

DEVELOPMENT MATTERS!
GLOBAL ISSUES LINKED TO THE LECTIONARY
July, August & September 2007

Dear Colleague,

Welcome to another bulletin of Development Matters, a resource for preachers which links the principal Sunday lectionary readings with contemporary global issues.

Many of the readings this quarter are explicitly about money and its power. Time and again there are challenges about our values, our choices and the control of wealth. Overall, the passages question how we acquire money, how we use it, how we 'see' it, its power to enthrall and whether it is in truth our god. Whilst we might be used to thinking about these issues from a personal perspective and at an individual level, perhaps during this quarter we can consider them from a global perspective and at a corporate level, letting them challenge us about our world with its great imbalances in wealth.

This edition of Development Matters focuses particularly on the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) - a blueprint to reduce global poverty by 2015. They were agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions in 1999. The goals are listed on the insert along with a set of beatitudes based on the MDGs written by Bishop Christopher Gregorowski of Cape Town.

'Blow the Whistle' is a new campaign which asks whether, at half-time, we are on target for achieving the goals. It has been launched by Micah Challenge (see point 3) who say, *'2007 marks the half-way point and it's time to Blow the Whistle to ensure, firstly, that our Government and others the world over honour their promises, and, secondly, that the UK Government actively encourages other global leaders to affect change in their own countries. In the UK, the Blow the Whistle campaign will focus on five key areas - AIDS treatment, water and sanitation, climate chaos, trade justice and primary education - as it calls on our Government and the international community to look at the half-time scores so that extreme poverty and hunger for the world's poor really are halved by 2015.'*

The MDGs were also the focus of a conference of the Anglican communion held in **Boksburg, South Africa in March. The Towards Effective Anglican Mission (TEAM) conference**, was held to provide the churches and provinces of the Anglican Communion with "a shared vision and a shared energy" for the tasks outlined in the Millennium Development Goals. Archbishop Rowan Williams, who chaired the meeting, said the purpose was to, 'ask questions like: what are the resources that the Anglican Churches worldwide can bring to bear on these challenges; how do we better coordinate the provision of the help we can offer; how do we build effective relationships with government and voluntary organizations worldwide; and how do we keep our motivation in combating the scourge of poverty and disease sharp and focused?' Space in this bulletin only allows for one quote from the conference (point 11) – but visit the TEAM website, www.team2007.org, for some inspiring reading.

Elizabeth Perry
01935 850849

DATE	READINGS	THEMES AND IDEAS IN THE TEXT	CONTEMPORARY PARALLELS, COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS
July 1st	1 Kings 19.5-16,19-21 Psalm 16 Galatians 5.1,13-25 Luke 9.51-62	Dejected and exhausted, Elijah's most basic needs for food and water are met first. Then comes a gentle whisper and later a companion. Choosing whom we serve and what we offer. 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. 'If you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another'. Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem and all that will entail. Would-be followers are asked to count the cost while over-zealous disciples completely lose the plot.	The choices of faith are seen to be life-changing and profoundly practical. At the heart of the gospel is salvation - Jesus does not come to destroy life but to save it. The practical outworking of this is 'you shall love your neighbour as yourself'. Paul is also aware that harm can rebound on the perpetrator. In our world of need and insecurity, how can we love our global neighbour? Can we afford not to? See especially insert, 8 and 11.
July 8 th	Isaiah 66.10-14 Psalm 66.1-9 Galatians 6.[1-6]7-16 Luke 10.1-11,16-20	A breast-feeding mother dandling and comforting her child is the image of God's nurturing love and vision for Jerusalem. <i>Come and see what God has done...whose eyes keep watch on the nations.</i> <i>Bear one another's burdens.</i> Responsibility. <i>You reap whatever you sow. Do not grow weary of doing what is right. Let us work for the good of all.</i> Vulnerable individuals carry the good news of the Kingdom into ordinary villages and homes.	In the gospel reading Jesus says the Kingdom is received in welcome and hospitality or rejected in their refusal. Place is also important in Isaiah's vision, the city being the source of both spiritual and physical nourishment. Thus the gospel is rooted in the world we know, and bearing burdens is spiritual work. In a world of need there is much to be done (1,6, 11)and we must not grow weary in doing right (3,4,7). But there is cause for hope too (see 5 and 10).
July 15 th	Deuteronomy 30.9-14 Psalm 25.1-10 Colossians 1.1-14 Luke 10.25-37	<i>The word is very near to you. It is not too hard for you.</i> <i>Teach me your paths.</i> Love springing from the hope of heaven. <i>Lead lives worthy of the Lord.</i> Jesus' outrageous story of the reviled outsider who did what the orthodox would not - who had compassion and met a stranger's need, who saw shared humanity, not difference.	<i>You shall love your neighbour as yourself.</i> This is a profoundly challenging story in a world of need and division. How do we respond when confronted with situations such as seen in points 1,2,4,6-9? We may feel it is 'too hard for us'. But Jesus' story is in answer to a question about obtaining eternal life: our own future is bound up with that of our neighbour, perhaps above all at the global level. See 11 and insert.
July 22 nd	Genesis 18.1-10a Psalm 15 Colossians 1.15-28 Luke 10.38-42	Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to strangers is blessed. Authentic living. Honesty, respect and refusal to take advantage of another's weakness. Jesus, the reflection and dwelling place of God, bringer of reconciliation, whose body is now the church. Jesus includes those whom the world excludes, and longs to include those who -caught up in their own agendas - exclude themselves.	God's story unfolds through one-to-one encounters. Hospitality and the receiving of another are means of grace if we have the eyes to see it. How can we practise hospitality to our global neighbour? How do we understand the psalm's injunctions in the very different economic system of today? What do good news, reconciliation and peace - or even to be the body of Christ - mean in our context? See especially 3,11 and insert..
July 29 th	Genesis 18.20-32 Psalm 138 Colossians 2.6-15[16-19] Luke 11.1-13	Abraham appeals to God's justice. God's preferential option for the lowly. <i>Live your lives rooted and built up in Christ.</i> Your Kingdom come.	Forgiveness, sparing and compassion run through these passages - also the theme of persistence. The Lord's prayer focuses on the essentials of bread and the Kingdom and unequivocally links our forgiveness with how we treat our debtors. The practical outworking of Jesus' teaching is still to be realized. How can we build God's kingdom of justice today? See insert and 4-6.
Aug. 5 th	Ecclesiastes 1.2,12-14; 2.18-23 Psalm 49.1-12 Colossians 3.1-11 Luke 12.13-21	The despair of toiling for nothing or for another's gain. Wealth is ultimately no use to the rich. <i>In prosperity people lose their good sense</i> (JB). A new life, new perspective, new attitudes, new relationships and no divisions. Hoarding contrasted with being rich towards God.	Wealth is the principal theme of these passages - a challenge in today's world of huge disparities of wealth and power where many still toil in vain (see 1,2 and 9). But Christ offers another way where wealth is redefined, riches understood differently, where Christ is all, where relationship is of first importance and where what we have in common is more important than what separates (11(i) & insert.
Aug. 12 th	Genesis 15.1-6 Psalm 33.12-22 Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16 Luke 12.32-40	<i>He believed.</i> The Lord reveals a seemingly impossible future. <i>Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord.</i> Faith: the conviction of things not seen; the hope of a better future. <i>It is the Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.</i> Be ready for action, alert.	Living in the conviction of an unseen future where God's promises are fulfilled. Such confidence and hope are needed today when economic justice for the world's poor can seem an impossible dream (1,6). Do we have the determination to believe the future into being (11)? The MDGs give us a framework of hope and action (insert) and change is possible (4,7).

Aug. 19 th	Jeremiah 23.23-29 Psalm 82 Hebrews 11.29 - 12.2 Luke 12.49-56	<i>Speak my word faithfully.</i> God's word has the power to break stony ground, shatter hard places. A cry for God to judge in favour of the weak and needy and deliver them from the hand of the wicked. Faith, perseverance, trust - expressed by different people in different ways in different situations, but encouraging us to run <u>our</u> race. Jesus is frustrated at the crowd's inability to see what is really happening.	Jesus is unequivocal that he has come to set the world ablaze, not bring a bland peace. It will involve confrontation and conflict, reflecting Jeremiah's vision. The poor still need God's justice (1-3,6,9). Do we recognize what is going on in our world, see the signs of the times? Are we prepared for conflict in demanding justice? Do we have faith? See also 4,8,10,11.
Aug. 26 th	Isaiah 58.9b-14 Psalm 103.1-8 Hebrews 12.18-29 Luke 13.10-17	Our <u>own</u> well-being is bound up with <i>removing the yoke, offering food to the hungry and satisfying the needs of the afflicted.</i> <i>The Lord works justice for all who are oppressed.</i> <i>Do not reject God's grace.</i> We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Jesus breaks the rules, releases a woman from a crippling condition and irritates the orthodox.	Jesus demonstrates his mission to set people free, to bring restoration. The Kingdom is received/revealed in individual lives transformed. The authorities resist, putting orthodoxy and accepted practice before freedom, but are shamed by the crowd's jubilation. As then, so now: see 1,2,4. How does God work justice for all who are oppressed today? Will we take part in Jesus' mission and risk our own transformation? See also 3,5,11 and scales reflection on insert.
Sept. 2 nd	Proverbs 25.6-7 Psalm 112 Hebrews 13.1-8,15,16 Luke 14.1,7-14	We might turn out to be less exulted than we thought! Generosity, justice and a concern for the poor commended. Looking outwards, hospitality, empathy with those who suffer and sharing resources are sacrifices that please God. Jesus asks his followers to defy convention and invite the poor and marginalized to eat with them.	Feasting and hunger feature in these passages and God's practical concern for those who suffer and are in need. Global hunger and need are at appalling levels (see 1,6) and are neither accidental nor natural (2,4,8,9). How can we follow Jesus' instruction to invite such as these to a feast? We need justice as well as generosity. But people <u>are</u> trying, see 5,7,10.
Sept. 9 th	Deuteronomy 30.15-20 Psalm 1 Philemon 1-21 Luke 14.25-33	Choices: life/death, blessings/curses, God/idols. The righteous and wicked compared. A slave has become a son and is to be welcomed as a brother. Counting the cost of following Jesus.	Choices have consequences and our choice to follow God's Way is expected to be whole-hearted and have profound, life-affirming consequences. In the Jesus society, hierarchical domination systems are replaced with ties of kinship, but this is to be chosen, not imposed. How far do our own lives reflect these values? What choices do we face corporately in today's world? See esp. 1-3,11 and insert.
Sept. 16 th	Exodus 32.7-14 Psalm 51.1-11 1 Timothy 1.12-17 Luke 15.1-10	The Israelites attribute their deliverance to an idol of their own making. David's heartfelt acknowledgement of sin. <i>Even though I was formerly a man of violence ...I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief.</i> The Father's joy when one sinner repents and Jesus' enjoyment of their company.	Misunderstanding our own good fortune and the worship of idols are as prevalent as ever. Today, the rich world imposes policies on poor countries which are patently harmful (4) and which rich countries refuse to practise (9). We are also responsible for others' misfortune (8). We need to repent and know the Father's joy. See 3, 11 and insert.
Sept. 23 rd	Amos 8.4-7 Psalm 113 1 Timothy 2.1-7 Luke 16.1-13	The prophet thunders against those who cheat and exploit the poor through trade. Changed fortunes: God lifts up the needy from the ash heap. Pray for those in authority so those in their power can live peaceful, dignified lives. A shrewd manager acts expediently to reduce debt, losing his master income but winning him friends and a reputation for generosity.	These passages are as fresh today as when they were written. The poor are still cheated and exploited through unfair trade, on a massive scale (9). What clearer example of mammon's sway can there be than the pursuit of economic dogma at the expense of children's education? See 4. Jesus is adamant: money/wealth is a means, not an end. We must not let it rule. See reflection on scales on insert and 5.
Sept. 30 th	Amos 6.1a,4-7 Psalm 146 1 Timothy 6.6-19 Luke 16.19-31	The prophet speaks against those who look to their own pleasure but are not troubled by others' misfortune. Justice for the oppressed, food for the hungry. <i>Take hold of the life that really is life.</i> The rich man has had his chance - and missed it. Even in hell he can't shake off his superiority and expects Lazarus to serve him.	Once again these passages address wealth: its lure, its divisive power and its capacity to shape and define us. Jesus' criticism of the rich man is that he did not share his wealth, he did not do what he could when he could. This is a profoundly challenging passage to us who live in the world's fourth largest economy. Do we choose to ignore the poor or do what we can for justice? How can we <i>take hold of the life that really is life</i> ? Most points apply.

1. Two worlds.

Life expectancy. G8 countries:77; Africa:48.

Access to clean water. UK:100%; DR Congo: 45%.

Annual spend per person on health. Canada: \$2,534; Mali: \$1.

Number of people per doctor. Italy: 169; Malawi: 50,000.

People with HIV. Developed world: 1.5 million. Africa: 28 million.

Number of people who live on less than \$1 a day. G8 countries: 0. Africa: 291 million.

Deaths under 5 (per 1,000). G8: 6; Africa:174.

Number of African children under 5 who die each year:4,500,000.

Amount spent by G8 on subsidising Western farmers: \$311 billion. Amount spent by G8 on aid for Africa: \$13 billion.

Cost of universal education, halving poverty and cutting child deaths by three quarters: \$25 billion.

Source: The Independent, 31/5/03 (nb excluding debt relief and emergency food aid, assistance to sub-Saharan African fell by 2.1 % in real terms from 2004 to 2005 and fell again the following year).

2. The cost of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other Global War on Terror operations since 9/11. The US Congress has so far approved a total of about \$510 billion for military operations, base security, reconstruction, foreign aid, embassy costs, and veterans' health care for the three operations initiated since the 9/11 attacks. About 90% of these funds are for the Department Of Defence, about 7% for foreign aid programs and embassy operations, less than 1% for medical care for veterans, and 1% unallocated.

Source: Open CRS - Congressional Research reports for the people, March 14, 2007 <http://openrcrs.cdt.org/>

3. Micah Challenge (see www.micahchallenge.org.uk)

Building on the momentum of the Make Poverty History campaign, Micah Challenge is calling on the Government to keep its promises to the poor, and on the church to stand in solidarity with the poor. Micah Challenge UK is a coalition of Christian organisations and churches in Britain, united in their concern to fight global poverty. It is part of the international Micah Challenge movement of churches and Christian agencies uniting to hold their governments to account for the promises they made towards the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 (see insert). Around the world Micah Challenge seeks to ignite and fuel a global movement of Christians from the South and the North - Christians who are united in seeking dramatic reductions in poverty, and in speaking out against its injustices with a single, formidable voice. Already, 32 countries have united behind the Micah Challenge and 13 more countries are due to launch their own national campaigns in the course of 2007.

The challenge at the heart of the movement is Micah 6:8. "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah Challenge calls us to ensure justice is done, to embrace mercy in our hearts, to be obedient to our Lord. Micah Challenge seeks transformational change in society, through the active involvement of the church with the poor and against the injustices of poverty. It seeks to sensitise and engage Christians into greater political and practical involvement with the issues relating to poverty by highlighting biblical truths which prompt a compassion of heart. It will also enable Christians to pray, take action, speak out and engage with the issues surrounding poverty, here in the UK as well as overseas.

Millennium Development Goal 2: achieve universal primary education

4. Debt and education. The ongoing debt crisis in poor countries has a severe impact on access to education.

Today, 80 million children never go to school. Hundreds of millions of children are crammed into huge classes without enough teachers, books or facilities. Closing the appalling education gap will require an extra 1.9 million teachers, and cost up to \$17 billion each year. But it is made very hard for developing country governments to invest in public education when their countries are drained of resources by the need to service debts, and when conditions to qualify for debt relief undermine their efforts.

Many African countries invested in free public education after independence in the 1960s. But the ballooning cost of servicing historic debts meant that the money available for basic needs like education dried up.

In 2005, debt payments cost the poorest 59 countries over \$40 billion, more than twice the extra resources needed to put every child through school. Many countries are still spending far more on debt than on education, often whilst being told by the rich world that their debts are affordable.

Not only are debts a drain on resources. They also lead to the imposition of conditions by creditors:

In the 1970s and 1980s, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) told many countries to reduce investment in education and introduce school fees, meaning that quality, and the numbers of children in school, fell. The rich world has finally stopped telling poor countries to charge fees but many harmful conditions remain, such as enforced cuts in public spending, and limits on wages for teachers, doctors and other public servants. For instance, in 2004, the IMF told Zambia to freeze public sector wages, meaning Zambia could not afford to recruit 9,000 newly qualified teachers, despite a massive shortage. Intense lobbying by education campaigners won a slight relaxation of the condition. But the IMF still imposes a tight cap on public sector wages, making it extremely difficult to recruit or retain teachers. Meanwhile, one third of Zambian children do not attend primary school, and four out of ten women cannot read or write.

Teacher shortages are particularly bad in some debt-burdened countries. For instance, in the Republic of Congo, which pays around \$600 million a year on debts to the rich world, there is one teacher to every 140 children.

School fees keep many children – especially girls – out of school. A recent survey of 103 countries found that 89 required some kind of charge for school. An example is Chad, which is still waiting for debt cancellation. In 2006, it paid \$66 million in debt service. Meanwhile, only one third of girls attend primary school.

Where debts have been cancelled, it has generally been great news for the education sector. Repeated studies have shown that social spending increases after debt cancellation, particularly spending on education: not least because of citizens' pressure for the proceeds of debt relief to be invested in this way.

Ghana recently used debt relief money to abolish primary school fees: enrolment increased by 16% in one year.

Malawi has used debt relief to train nearly 4,000 new teachers each year. Benin has used it to recruit teachers for vacant posts in rural areas, and Mali to pay 5,000 community teachers.

'The question we need to ask the leaders is: do they really need this money for their own countries? Or can't the lender countries survive without the money from debt servicing? If they can survive, why can't they just cancel the debts? This would allow many children to escape premature deaths that are caused by lack of access to information on health and HIV and AIDS that they would otherwise get if they went to school.' Chikondi Mpokosa, VSO International.

From 'Debt and Education', Jubilee Debt Campaign 2007, in association with Oxfam, Save the Children, VSO and World Vision.

5. Education brings equality

Reading, writing and arithmetic may not seem a priority in communities where immense poverty eats away at the very fabric of family life. But in Burundi, Malawi and Sudan these were exactly the skills which illiterate community members, especially the women, asked for, to enable them to be equipped to find long-term solutions to tackle the poverty in which they live.

In 2000 the Mothers' Union responded to the need and initiated their MU Literacy and Development Programme (MULD). Designed to use a holistic approach and do more than just make people literate, the programme uses participatory skills to enable community members, men and women, to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills whilst discussing and planning action on issues and challenges they face on a daily basis. In this way the whole community becomes engaged in: identifying problems and challenges, sharing local knowledge and expertise, planning local action and resolution of conflicts, participating in local HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives and setting up of income generating projects.

In all areas of community life, women are subordinate to men and this marginalisation of women is contributing to greater poverty levels. Women like Verdiane were deemed worthless by their husbands and other men and were not allowed to take part in income generating activities. But when she and her husband, Deo joined the Mothers' Union literacy circle near their Burundi home their lives were transformed. Deo discovered the talents and skills of all women, and valued Verdiane as a partner in their marriage. He learned to respect her, and with literacy training the couple are now running a successful small business, which has lifted them out of poverty and turned an unhappy situation into a happy one.

"I am so grateful to the literacy programme, and call upon all illiterate men and women to join it," says Verdiane, "it has improved very much my family life."

The MU Literacy Development Programme is helping communities to work together with confidence and newfound skills. Allowing dreams to turn into reality for thousands of learners in their villages, displacement camps and towns across the three countries. For only £22 the programme is able to help individuals or families, like Verdiane and Deo, in every aspect of their family life. Through its holistic approach, thousands of women are becoming empowered with new skills, living transformed lives and being raised out of poverty.

"Now we shall sensitise others about the improved status of women. Women can now express their ideas and know their rights. We can participate in development." Annonciata, Burundi

Millennium Development Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability, including reducing by half the people without access to clean drinking water.

6. A lack of clean water close to home robs people of time, health and opportunity. 443 million school days are lost each year to water-related disease. Households in rural Africa spend an average of 26% of their time fetching water.

The simple act of washing hands with soap and water can reduce diarrhoeal diseases by around 40%.

It would cost an extra US\$10 billion each year to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people without access to safe water and sanitation. This is about half the amount rich countries spend on bottled water every year.

From 'End Water poverty' an international campaign calling for sanitation and water for all. See www.endwaterpoverty.org.

7. Imagine you live in Malawi and have to walk for two hours every day in 40°C heat to get water from the Shire river. There are hippopotamus and crocodiles in the river, so the water is not very clean. Also, there aren't many places along the riverbank where the rushes are cleared to be able to reach the water to dip the bucket in, and often these places were used by crocodiles to sleep on. You arrive at the riverbank, and find that a crocodile is asleep in the sun. He might be asleep because he has just fed, but he might be asleep whilst waiting for a meal to come along.

What do you do: go home (2 hrs back, no water, children even thirstier) or creep round the crocodile? In 2004, 15 mothers were killed by crocodile attacks, just because that is where they have to go to get their water.

This used to be the reality facing the people of Kasinthule. But things have changed – thanks to fairtrade. The Kasinthula Cane Growers sell their sugar to the fair trade market and as a result of people in the UK buying fairtrade sugar, the Kasinthule farmers have been able to pay for a borehole to be installed in the village. Now it just takes a few minutes to fetch the water – freeing up spare time - and the water is clean, ready to drink from the tap, not needing to be filtered or boiled. The number of people suffering from water-borne diseases has gone down considerably. This is the kind of difference we can make when we switch to buying the fairtrade brand.

8. Flooded future looms for Bangladesh. If climate change pushes sea levels higher, people in coastal areas in low-lying countries like Bangladesh could be forced from their homes. As part of the BBC's Planet Under Pressure series, Roland Buerk visited a family living in the Ganges River delta.

Continues over...

"I have to work hard because of my misfortune," said Abdul Razzak. "There's lots of suffering here. Sometimes the tide is four or five feet high. Then I can't sleep because I have to stay standing up."

The villagers have built up platforms of mud for their straw huts to try to keep them out of the water. They have planted trees hoping the roots will bind the soil to stop it being washed away. But over the long term their efforts will almost certainly be in vain. Some estimate that the rise in sea level at the top end of the IPCC forecast is predicting will leave at least a fifth of Bangladesh under water. And it is not just coastal areas that are under threat. Bangladesh's rivers are expected to flood even more frequently.

"It's a flat, flat, flat country," said Dr Atik Rahman of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies who has investigated how climate change will affect the country. "The flow of water coming from the Himalayas - which is huge - depends on the differential of height. When the sea level is higher, the flow of that water will be restricted. So when you hear now of Bangladesh being a flood-prone country - it will be a much more flood-prone country in future." Dr Rahman adds that after sea levels rise, salt in the ground water will become a major problem, with fields up to 40km from the new coastline rendered useless for growing crops.

The irony is that Bangladeshis have contributed little to the pollution blamed for enhancing climate change, and which threatens to bring so much destruction to their country. Like most people here, Abdul Razzak's wife cooks on a wood-burning stove made out of clay. But apart from that, the family consumes little energy. They have no electricity and use candles for light. They get about by walking or in a boat powered by a single oar at the stern.

The people on Char Bangla are acutely aware that the "sins of the rich" could be visited on them.

"We are angry with the people who are doing this," said Abdul Razzak. "We are angry with the people building these factories that will make us sink into the sea."

"We have heard these kinds of things, the danger that is going to come. We are going to be washed away. But we are living by relying on Allah," said his wife Rabea Khatun.

"What can we do?," asked their neighbour Abdus Salaam Taluikdar. "We are angry but we're trying to get on with our lives. We can do nothing, but everyone is angry."

Dr Atik Rahman believes the richer countries have an obligation to help countries like Bangladesh which will suffer disproportionately from global warming.

"No contribution, highest impact - that makes it a huge case of moral inequality against which the global citizenry, the global nation states, must take action. If not we'll be calling it climatic genocide. That's where we're heading."

Some predict that in the future millions of people in low-lying countries like Bangladesh will be forced to migrate. But a movement of people on that scale will create its own international tensions. The world will have to learn to cope with refugees from climate change. Story from BBC NEWS (my emphasis).

9. Mamadou Niang is a rice grower from Senegal. He identifies three problems he faces – none of which are of his making:

- He no longer receives help from the government for inputs such as seed and fertiliser. The government was required to stop helping producers like Mamadou as a condition of **debt** relief.
- His rice is undercut by imported rice from the USA. The rules which apply to his government don't apply in rich countries where governments *are* allowed to subsidise their producers and exporters – allowing artificially cheap products to be dumped on poor country markets, increasing poverty there. So Mamadou's second problem is **trade** injustice.
- Mamadou finds it increasingly difficult to grow his crop. 'Each year the Sahel is getting closer' he says. Mamadou's third problem is **climate change**.

Millions of poor people around the world have to struggle with such poverty caused by economic policies and climate change.

10. In Burkina Faso, Ally Ouedraogo worked "with [his] bare hands until they bled" for over 20 years in an astonishing act of faith. He implemented techniques to regenerate his land which was previously unproductive sand and rock. It is now a veritable forest. Christian Aid partner Reseau Marp is working with Ally and a group of farmers in his community to advocate such techniques to others and to disseminate new information on improved types of seed and planting suitable for the harsh drought prone Sahel climate. Reseau Marp also designs equipment that can ease the labour involved in farming techniques that combat desertification.

11. The following two extracts are from Dr Steve de Gruchy's keynote address, 'A funeral and four weddings: theological engagement with poverty and sustainable development' at the TEAM conference at Boksburg, South Africa 7-14 March 2007.

i. The challenge is clear: we need to make poverty history. We have the resources, the skills, the organisational capacity, the vision, the passion. What we don't seem to have is much progress! There are still so many people in the world who go to bed hungry, children who die long before their time, adults who suffer from curable diseases, refugees who live in dehumanising conditions, and victims of war who lie helpless and hopeless. For us, as people of faith, the reality of this dehumanising poverty – in the midst of the unbelievable wealth of the world's rich people, companies, nations, and churches - stands as a judgement upon us: upon our belief in a loving God, upon our well-intentioned development programmes, upon our pious sermons and ecclesiastical resolutions, upon our failure to give bread and water to Christ who meets us in the poor person on the street, in the refugee camp, the shanty compound, the hospital ward, the remote village.

ii. As Al Gore has demonstrated, the earth crisis is an *Inconvenient Truth*. That is why the seventh MDG is "ensure environmental sustainability". Poverty is also an inconvenient truth. That is why the first MDG is "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger". What strikes me as strange is that no-one seems to be putting these two truths together – and making the obvious connection: the current economic system is not going to solve poverty. That is an *extremely* inconvenient truth. More than that, it is a dead end. It is the funeral referred to in the title of this talk. And if the church somehow thinks that it must hitch its wagon to this economic horse, I would think that it would signal a great loss of moral wisdom. It would be like trying to preach a wedding sermon at a funeral, and we should at least know the difference.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:** reduce by half the number of people living on less than \$1 (60p) a day and those who suffer from hunger.
2. **Achieve universal primary education.**
3. **Promote gender equality and empower women:** end gender disparity at all levels by 2015.
4. **Reduce child mortality by two thirds for children under five.**
5. **Improve maternal health:** reducing by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio.
6. **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases** halt and begin to reverse the spread of these.
7. **Ensure environmental sustainability** , including:
 - integrating environmental sustainability into developing country policies and programmes;
 - reversing the loss of environmental resources;
 - reducing by half the people without access to clean drinking water;
8. **Develop a global partnership for development** , including:
 - an open trading and financial system that is rule based and includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction;
 - addressing least developed countries' special needs including tariff and quota-free access for exports;
 - enhanced debt relief and cancellation of bilateral debt; national and international measures to make debt sustainable;
 - more generous development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction;
 - working with pharmaceutical companies to provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
 - make available the benefits of new technologies in cooperation with the private sector.

Achieving these goals would lift at least 500 million people out of poverty.

BEATITUDES FOR A GLOBALISED WORLD

'Irish musician Bono called the Millennium Development Goals "the beatitudes for a globalised world". This inspired me to see the 8 MDGs as Jesus might see them.' - Bishop Christopher Gregorowski, Cape Town

**Jesus said, "You are blessed when you are merciful: you will receive mercy."
(Matthew 5:5)**

You are blessed when you seek bread for the hungry: you will be filled.

You are blessed when you provide schooling for all girls and boys: you will see God's light.

You are blessed when you support women and girls in their quest for empowerment and equality: the power of God's Spirit is yours.

You are blessed when you bring vulnerable children to health and strength: you will be healed and strengthened.

You are blessed when you seek the health of pregnant women and young mothers: you will be called God's children.

You are blessed when you strive to combat HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other diseases: you will receive mercy.

You are blessed when you care for my creation, and seek clean water and sanitation for all, and a better life for slum dwellers: you will inherit the earth.

You are blessed when you open your borders to fair trade and your budgets to sound development: you will be richly rewarded.

You are blessed when you are persecuted for being just and seeking justice in the world: you are members of my family - for just as you do these things for your sisters and brothers in need, you do them for me.

Reflection on the scales of justice

(Amos 8:4-7)

Our choice could
tip the balance
in favour of the poor
and lighten the load
of those weighed down

We could level inequality
and distribute warehouse mountains
share out the wealth
that was never ours to hoard
turn the tables
on those who play
the markets

We could stockpile generosity
and speculate in hope
sell up our shares in selfishness
and settle for the dividends
of solidarity

For added value
build portfolios of justice
or an ISA in the growth
of the kingdom of God,
buy shares in trust and act in faith
risk our securities to find a richer life

May the percentage of our interest
in people rise
and may we be the prophets
of hope.

Sophie Stanes/CAFOD