

WORSHIP MATERIALS – WORLD DEBT DAY

16 MAY 2004

INTRODUCTION

In section 1 an order of worship has been prepared which congregations may like to use, either as it is, or by selecting what is most appropriate for their situation. Included in this section are additional resources such as a list of suggested hymns, bidding prayers and good news stories

Red chains have been the symbol of the debt campaign, and therefore leaders of worship may like to encourage their congregations to wear something red for that particular service, or have red chains around the church, or give out strips of red paper for people to write prayers on which, as they go out, could be joined together to make a chain. Members should be encouraged to wear things like T shirts and scarves which demonstrate their solidarity with the Jubilee movement.

Recognising that debt is an interfaith issue, Section 2 includes material from all major faiths.

The editor of this material would like to thank all those who have made so many contributions throughout the years, some of which are incorporated in the service for 16 May. It has not been possible to trace the source of all the materials used, but it is hoped that the writer will be forgiven by those to whom she is in debt.

Janice M Clark
Birmingham
January 2004

SECTION ONE

WORLD DEBT DAY
16 MAY 2004

FAITH AND DEBT, CALLING US TO BE A NEW CREATION

Call to worship:

Who may be a guest in your house?

or who may dwell on your holy mountain?

One who leads a blameless life

who does what is right,

who speaks truthfully from the heart:

one whose tongue is free from malice,

who never wrongs a friend

who utters no reproach against a neighbour;

one who cannot respect the unworthy

but honours those who fear God;

who stands by a promise given

though it be to personal disadvantage;

one who will not take interest on a loan,

nor accept a bribe to testify against the innocent.

Whoever does this shall never be overthrown (Psalm 15)

Hymn of Praise: Praise my soul the King of Heaven / Gracious God in Adoration or some other hymn of praise

Prayer of Adoration:

With people of every time and place, we offer God the gift of praise as we ask that our love be made wide enough to include all peoples.

In this spirit we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We worship God, who has enriched the fabric of our life with the diversity of every race and culture, as we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We praise the God who continually calls us to put aside the weapons of hatred and discrimination, as we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We adore the God who makes the rain to refresh us in our common labours for justice and peace, as we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We praise the God who has fashioned us to be the one Body of Christ, proclaiming the one gospel, as we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We adore the God who has called us to give proud witness to the unity and diversity of human hearts enlightened beyond the dark power of discrimination, as we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We are filled with joy for those in our midst whose courageous love has called each of us beyond the sinfulness of hatred and prejudice, as we pray:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We are filled with joy at the presence of the Risen Christ, who calls us from our divisions to a new unity of mind and heart, as we cry out:

Praise to you, O God of Life

We indeed give God praise and thanks for this time together for calling us to be a new creation, bringing about the reconciliation of Christ to a broken world.

We give praise to you, O God of Life, now and for ever. Amen

("From Shore to Shore compiled and edited by Kate Wyles SPCK)

Explanation of World Debt Day: How it came about

Bible readings:

Old Testament: Lending money Ex 22:25-27

Year of Jubilee: Lev 25: 8-12(17)

Prayer of Confession:

Leader: As we acknowledge our successes and our failures, what we have done, and what we have been unable to do, we turn to God, who is unceasing hope, in prayer.

Reader 1. Lord comfort your people and clothe us with your strength

All: Comfort your people, God of power and compassion

Reader 2 Calm our anxieties, soothe our anguish and lighten the darkness that surrounds us.

All: Comfort your people, God of power and compassion

Reader 1 Surround us with your love and anoint us with your peace

All: Comfort your people, God of power and compassion

Reader 2 Hear our voices and our hearts as we wait and watch together

All: Comfort your people, God of power and compassion

Reader 1: This is what the Lord asks of you, only this: to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8)

Leader: For the times we have failed to act justly

All: We ask for forgiveness and mercy

Leader: For the times we have failed to love tenderly

All: We ask for forgiveness and mercy

Leader: For the times we have failed to walk humbly with God

All: We ask for forgiveness and mercy

Leader: Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength

They will soar on wings like eagles: they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40: 28-31)

(Keep Watch with me CAFOD July 2000)

Hymn: Beauty for brokenness or some other hymn which speaks of God's broken world

Drama: On top of the world

One and Three enter. Three is carrying One on his/her back.

ONE: When the world was divided, I came first.

THREE: *When the world was divided, I came third.*

ONE: You are poor.

THREE: *I am poor.*

ONE: I am rich.

THREE: *You are rich.*

ONE: Naturally I want to help you.

THREE: *Naturally.*

ONE: I only want the best for you.

THREE: *Naturally.*

ONE: I will ensure that you are well clothed - not as well clothed as I am, naturally, but clothed.

Naturally, living in a hot climate, you won't need as many clothes as I do.

THREE: *Naturally.*

ONE: I will ensure that you are well fed - not as well as I am, naturally, but fed. Naturally living in a hot climate, you won't need as much food as I do.

THREE: Naturally.

ONE: You will have political independence. The freedom to choose. The freedom to run your own affairs. The freedom to spend your money as you wish.

THREE: *But I am poor.*

ONE: I only want the best for you. Naturally, I will give you some money...

THREE: *Give?*

ONE: ...if you sell me something.

THREE: *I don't have anything you want*

ONE: Then make or grow something.

THREE: *I don't have enough money to make or grow things you want.*

ONE: I only want the best for you. I will lend you money, then you will be able to produce products that I can buy.

THREE: *Thank you.*

ONE: Naturally, I shall expect you to pay back the money I lent you at an appropriate rate of interest.

THREE: *Naturally. A question...*

ONE: Yes?

THREE: *In order to pay back the money I owe you, I need to sell you what I make?*

ONE: Yes.

THREE: *So who decides the rate of interest on the money I owe you?*

ONE: I do. Naturally.

THREE: *So you decide how much money I get from you, and how much I give to you?*

ONE: Naturally, you have the freedom to run your own affairs. The freedom to spend your money as you wish.

THREE: *Just one more thing. Will you get off my back?*

ONE: Because I only want the best for you.

THREE: *If you won't get off my back, why don't I just throw you off my back?*

ONE: You need me.

THREE: *What for?*

ONE: To buy the products you produce, and to lend you money when you need it.

THREE: *When do I need it?*

ONE: You need it now.

THREE: *Why?*

ONE: You need me to lend you money now, to pay the interest on the money I lent you before.

THREE: *Why don't you pay more for the products I produce, to help me pay back the money I owe you?*

ONE: Because I only want the best for you.

THREE: *Naturally.*

ONE: I will do anything for you.

THREE: *Except get off my back.*

ONE: Naturally.

(Breaking the Chains ©John Bishton, 1998)

Bible Reading: A new creation Isaiah 65: 17-23

Hymn: For the healing of the nations or some other hymn that calls for justice in God's world

Images in Isaiah

No more the sound of weeping be heard or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it

- an infant that lives but a few days - HIV/AIDS, dirty water, lack of health facilities, lack of health education, malaria, cholera
- or an old person who does not live out a lifetime- HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, malaria, tuberculosis
- They shall build houses and inhabit them - but built of permanent materials to stand up against floods, hurricanes
- They shall plant vineyards and eat their own fruit - migrant labour, land taken over for dams, mining, factories, which only impact the rich 1/3 countries
- They shall not plant and another eat - cash crops, coffee, tea, cashew nuts, cotton, tropical fruits, spices and herbs for the 1/3 world
- they shall not labour in vain - free trade, fair trade, cash crops
- or bear children for calamity - lack of education, HIV/AIDS

For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the works of their hands

For they shall be blessed by offspring blessed by the Lord and their descendants as well - debt relief, fair trade, HIV/AIDS vaccines and anti retroviral drugs

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth, the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind

Debt relief brings new possibilities, new hope, new chances, new life

Creed:

We believe life is more precious than gold

We believe people are more important than profits

We believe it is our duty to work for justice

We believe slavery is wrong

We believe the world's poorest people who are enslaved by unpayable debts should be freed

We believe it is our duty to work for liberation

We believe children should not inherit the debts of their parents

We believe people born in chains, struggling to pay debts they never incurred should be set free

We believe it is our duty to work for liberation

We believe all people are equal

We believe nobody has the right to grow wealthy by making others poor

We believe it is our duty to work for justice

(Mark Topping)

Hymn: The right hand of God is writing in our land or some other hymn which speaks out for justice

Bible readings: Paying off debts and cancelling debts Mt 18: 21-35

The day of Favour Luke 4: 16-21

The Prayer Jesus gave to his disciples Mt 6: 9-13

The Lord's Prayer

Our father who art in heaven-

defender of the widow and orphan,

come to the aid of so many trapped in debts that cannot ever be paid

Hallowed be your name-

reveal your loving presence to us

as we seek to stand alongside the many who have nothing to call their own

Your kingdom come-

prevent us from denying the promise of your Kingdom

by resigning ourselves to the inevitability of poverty that is created by the debts of whole nations

Your will be done-

awake in us a hunger and thirst for justice, and put within us the political will to end the scandal of a financial system which enslaves through debt

On earth as it is in heaven-

remind us daily that we work for your reign on earth

where it is in our power to change the unfair way our economic institutions work

Give us today our daily bread-

give us that sense of urgency to struggle for justice

as intense as that felt by those for whom each day is about hoping 'just to Survive

Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors-

forgive us our acceptance of a system of credit and debt which gives most to those who need least and forgive, too, our complicity in an economy which uses land, property and resources to profit

rather than meet human need

And lead us not into temptation

help us not to give in to despair or be defeated by setbacks, and defend the poor of deeply indebted countries against feeling utterly abandoned and broken in spirit

But deliver us from evil

deliver us from the evil working of the world economy that puts debt repayment further and further away from the poorest nations; and from the evil within us that prevents us taking responsibility for the tragedy of the debt-loaded nations. Amen

Rt Revd Peter Hall (permission given)

Good News Stories of your choice or use the suggestions given in additional material at the end of this section

Prayers of Intercession

We gather to offer our prayers for strength to continue in the struggle.

We pray for all those involved in the Jubilee Debt Group that they may continue to campaign, question and encourage us all to work for an end to debt.

(A rainbow scarf is placed on the communion table)

God in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for those involved in economic research and provide the background information and statistics needed for us to be informed about the campaign.

(A laptop computer is placed on the communion table)

God in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for the millions of people who depend on us to break the chains of debt, in order to have fulfilled lives.

(Broken links of chains are placed on the communion table)

God in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for the leaders of indebted countries, that they may have the wisdom and strength to do what is right for their countries.

(A globe is placed on the communion table)

God in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for your church, that it may remain true to the teachings of God's word and be stimulated in its action.

(A cross is placed on the communion table)

God in your mercy

Hear our prayer

We pray for ourselves, that our actions, however small, may impact on the establishment of justice in God's world.

(A Debt T shirt is placed on the communion table)

God in your mercy

Hear our prayer

(Janice M Clark permission given)

Offering and notices

Commitment

Leader What shall we call you?

left Shall we collect together all the words that praise you

right Shall we give you all the names of this world, you the Un-nameable

left Shall we call you

"God of my life"

right "Hallowing my acts"
 "Meaning of my existence?"
 Shall we call you
 "Our journey's end"
 "Home of our loneliness"
 "Bitterness of our bitter hours?"

left Shall we call you
 "Creator"
 "Sustainer"
 "Pardoner?"

right "Near one"
 "Distant one"
 "Incomprehensible One?"

left "God of both flowers and stars"
 "God of gentle wind and of terrible battles?"

right "Wisdom"
 "Power"
 "Loyalty and truthfulness?"

Leader Yes, we call you all of these things...
 and more...we call you Love.

left right For though our stirring speeches speed around the world on television and the web
 ...if the hungry of the world still starve...

left right Though our engines roar ever faster over continent and island...
 ... if the naked are not clothed...

left right Though we plumb the depths of the sea and walk on the surface of the moon
 ...if the coloured go unrepresented

left right Though we solve all our problems so that even our computers break down under the
 weight of our answers
 ...if the sick go unattended...

left right Though our standard of living rises and our taxes fall...
 ...if the infected of the third world cannot afford life saving drugs

Leader ...though we have faith strong enough to move mountains but have not love, we are nothing.

left And so we affirm our desire to grow by increasing harmony amongst all people
 all races together, rich and poor together

right We affirm our desire to grow in working together for justice and peace in all the world

left We affirm our desire to grow in caring for the weak and the unprotected
 the hungry and the sick

right We affirm our desire to grow in love and respect for our community, every community, God's
 world

Leader For we call you Love!
*(From Stigma and Discrimination a Celebration of Life! World AIDS Day, Southwark Cathedral 2003
 permission given)*

Hymn: God forgive a sinful nation or a hymn of commitment

1. God forgive a sinful nation,
human justice not yet ours:
people face discrimination
by the strength of all our powers
More imprisoned, more degraded,
more deported from our shores
2. There is need for deep repentance.
History tells a sorry tale.
We look back with pained
remembrance
plundering on so great a scale
Grave oppression, exploitation
built our wealth, but left us frail
3. Hence we need to work together
Black and white in God-sent task
Joining in the common struggle,
beating failures of the past,
following prophets and disciples
and to God still holding fast
4. So we take the struggle forward
prayer and worship set the tone
Centre of the celebration -
God who us the way has shown
'till among the race of humans
justice shall be fully shown.
(D Haslam with permission tune
Rhuddlan)

Final Prayer

Congregation say:

God give us the spirit of courage, that we may have the strength to fight injustice.

Give us the spirit of challenge, that we may not accept the status quo without question. Give us the spirit of compassion, that we may see the world from other people's viewpoint.

We ask for the spirit of gentleness, that we may listen to the voice of the poor without trampling on their dreams in our rush to action.

God give us your Spirit, the spirit of truth, justice and hope that we may rest and work in the vision of a new future, where all are linked by the bonds of humanity not enslaved by the chains of debt.

(CAFOD Debt Prayer)

Additional Material

Bidding Prayers for Catholic Liturgy

Written by White Fathers of Algeria specially for World Debt Day 2004

Response : *Lord of Justice and of Peace, hear our prayer.*

1. The Church has the right and the duty to play a full part in the creation of a just society, using all the means at our disposition and in union with other believers. We pray that we, as disciples of Jesus, may know how to commit ourselves, at all levels and through concrete action, to the changing of unjust structures which imprison people in permanent oppression.
2. Let us pray for rulers and heads of governments and of all international organizations, that they might strive ever more for a worldwide solidarity which assures the dignity due to people and peoples, attacking the very roots of injustice and suffering; and that they might implement effective measures to lighten the crushing debt of poorer nations.
3. For poor countries suffering from widespread corruption, often caused by exterior interests but exacerbated by dishonest politicians; we pray that through a renewal of conscience they might achieve a harmonious and transparent management of their affairs.
4. We pray, too, for rich countries. May they be more aware of their duty to support the efforts of poorer neighbours to escape from poverty and misery; this is the only way to ensure the conditions necessary for a stable peace and a lasting spirit of harmony.
5. We pray for all those who struggle today for a just and truly human standard of life for everyone. May the Lord help them in their commitment, and may they never be discouraged by the difficulties they face.

Intentions de Prière

Réf. *Seigneur de justice et de paix écoute nos prières !*

1. L'ÉGLISE a le droit et le devoir de participer pleinement à l'édification d'une société juste avec les moyens qui sont à sa disposition et en collaboration avec les autres croyants. Comme disciple de Jésus, qu'elle sache s'engager par des actes concrets et à tous les niveaux dans la voie de changement des structures injustes qui enchaînent et maintiennent les personnes dans l'oppression.
2. Prions pour les chefs d'états et de gouvernements pour toutes les instances internationales afin qu'ils oeuvrent davantage pour une solidarité internationale qui tienne compte de la dignité des personnes et des peuples en s'attaquant à la racine des injustices et des souffrances. Qu'ils prennent aussi des mesures efficaces pour alléger les dettes écrasantes des pays pauvres.
3. Pour les pays pauvres, soumis à une corruption générale provoquée souvent par des intérêts extérieurs mais relayés par des hommes politiques véreux, prions afin que dans un sursaut de consciences ils puissent arriver à une gestion solidaire et transparente.
4. Prions pour les pays riches, qu'ils prennent davantage conscience qu'ils ont la responsabilité de soutenir les efforts des pays qui luttent pour sortir de la pauvreté et de leur misère, ce qui est la condition pour assurer à l'humanité une paix et une harmonie durable.
5. Prions pour tous ceux qui luttent aujourd'hui pour que chaque personne puisse avoir une condition de vie humaine et juste. Que le Seigneur les soutienne dans leur engagement. Et qu'ils ne se découragent pas devant les difficultés.

Hymn Suggestions for 16 May World Debt Day Worship

Title	Source
Almighty Father, who for us the Son didst send	Methodist Hymns and Psalms (MHP)401 Global Praise 9 (General Board of Global Ministries)
Almighty God, we come to make confession	Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New 27 (CAHON)
Beauty for brokenness	CAHON 60
Bring many names	Voices United (United Church of Canada) 268
Brother, sister let me serve you	CAHON 88
Christ is alive let Christians sing	CAHON 96 MHP United Methodist Hymnal 318 Voices United 158
Come to be our hope, Lord Jesus	World Praise 159
Facing a task unfinished	Declare His Glory 40 Keswick Praise 230 Songs of Fellowship 88 Mission Praise 126 (346)
For the fruits of his creation	CAHON 185 MHP 342 Mission Praise 153 United Methodist Hymnal 97 Common Ground 34 Voices United 227
For the healing of the nations	CAHON 186 MHP 402 United Methodist Hymnal 428 Voices United 678
Go forth and tell, O Church of God awake	CAHON 238 MHP 770 United Methodist Hymnal 670
Gracious God, in adoration	CAHON 244
If you believe and I believe	Common Ground 62 Fill us with your love
Inspired by love and anger	CAHON 325 Common Ground 63 Wild Goose "Heaven shall not wait"
I, the lord of sea and sky,	Greenbelt Dance on Injustice 9 Mission Praise 275 (85) Common Ground 50
I will speak out	Songs of Fellowship 280
Jesus calls us here to meet him	CAHON 346 Common Ground 66 Wild Goose "Enemy of Apathy"

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult	Common Ground 66 Hymns for Today's Church 104 Keswick Praise 159 MHP 141 The Baptist Hymn Book 416
Jesus Christ is waiting	CAHON 349 Wild Goose Songs Volume 2 " Love from below"
Jesu, Jesu fill us with your love	Common Ground 62 MHP 145 United Methodist Hymnal 432 Voice United 593
Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun	Hymns for Today's Church 516 CH3 413 Keswick Praise 234 Songs of Fellowship 301 The Baptist Hymn Book 184 MHP 239 Mission Praise 379(123)
Leap, leap my soul, Leap, leap my soul	Fill us with your love 30
Lord have mercy on this nation	Spring Harvest 67
Lord your church on earth is seeking	Hymns for Today's Church 511 MHP 774
Lord you give the great commission	United Methodist Hymnal 584 Voices United 512
Loved with an everlasting love	Mission Praise 452
Make me a channel of your peace	CAHON 437 Declare His Glory 76 Songs of God's People 76 Songs of Fellowship 381 MHP 776 Mission Praise 456 Voice United 684
Make way, make way	CAHON 438 Mission Praise 457
May the mind of Christ my Saviour	CH3 432 Declare His Glory 14 Hymns for Today's Church 550 Keswick Praise 172 MHP 739 The Baptist Hymn Book 596
O God by whose almighty plan	MHP 396
O Lord all the world belongs to you	CAHON 509
O Lord the clouds are gathering	Songs of Fellowship 429 Mission Praise 509(728)
One more step	MHP 746 Common Ground 100
Praise my soul the King of heaven	Hymns for Today's Church 38 CH3 360

	Keswick Praise 22 Songs of Fellowship 466 Mission Praise 560 (187) MHP 13
Praise with joy the world's creator	Voices United 312
Restore O Lord	Songs of Fellowship 483 Mission Praise 579(196)
Rise up, O men of God	Christian Hymns 477
Said Judas to Mary	Voices United 129
Take my life and let it be	Declare His Glory 96 CH3 462 Keswick Praise 184 The Baptist Hymn Book 527 Mission Praise 624(212) MHP 705 Songs of Fellowship 519 Hymns for Today's Church 554
The bread of Life	Wild Goose Songs Volume 2
The Church of Christ in every age	MHP 804 United Methodist Hymnal 589 Voices United 601
The kingdom of God is justice and joy	Hymns for Today's Church 333
There is a Redeemer	Songs of Fellowship 544 Mission Praise 673(590)
There's a spirit in the air	CAHON 661 Common Ground 130 MHP 326 United Methodist Hymnal 192 Voices United 582
The right hand of God	MHP 408
We have a dream	CAHON 715 Enlarged Songs of Praise
We cannot measure how you heal	Common Ground 138
We lay our broken world in sorrow	Common Ground 143
We turn to you O God of every nations	CAHON 725 MHP 412
What shall we pray	Common Ground 141
When our confidence is shaken	MHP 686 United Methodist Hymnal 505
Who can sound the depth of sorrow	Songs of Fellowship 604 Spring Harvest 129 Mission Praise 766(754)
Will you come and follow me?	CAHON 752 Voices United 567
Will you come and see the light of the stable	Voices United 96

Sermon Notes are available from [www. Tearfund org.uk](http://www.Tearfund.org.uk)

or upon request from Audrey Miller 0121 471 4175

jubileedebt@blueyonder.co.uk

Good News Stories

By Stephen Rand, Tearfund Prayer and Campaigns Director & Co-Chair of Jubilee Debt Campaign.

Five years ago 70-000 campaigners surrounded a meeting of G8 leaders in a vast human chain to proclaim jubilee over the international debt crisis. Was it more than a brave gesture? Has it really made a difference?

I could take you to meet people whose lives have been changed by the Jubilee debt campaign.

Bright Muhwezi is a pupil at Nyamiyaga Primary School – what a wonderful name for a student! The school sits on a hill about 2km from the nearest road. The school has over 400 pupils; numbers were reduced when winds and rains completely destroyed two classrooms and an office in 2001, forcing the school to close its P7 (final year class) and use the local church as classrooms for two other classes.

But in 2002, however, funding from resources released by debt relief meant that two classrooms were built and new desks made. But its remote location meant the school also had no water supply. Every day Bright and his fellow pupils were sent to collect water from a tap, if it was working; or from the open stream near the main road 2 km away. Pupils, therefore, missed out on classes and suffered from tiredness. But once again, debt relief funding enabled a 10,000 litre water tank to be installed at the school. The tank now provides enough water for the school - right on the premises.

Bright has safe water, a better-equipped school – and now debt relief has contributed to primary education and health care being made available free of charge to every child in Uganda. I was in 11 Downing Street when Gordon Brown introduced the Ugandan finance minister, and he promised that the debt relief Uganda would receive as a result of the initiatives taken by the Chancellor and his G7 colleagues would mean free primary education for all in Uganda – and he has delivered on that promise.

There is good news about what debt relief has already achieved – and not only in Uganda. Mozambique's free vaccination for all children has also been financed from debt relief funds. There are children alive today because of debt relief. . It was paying \$2 million per week in debt service and this has been reduced to \$1 million per week. The \$50 million per year that is saved has been routed directly into the budget as additional spending on health and education.

I could also take you to meet other people whose lives have been changed by the Jubilee campaign: some of the 70,000 people who went to Birmingham on May 16th 1998, to protest peacefully, joyfully, hopefully, positively.

I have lost count of those who have told me what a profoundly spiritual experience this was. It was a moment when they discovered that their voice counted. That together ordinary people could make a difference. One said to me 'It has taught me that a voice, even small, can be heard if I speak for and with the Lord's approval and that if I believe and act, mountains can be moved.'

Christians should not underestimate the significance of this. Last week I was taking part in a debate about whether the state of the world was getting worse. One speaker suggested that there was greater apathy in the church than ever before. Whether or not that is true, it is a reminder that people are longing to know that they can make a difference. Christians need to be helped to discover their role and purpose in the world, as well as in the church. I want to do all I can to encourage people to share in the spiritual experience of those who took to the streets of Birmingham five years ago.

The fact that Christians were at the forefront of the Jubilee campaign has also made its mark on politicians. They now readily acknowledge the significance of the church in action – both in raising its voice for justice here, and in working for change through relief, development and advocacy work for poor people and communities around the world.

Guyana: improving health, education and infrastructure

Guyana first received debt service reduction under the original HIPC in 1999 and again under enhanced HIPC last year, resulting in a cut of \$60 million a year, leaving annual repayments of \$41 million. Guyana is using the bulk of this to help fund its national development plan for 2000 - 2005. Debt relief will provide \$132 million of the total \$220 million needed over three years.

Examples of increased spending are:

- \$15.4 million for improving access to healthcare for the poor across the country, by decentralizing healthcare provision, upgrading all regional health centres, and focusing particularly on rural health posts
- \$2.1 million for regular MMR immunization and malaria containment programs.
- \$2.3 million to be spent on a health education program to lower HIV, other STD's, malaria and other infectious diseases, and \$1.3 million to create a specialized national HIV/AIDS care centre
- \$15.9 million for infrastructure maintenance, text books and other teaching materials
- \$5.4 million for teacher training to reduce the student / teacher ratio from 40:1 now to 27:1 by 2004
- \$15 million for rebuilding 75 nurseries, 85 primary schools and 56 secondary schools
- \$12.2 million to renovate and maintain irrigation systems thus improving farmland productivity
- \$8.5 million to be spent on drilling 100 rural wells and installing 400 water pumps
- \$2 million to be spent on rehabilitating city sewerage systems
- \$9.2 million to be spent on improvements to local feeder and market roads
- \$2.9 million to improve airstrips in the remote rainforest hinterland
- \$3.6 million to be spent on securing land rights for all people, to allow them to use their property as collateral when applying for micro credit.
- \$3.7 million to be spent on developing industrial parks.
- \$4.1 million to be spent on specific vocational training
- \$1 million to be spent on the creation of a national "ecotourism" board, and advertising overseas.

Source: Guyana interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, August 2000

SECTION TWO

REFLECTIONS FROM WORLD FAITHS

Bahai

O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, confer life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind .

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace. Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together. O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence. Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind
(Abdu'l-Bahá)

Buddhists

"Since the welfare system was installed in the United States, that nation has produced the greatest wealth ever produced by any nation in history, including inventions in principle capable of infinite productivity; and this in the midst of a series of disastrous wars, with their aftermaths wherein the nation gave enormous treasure to rebuild the nations it had defeated. Now, the rulers of America confusedly think that their gifts to the people, the real source of their optimism, the energy of real productivity, are exhausting them, and so they want to take it all away. In this confused effort to clutch onto what they see as scarce and shrinking wealth, they will destroy the source of that wealth, the love and optimistic confidence and creativity of the people. Fortunately, this will result in a rapid disaster for all, so the error will soon come to light, and Prince Vessantara will return in triumph from his banishment. Hoarding creates poverty. Giving away creates wealth. Imagination of scarcity is thus the cause of loss. Imagination of abundance creates endless wealth. It is terrible or wonderful, depending on one's tolerance, that life must always be so subtle, so paradoxical, and complex."

R Thunann explains Nagarjuna's guidelines to rulers. Within the Buddha's teaching, Nagarjuna makes explicit the principles that a culture of generosity helps to promote wealth, and a culture of greed and meanness has the effect of creating poverty. It is not just "virtuous" in Buddhism to be generous, it has a real and practical outcome: we will all be better off. Likewise, it is not only unvirtuous to be stingy and penny-pinching, it makes us all actually much worse off. In the case of the First World countries continuing to thrive on the starvation of others, this is theft, and cannot be justified by any argument. However, in a spirit of enlightened self-interest, the wealthy countries of the world should look after their own future wealth by being generous with it.

(Naguna's Guidelines for Buddhist Social Action by Robert A.F. Thurman. In 'Engaged Buddhist Reader' Ed By Arnold Kotler. Parallax Press 1996)

Hindu

O Lord of the universe, Supreme Soul, Dispeller of sorrow, hail to Thee. May Thy rule of righteousness be established everywhere for it is Thou who banisheth in an instant the agonies of thy devotees. May Thy kingdom of virtue reign supreme.

Thou art the Friend of the helpless and the Dispeller of suffering. Thou art my Saviour. Extend Thy hand of mercy. I seek Thy refuge.

Destroy our base desires and wipe out our sins. Increase our faith and devotion. May we serve Thee and Thy devotees!

(This is an extract from Arti. Arti is the singing of prayers to calling by the devotee to reach God. The devotee sings the hymn of the attributes of God and prays for the destruction of his own faults.)

Jewish

At the end of every seven Years thou shalt make a release.

And this is the manner of the release: every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it. He shall not exact it of his neighbour or of his brother because it is called the Lord's release.

If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need. In that which he wanteth thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand to. (Deuteronomy 15: 1,2,7,8,10)

Muslim

One of the basic duties of Islam is Zakah (welfare distribution). The Arabic word Zakah means to purify. It is to be paid once a year on savings at the rate of two and a half percent. Payment of Zakah is a means of keeping our wealth clear of greed and selfishness. It is a compulsory payment and is neither charity nor a tax. Zakah has to be spent under fixed headings like helping the poor, the needy, to free captives and debtors, to win over hearts and for the cause of Allah. Zakah provides us with the opportunity of sharing our excess wealth with those less fortunate than ourselves. Zakah is one of the basic principles of Islamic economy based on social welfare and fair distribution of wealth.

Our prophet Hazrat Mohammad (Pbuh) used to pray often for the ease and removal of the debts. In the day of judgement we should face the consequences for not clearing debts in case we owe to someone. It is said that debtors should be given the opportunity and time to repay the debt. Even then if the debtors do not repay it and they are forgiven then the lenders will be rewarded very much by Allah.

Sikh

Our Lord and Master is the Power of the powerless. He does not come or go. He is Eternal and Permanent. Through the Word of the Guru's Shabad, He is known as True. If you are weakened by the pains of hunger and poverty...and no one will satisfy your hopes and desires... if you then come to remember the Supreme Lord God, you shall obtain the eternal kingdom.

(Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Sri Raag, 70, Sri Guru Granth Sahib)

Zoroastrian

Through all These
with good mind and through righteous paths, by acts and words of wisdom,
We move towards thee, O Ahura Mazda!
We bow to thee and are indebted to thee.
Through all pure thoughts as well as words, through all pure deeds,
We approach our Lord
We see Thou art clothed in the best of all corporeal lights, and
I, the loftiest of all the light, which is called the Sun.

(Further contributions to this section are welcome. Please send to Audrey Miller
jubileedebt@blueyounder.co.uk)

HEBREW SCRIPTURE REFERENCES WITH COMMENTS

God's people are instructed to dismantle, on a regular basis, the fundamental patterns and structures of stratified wealth and power, so that there is "enough for everyone." This socio-economic vision is articulated in a variety of ways through

Exodus storytelling (Exodus 16), Levitical legislation (Leviticus 25), Deuteronomic exhortation (Deuteronomy 15), prophetic pronouncement (Isaiah 5)

Alternative economic practice

1. every family is told to gather just enough bread for their needs (Exodus 16:16-18)
2. this bread should not be "stored up" (16:19-20)
3. "On the sixth day, when they distribute what they bring in, it will be twice as much....Six days you shall gather; but on the seventh, which is a Sabbath, there will be none" (Exodus 16:5, 26)

"You shall let the land rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat" (Exodus 23:10-11)

The Deuteronomist interprets the Sabbath year to include debt release (Deuteronomy 15:1-18).

The Sabbath year debt release intends to safeguard both social justice ("there will be no one in need among you") and sound fiscal policy ("creditor nations will not rule over you," Deuteronomy 15:4-6)

Anticipating the human tendency toward selfishness, the practical Deuteronomist specifically forbids people from tightening credit in the years immediately prior to the Sabbath remission (15:7-11).

The remission applies to debt slaves as well, not only freeing them but demanding that they be sent away with sufficient resources to make it on their own (15:12-17).

Whether or not the community will enjoy the blessing of the land is contingent on its fidelity of this Sabbath discipline, which Deuteronomy, like Exodus, grounds in the memory of being liberated from Egyptian slavery (Deuteronomy 15:15; see 5:15).

A comprehensive remission to take place every "Sabbath's Sabbath," or 49th-50th year (Leviticus 25).

The Jubilee (named after the jovel, a ram's horn that sounded to herald the remission) aimed to dismantle structures of social-economic inequality by:

- releasing each community member from debt (Leviticus 25:35-42);
- returning encumbered or forfeited land to its original owners (25:13, 25-28);
- freeing slaves (25:47-55).

The rationale for this unilateral restructuring of the community's assets was to remind Israel that the land belongs to God (25:23) and that they are an Exodus people who must never return to a system of slavery (25:42).

The Jubilee was perhaps already prefigured in the "Feast of Weeks" (Shavuot, later the feast of Pentecost), a celebration of the first fruits of the harvest (Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:15-25; Deuteronomy 16:9-12):

Feast of Weeks: "From the day after the Sabbath, from the day on which you bring the sheaf of the elevation offering, you shall count off seven weeks.... You shall count until the day after the seventh Sabbath, fifty days; then you shall present an offering of new grain to the Lord" (Leviticus 23:15-16).

Jubilee: "You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the period...gives forty-nine years; and you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants" (Leviticus 25:8, 10).

This suggests that "Sabbath economics" applied at each harvest, not just every other generation.

Amos accused the commercial classes of regarding *shabat* (*Sabbath*) as an obstacle to market profiteering, and of treating the poor as an exploitable class rather than guaranteeing their gleaning rights (Amos 8:5-6; see Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 19:9-10; Micah 7:1).

Hosea laments that fidelity to international markets had replaced Israel's allegiance to God's economy of grace (Hosea 2:5).

Positive evidence that the Sabbath vision was practised. Jeremiah blasts King Zedekiah when he reneges on his declaration of Jubilee manumission (Jeremiah 34:13-16). Naboth resists King Ahab's attempt to assert eminent domain by invoking his traditional "ancestral rights" to the land (1 Kings 21). And the reformer Nehemiah resurrects the Levitical prohibition of interest (Nehemiah 5:6-13) as well as the Sabbath strictures on commercial production, transaction, and finance (10:31).

The prophet Isaiah railed against economic stratification by which wealthy creditors "add house to house and field to field, until there is room for no one but you" (Isaiah 5:8). He saw it as a betrayal of Israel's vocation to be "God's pleasant planting; God expected justice, but saw bloodshed" (Isaiah 5:7).

True fasting and treatment of the poor: Isaiah 58: 6-12

(Thanks to "God Speed the Year of Jubilee! "The biblical vision of Sabbath economics" *Ched Myers Sojourners Magazine May-June 1998*)

Quotes from the Holy Qu'ran
and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him)

1. "He who sleeps on a full stomach whilst his neighbour goes hungry is not one of us."
(Prophet Muhammad)
2. "A believer wants for his brother what he wants for himself."
(Prophet Muhammad)
3. "O People, regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds."
(The last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad)
4. "All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action."
(The last Sermon of Prophet Muhammad)
5. "Verily God will not change the condition of men, till they change what is in themselves "
(The holy Qur'an -13:12)
6. "Surely Allah enjoins justice and kindness, and giving to kindred and forbids shameful and indecent deeds and rebellion. He exhorts you in order that you take heed."
(The Holy Qu'ran - 16:90)
7. "Allah hath blighted usury and made almsgiving fruitful".
(The Holy Qu'ran - 2:275)
8. "The earth is green and sweet and verily Allah has installed you as trustees in it to see how you act"
(Prophet Muhammad - Muslim)
9. "Those who squander and waste are the brothers of the shaytan."
(The Holy Qu'ran 17:27)
10. "Whoever of you see a wrong, he should change it with his hand; and if he cannot do that (he should change it) with his tongue; and if he cannot do that (he should change it) with his heart and that is the weakest of faith."

11. "O children of Adam: Eat and drink but do not waste by excess, for Allah does not love the wasters."
(The Holy Qu'ran 7:31)
12. "If any one plants a tree or sows a field and men, beasts, or birds eat from it, he should consider it as a charity on his part."
(Prophet Muhammad - Imam Ahmad)
13. "Live in this world as if you were going to live forever; prepare for the next world as if you were going to die tomorrow."
(Prophet Muhammad - Bukhari)
14. "A true believer is one who does not hurt others with his thoughts, words or actions."
(Prophet Muhammad - Bukhari)
15. "He who brings happiness to a Muslim household, Allah will not see for him a reward less than Jannah (Paradise)".
(Prophet Muhammad)
16. "Even a smile is charity"
(Prophet Muhammad)
17. "The best of you is he (or she) who is of most benefit to others."
(Prophet Muhammad)
18. "Pay Zakat out of your property, for truly it is a purifier which purifies you, and be kind to your relatives, and acknowledge the rights of the poor, neighbours and beggars."
(Prophet Muhammad)