aspect of our lives. Returning money to its original purpose: a means of exchanging goods.

Such a jubilee, then, goes well beyond cancelling some debt. Unjust debt is at the heart of our global economy; at the heart of deep inequality between rich and poor, as well as between rich and poor countries. If a jubilee is a call for justice, it must consist of far-reaching changes in the global economy to build a society based on justice, mutual support and community; an economic and political as well as spiritual renewal in our society.

*The Most Rev John Sentamu is the Archbishop of York.*

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**Economic change is about justice, not charity, say faith leaders - Tuesday 05th February 2013**

MPs heard calls from faith leaders on Tuesday to pursue radical policies that will lead to justice for the poorest people in both the UK and the world.

Speaking at a parliamentary reception to mark 15 years of the Jubilee Debt Campaign, the religious leaders gave their backing to debt cancellation for the most indebted countries, a new financial system involving progressive taxation, and restrictions on harmful lending.

Speaking in the room that saw the launch of Jubilee 2000 fifteen years ago, the speakers included the Anglican Bishop of Bath and Wells, Peter Price and the Vice-Chair of the Rabbinic Assembly of Reform Judaism, Sybil Sheridan.

They were joined by the President of the Methodist Conference, Mark Wakelin, Bhai Sahib Ji, Chairman of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha and Trisha Rogers of the British Humanist Association.

They are among more than 400 faith leaders who have signed a letter to the Prime Minister calling for a “*Jubilee for Justice*”. They include Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs as well as members of Christian denominations ranging from Roman Catholics and Coptic Orthodox to Quakers and Pentocostals.

The meeting was attended by over eighty people, including fifteen MPs from the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Scottish National parties.

Mark Wakelin, President of the Methodist Conference, told the meeting:

*“It’s not just a Christian message. It’s certainly not just a Methodist message. It’s about changing the narrative… that blames the poor for poverty… We know in our hearts and in our marrow – because our creator put it there – that things shouldn’t be this way*.”

Nick Dearden, Director of the Jubilee Debt Campaign, told the meeting:

“*It is not acceptable for the poorest in society to pay the price when a system that never benefited them in the first place goes wrong…. It’s not only about debt cancellation – important though that is – it’s about just and progressive taxation and an end to harmful lending.”*

*Sybil Sheridan reminded the meeting of the original, biblical meaning of “jubilee”: a regular event that involved “the cancellation of debt, the freeing of those enslaved to debt”. She insisted: “All God’s commandments are about justice*.”

Sikh leader Bhai Sahib Ji said: “*Loving and serving God means loving the whole creation*”. He called for *“just and fair national and global finance*” and “*fair standards for lending*”.

Peter Price, Bishop of Bath and Wells, spoke of his own experience of seeing debt cancellation in Zambia. He added:

“*This is a movement that’s about ordinary people… Remember, change comes from the grassroots. It never comes from the top down. It always comes from the bottom up*.”

Photos from the event are available on flickr: [https://www.flickr.com/photos/26672475@N08/sets/72157632697142646/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/26672475%40N08/sets/72157632697142646/)



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**Over 400 Faith Leaders Demand ‘Jubilee for Justice’ - Thursday 14th March 2013**

Nearly 450 faith leaders from all the major faiths have signed an open letter calling for a new debt jubilee in response to today’s financial crisis.

The letter was delivered to the Prime Minister on 8 February 2013. It reads:

Faith Leaders Call for ‘Jubilee for Justice’

Following the year of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, we recall the ancient custom of the Jubilee Year, in which debts would be cancelled.

The Hebrew scriptures speak of a Jubilee Year in which unpayable debts should be cancelled. The Gospel writer, Luke, records that Jesus began his public ministry with a call to restore the just economy of Jubilee where all have enough. Jesus also tells those who have assets, to lend without expecting a return. The Holy Qur’an condemns usury and requires zakah (almsgiving) as an essential duty to prevent wealth being accumulated only among the rich.

The Dharmic faiths from the Indian sub-continent also teach the same principle. In the Anguttara Nikaya, Buddhists read, ‘One holds wealth not for oneself but for all beings.’ Sikhs believe in earning ethically, being benevolent and they pray for the common good of all. Mahatma Gandhi, from his Hindu roots, famously said, ’Earth provides enough to satisfy everyone’s need but not enough for everyone’s greed.’

In recent times, the idea of Jubilee has been applied to the need to cancel the unfair debts of many ‘Third World’ countries. This does not represent charity towards the impoverished but a call for justice: to reform the basis of the global economy and renew relationships between high and low income countries. This call for Jubilee since the 1990’s has led to the cancellation of $120 billion of debt (£80 billion), bringing education and healthcare to many millions of people.

Despite these achievements, over the last thirty years there has been a series of debt crises culminating in the present one in Europe. A self-serving financial system has brought the global economy to its knees and we are now seeing the poorest people in our own society and around the world paying the price for this excess.

That is why we ask people everywhere to join in calling for a renewed Jubilee. Finance must be put back in its place as a means to human well being. We need far reaching changes in the global economy to build a society based on justice, mutual support and community. We need economic and political as well as spiritual renewal in our society. We applaud the efforts of citizens across Europe and the world to engage in democratic audits of their national debts as a first step towards reclaiming public control of national finances. We call on people in the UK to unite in support of this vision of Jubilee, and to make this cause a lasting legacy of 2012.

A Jubilee for Justice today would mean:

* Cancelling the unjust debts of the most indebted nations
* Promoting just and progressive taxation rather than excessive borrowing
* Stopping harmful lending which forces countries into debt

Signatories:

Bishop Doye Agama, Apostolic Pastoral Association, St John’s Rectory, Moston

Rukmami Agarwal, Committee Member, Arya Samaj

Ajay Aggarwal, Secretary, Faiths Forum for the East Midlands

Nasreen Akhtar, Islamic Awareness Week Co-ordinator, Islamic Society of Britain

Cllr Rabnawaz Akbar, Secretary of Manchester Council of Mosques and Manchester City Councillor

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, Executive Secretary, Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs, Churches Together in England

Rev Christopher Aldridge, Retired Priest, Birmingham

Rev David Alford, Methodist Minister

Jenny Allen, Member of Moseley Interfaith Forum

Rabbi Neil Amswych, Bournemouth Reform Synagogue and Chair of Interfaith Dorset Education and Action

Rev Bill Anderson, Chair, Birmingham Methodist District

Bishop Angaelos, General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK

Rt Rev Geoff Annas, Bishop of Stafford

Rt Rev John Arnold, Chair of CAFOD and Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster

Mohammed Arshad, President of UK Islamic Mission

Gyanesh Arya, International Preacher, Arya Samaj

Fr Nigel Asbridge, Priest Missioner, St Mary with St John, Upper Edmonton

Rev M. A. Ashby, Minister, Durrington Community Center Church

Mark D Ashcroft, Archdeacon of Manchester

Saphia Aslam, Head Female Scholar, Muslim Education Centre

Rev Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford

Rev Vicki Atkinson, Minister, Birmingham Methodist Circuit

Deacon Gill Atkinson-Heck, Methodist Chaplain, University of Huddersfield

Q Amaruzzamnn Azmi, Imam, North Manchester Mosque

Rt Rev Nick Baines, Bishop of Bradford

G Bamford, Deacon, Methodist Church, Redditch

Rev Warren Bardsley, Methodist Minister

Revd Peter Barnett, Retired Priest

Jonathan Bartley, Director, Ekklesia

Dale Barton, Parish Priest Bradford

Rev Peter Bates, Superintendent Birmingham Circuit, Methodist Church

Lotifa Begum, Development Education Coordinator, Islamic Relief

Rev Goh Peng Beh, Minister, Chinese Methodist Church

Rt Rev James Bell, Bishop of Knaresborough

Rev Peter Ball, Ecumenical Development Officer, Churches Together in Oxfordshire

Rabbi Miriam Berger, Rabbi of Finchley Reform Synagogue

Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh, Chairman, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha

Anil Bhanot OBE, Managing Director, Hindu Council UK

Jatinder Singh Birdi, Warwick District Faiths Forum

Mark Bitel, Clerk, Edinburgh Central Quaker meeting

Canon Ian Black, Vicar of Peterborough & Canon Residentiary Peterborough Cathedral

Rt Rev Richard Blackburn, Bishop of Warrington

Rev Bev Boden, Methodist Church Minister

Pamela J Bolas, Chaplain, Glenfield Hospital, Leicester

Julian Bond, Director, Christian Muslim Forum

Revd Andii Bowsher, Anglican Chaplain, Northumbria University

Rev Victoria Bravette, Minister, Birmingham Methodist Circuit

Gerald P.S. Breen, Parish Priest, St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham

Rev Gwynne Brindley, Minister, Methodist Church

Rt Revd Pete Broadbent, Bishop of Willesden

Peter Broadley, Methodist Church Minister, Reading

Richard Bromley, Reverend

Rev Brian Brown, Minister, Methodist Church

Patrick Browne, Parish Priest

Robert Bryce, Deacon, Baptist Church

Faye Buchan, Session Clerk, Church of Scotland

Rt Rev Christopher Budd, Bishop of Plymouth

Revd Adrian Bulley, Minister, City United Reformed Church Cardiff

Sarah Bullock, Rector, St James’ Moss Side and St Edmund Whalley Range

Sue Burchell, Vicar, Church of England

Revd Mark Burleigh, President, College of Health Care Chaplains

Elizabeth Burroughs, Local Preacher, Methodist Church

Rt Rev Peter Burrows, Bishop of Doncaster

Hugh Burton, Team Rector, Church of England

Alan Butler, Anglican Parish Priest

Rt Rev Paul Butler, Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham

Julian Booth, Parish Priest

Rev Andrew J Brazier, University Chaplain

Revd Dr Nicholas Bundock, Rector, St James and Emmanuel, Didsbury

Canon Garry Byrne, Roman Catholic Dean of Coventry

Carol Cahill, FEED Manager, Vineyard Church

Vibha Cale, President, Arya Samaj West Midlands

Jan Cambridge, Assistant Clerk, Wirral and Chester Area Quaker Meeting

Rev A. P. Camper, Unitarian Minister

Philip Carlin, Minister, St John’s Hurst

Isabel Carter, Chair, Operation Noah

Colin Cartwright, Minister, Trinity Baptist Church, Chesham

Anne Cash, Retired Methodist Minister

Canon Peter Challen, Christian Council for Monetary Justice

Carole Challis, Methodist Presbyter

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List updated, 14 March 2013

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**Prompts for Christian Preachers: Global Debt Week of Action - Wednesday 1st October 2014**

These notes for Christian Preachers have been put together by two Jubilee Debt Campaign supporters, Rev Alison Geary and Rev John Nightingale, for Sunday 12 October 2014. Sunday 12 October is in the global debt week of action, and the notes are based on the lectionary readings for that week:

There are a lot of significant dates around October 12th for the preacher to note:

* 8-15th Global Debt Week of Action
* 11th European Day of Action on Debt,
* 11th Action on Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership (TTIP)
* 16th World Food Day
* 19-26th One World Week: theme "Breaking Chains, Making Change"
* 19th Stop the Traffik

The Joint Liturgical Group readings for this Sunday, as used by many churches, are:

Exodus 32: 1 – 14 or Isaiah 25:1-9

Philippians 4:1-9

Matthew 22:1-14

At first glance one might not choose these readings to link with such causes, but further exploration shows that together they touch on the nature of true worship, the celebration of God’s kingdom, and the urgency of our responsibility. The preacher on this Sunday, then, has several ways of alerting congregations to social justice and world poverty in the Sunday worship. The following notes offer a few possibilities for applying each of the set readings to local, national or international concerns.

Exodus 32: 1 – 14

1. The people were not prepared to wait. They wanted security and immediate gratification. Remember the advertisement for a credit card: “Take the waiting out of wanting”? Debt problems today often arise because loans have been given too quickly, when the creditor is desperate to make money or the debtor to spend it. Creditors and debtors have often not been prepared to wait in order to make loans which are likely to be productive for both parties.

2. The people wanted something to worship that they could see, so Aaron gave in to their pressure and not only produced an idol but also set up a religious festival around it. The prophets were always adamant that less religious activity was better than more: “I hate, I despise your feast days…. “ (Amos 5:21). They declared that true religion was

shown in acting justly, and that this was what God wanted of the people. How easily the

outward trappings of religion become more important than fairness and just dealings in

the community!

3. Gold is a symbol of wealth and privilege: the winner’s medal, the highest standard,

“as good as gold”. The gold bars in the cellars of the bank of England are symbols of

wealth, but have no intrinsic value or actual function in the world monetary system. The

rich hoard gold and have credit or cash for immediate use, whilst the poor have no

reserves and quickly run out of cash, so need to borrow to keep going, thus

compounding the debt problem. Governments need to make sure that money is put into

the hands of the poor in order to reduce inequality and debt slavery.

2

Isaiah 25: 1 – 9

1. A song of praise to God for his wonderful acts and then a description of God’s plan

for the world: a feast of good things on God’s holy mountain, where death and mourning

will be no more, and we will all sit down together at the feast. There is enough for

everyone to eat and be satisfied. Food security is a priority for every nation, but many

have difficulty in achieving it.

2. God’s concern is with the whole world, not just Israel, and, in particular, those in

greatest need. Rich and powerful nations too often entangle the poor in unjust and

unpayable debt. God’s kingdom, for which we work and pray, is to include all people

and its signs will be food and fellowship. Here is the basis for a critique of the present

debt slavery, inequality and one-sided international financial institutions.

Philippians 4: 1 – 9

“Rejoice,” writes Paul, “Chairete” which comes from the root charis or gift. He is

referring to a sense of thanksgiving for what God has done, gratitude because “the Lord

is near”. We can live in peace, he says, with no anxiety.

1. Our relationship with Christ is based on gift, therefore, not merit, unlike relations in

the world of economics. Economic relationships can be about greed and moneymaking,

or they can be about ensuring the maximum good for all. Paul urges

righteouness in the economic sphere: Christians are to focus on and do what is good, true, just and honourable. Focussing on the goods that a consumer society tempts people with, and craving more material things, can lead people into debt.

2. Paul appeals for two women to overcome their differences, but does not refer at all to the reasons for division, so we can only guess at the problem. Euodia and Syntyche have both worked with him, he says. Is it possible that this wider experience has given them new ideas for their local church which have not gone down well with the establishment? And has that the rejection harmed their relationship, too? Women and girls still face discrimination and prejudice in society and in the church, harming them and their communities. “All We Can” (formerly MRDF) and Christian Aid support many women’s groups, empowering them to work for change in their communities.

3. Disunity still affects the work and mission of the church. While Christians argue over by whom and to whom bread should be distributed in worship, people die from hunger across the world. When we work together (eg in Christian Aid, JDC, with local food banks) we are more effective. “Have no anxiety,” Paul says. How is that text being read today in Syria, Iraq, Sudan and many other places of danger and hunger? What requests are people there making of God? How will we be involved in the answers?

Matthew 22: 1 – 14

The implication of this strange and difficult story for Matthew is that the Jews were the guests who were invited to the feast of God’s kingdom but turned the invitation down,

3. sometimes shooting the messengers. The invitation then went to unlikely people, the Gentiles, who responded.

1. The first guests did not see the urgency of the invitation, and were not aware that the kingdom was present among them. Perhaps there are also people today who want to be in the kingdom when it comes, not realising that it is already here, and that they must face its challenge now. The rich nations could do more now to make amends for the damage they have done to poorer countries - slave trade and colonialism, by burning fossil fuels, extractive industries and so speeding up the damage caused by global warming.

2. The unexpected and illogical condemnation of the man without a wedding garment is perhaps a message to challenge smugness. It is not enough simply to accept the invitation: it has to put its stamp on the whole of a person’s life, Jesus is saying. What must we do to be able to sit together at the table with people who have been made poor by western exploitation and dominance?

There are so many issues here that the preacher would be well-advised to choose just one and encourage the congregation to take some concrete action on it, eg preventing tax evasion in UK and elsewhere; promoting trade justice and food security; providing funds to help poor countries combat climate change; breaking the chains of debt. Check the websites listed below for specific campaigns and actions in mid-October.
Jubilee Debt Campaign: jubileedebt.org.uk
One World Week: oneworldweek.org
Stop the Traffik: stopthetraffik.org
Tax Justice Network: taxjustice.net
World Food Day: fao.org/world-food-day/home/en
Rev Alison Geary and Rev John Nightingale
Secretary and Chair JDC Birmingham group