

# GLOBALISATION AND POVERTY

## Introduction

Cred's heartbeat has always been to see justice for the world's poor, whether that is by educating children and adults in the UK as to how they can work for change themselves, or by working direct with projects in poverty situations. The prophet Isaiah instructed us to "spend ourselves on behalf of the poor and satisfy the needs of the oppressed" (58:10) and that is no less relevant now than it was in his time. However, if we are to work effectively in our world today then we need to understand the context in which our world, and the poverty that is in it, is set.

This is where the word, 'globalisation', comes in. There are certain words that sum up the story that people find themselves in and that give people meaning and a way to understand the world. As Ian Linden helpfully puts it, "today the word 'globalisation' encapsulates our latest contemporary story".<sup>1</sup> There are many different definitions of globalisation that have been given, but perhaps the simplest is that provided by the Department for International Development in their White Paper on Globalisation. They say that globalisation is simply, "the process by which the world is becoming more and more connected and interdependent." At its popular level we experience this by drinking coffee from Nicaragua; eating avocados from Israel; wearing clothes made in Morocco; using a computer assembled in the Philippines and so on.

To look at it further, this interconnectedness happens particularly in four areas.<sup>2</sup> The first is the economic, which we will look at more closely later, *the ideology of globalisation*. Thus Colin Hines, a fellow of the International Forum on Globalisation describes globalisation as "the ever-increasing integration of national economies into the global economy through trade and investment rules and privatisation, aided by technological advances".<sup>3</sup>

The second area is the political: *the engine powering the ideology*. Politically, we have moved from a world that is international to one that is global: "the difference between these is that a world which is international conducts its business between nations. It is inter-national. But in a global world the state has become one player among others, all of whom have power and influence".<sup>4</sup> These other players are multinationals, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and global bodies such as NATO, the UN, the IMF, World Bank and the WTO. As problems have become global in nature (such as global warming and security issues), so global solutions are being sought.

The third area is the technological: *the fuel running the engine*. Very little of the above would be possible were it not for the incredible pace with which technology has developed. Economically, the currency transactions, which form an integral part of globalisation, are able to occur because of 'the click of the mouse'. Email, on-line '24-7', has enabled companies to split their assembly lines between countries on different sides of the world, sending designs and orders and shifting components from one country to another to minimise costs. Politically, one of the major reasons for the downfall of the communist regimes was because of the access that people had to Western ideas through the media, hence the dubbing of the 1989 revolutions as 'the television revolutions'.

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<sup>1</sup> I. Linden, *Development Matters: Christian perspectives on globalisation*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> These four areas are highlighted by Giddens throughout his writing on globalisation. The material in this section, and some of the statistics throughout the paper, comes from a Tearfund Policy Review Paper that I wrote in 2001, entitled, "Globalisation and the Poor".

<sup>3</sup> Cited in J. Martin, "Globalisation: an Opportunity for Churches?", Church of England Newspaper (12.1.01), 14.

<sup>4</sup> R. McCloughry, *Living in the Presence of the Future*, 40.

The fourth area is the cultural: *the manifestation of globalisation*. This is the ‘McDonaldisation’ of the world; the rearing of the ‘MTV generation’ and the recognition of Nike and Disney as global symbols. Klein calls this the “branding of culture”: there is no space left anymore that does not have a brand name attached to it. Every thing and every event comes at a price and with a logo. Globalisation has brought a huge increase in consumer choice, which few would wish to decry. One of the most significant freedoms is the freedom of movement. This is picked up by Bauman who talks of the “global and extra territorial elites”. Interestingly, he makes the point that, “mobility climbs to the rank of the uppermost among the coveted values – and the freedom to move, perpetually a scarce and unequally distributed commodity, fast becomes the main stratifying factor of our... times”.<sup>5</sup> We should not forget either the remarkable transformation that has occurred in the position of women in society and, consequently, the changing shape of the family. Giddens, in particular, has brought attention to this aspect of globalisation: “among all the changes going on today, none are more important than those happening in our personal lives – in sexuality, emotional life, marriage and the family. There is a global revolution going on in how we think of ourselves and how we form ties and connections with others”.<sup>6</sup>

These four areas – the economic, the political, the technological and the cultural – make up globalisation. The heightened awareness of localisation and issues of ethnicity, and the increase of fundamentalism, form the other side to globalisation. Most importantly is the recognition that those who do not have the resources to participate are led into increasing poverty. It is the subject of this paper to look at the problem of poverty in the context of our globalised world. In order to do that, we are going to look at the world of bananas, a subject that illustrates many of the points that are to be made.

### **A World Gone Bananas<sup>7</sup>**

Bananas have become one of the basic foods that we all eat today: so basic that the banana is the world’s most popular fruit, worth £5bn a year, and in the UK 95% of households buy them. We eat more bananas than we do apples and they are the most valuable food product in supermarkets, outsold only by petrol and lottery tickets. Yet, my parents’ generation almost never ate them, so what has happened in the world to make bananas such an ordinary part of life in the UK, rather than an exotic fruit that we rarely see?

Let us look at the story of the Banana War. Traditionally, Britain and the rest of the European Union have bought their bananas from their former colonies, particularly the Windward Islands in the Caribbean. Britain invested into the original plantations and Geest, the company that buys and sells most of the bananas, is a British company. The Lome Convention in 1975 formalised the EU’s commitment to continue to import bananas from the Windward Islands. This commitment was crucial since the Windward Islands are almost totally reliant on their banana industry and are able to charge a better price for their bananas than producers elsewhere.

However, 80% of the bananas involved in international trade are controlled by the big four American companies: Chiquita, Dole, Del Monte and Fyffes. Not liking the EU protectionist policy on bananas, America complained to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) who ruled in favour of the USA. When the EU refused to back down the US struck back and put import tariffs, in the end worth \$191.4m, on EU exports (hitting companies such as Arran Aromatics in Scotland which found 40% of its turnover effected). It might come as no surprise that the American complaint to the WTO came just days after Chiquita donated \$500,000 to the Democratic Party and that the tariffs were enforced by the Republican-controlled Congress after Chiquita donated \$350,000 to them...

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<sup>5</sup> Z. Bauman, *Globalisation: the Human Consequences*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Giddens, Reith Lectures. He devotes a whole Reith Lecture on globalisation to this subject.

<sup>7</sup> Much of this section comes from the Fairtrade Foundation and New Internationalist editions 317 (October 1999) and 322 (April 2000).

The situation that we have today is one where the overwhelming majority of the bananas that we consume today are produced in appalling circumstances. There are two main issues here. Firstly, the plantation workers live in poverty. In Ecuador, for example, the workers are paid just \$1 a day and some independent producers get only 3 pence per pound, which does not even cover costs. On average, the producer gets only 5% of the price of a banana: as with many other commodities exported to the North, 90% of the price stays in the North and is never seen by the producer.

Secondly, vast quantities of chemicals are used to treat the banana during its production. Plantations in Central America apply 30kg of active ingredients per hectare per year – this is more than ten times the average for intensive farming in industrialised countries. In Costa Rica, three-quarters of banana workers suffer from skin lesions and 20% of the male workers became sterile due to handling pesticides whilst entire communities suffer from indiscriminate aerial crop spraying.

The impact on the environment need hardly be stated, let alone the fact that massive deforestation has taken place to provide the land for the plantations. The effect that all these chemicals have on those of us who eat them is something many worry about. It is interesting to note the response of a banana worker in Guatemala on a Chiquita plantation on being asked if he ever ate the bananas he produced: “ Good Lord, no! People in places like this don’t eat the fruit they cut. I guess we know better”.

So is anything being done to counteract this situation? The answer, of course, is ‘yes’ and that answer is Fair Trade and campaigning. Fair Trade schemes work direct with cooperatives, cutting out the middlemen. They guarantee a fixed minimum price, however low world prices may fall, and if prices rise above this some schemes (such as Cafédirect) pay an extra 10% social premium. They often help beyond just the pay with business development programmes and other advice. Fair Trade schemes are extremely beneficial to the producers. For example, despite the recent coffee crisis, those registered with the official Fair Trade scheme were able to escape its worse effects and still invest in other essential things such as healthcare and education. Similarly, when Hurrican Mitch swept across many countries in 1998, those producers under a Fair Trade scheme were able to recover.

Alongside Fair Trade, many NGOs are campaigning to see changes in how bananas are produced. On a broader level, in the UK, there is currently running a Trade Justice Campaign, signed up to by virtually all the main NGOs involved in these issues, which is campaigning to see the global trading rules changed.<sup>8</sup>

Having looked at this subject of bananas, we can now consider the main points involved in the topic of globalisation and the poor. These points begin broadly and focus down as we go through.

### **1. Economic globalisation is based on the principle of free trade, market capitalism.**

This will hardly be news for most of us reading this, but, incase it is, let us explore it further. Economic globalisation works on the policies of trade liberalisation, privatisation and financial market deregulation. It is believed that free trade between nations, with no protective barriers, is the most effective way of increasing global wealth and lifting poorer countries out of their poverty.

This global system only works where there is growth and so the economics of globalisation is profit-driven to the extreme. As Clinton said, “I do not believe that a country with 4.5% of the world’s people can maintain its standard of living if we don’t have more customers”.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See [www.tradejusticecampaign.org.uk](http://www.tradejusticecampaign.org.uk).

<sup>9</sup> J. Bruges, *The Little Earth Book* (LEB), 81.

This drive towards continual growth has led to the emergence, and now dominance, of the Trans National Corporations (TNCs). Some of the facts surrounding them are well known:

- The ten largest TNCs have a total income greater than that of 100 of the world's poorest countries.
- Two-thirds of international trade is accounted for by just 500 corporations.
- 40% of the trade they control is between different parts of the same TNC!
- Of the world's 100 largest economies, fifty are TNCs.<sup>10</sup>

Corporate mergers and acquisitions have thus become a familiar feature of the globalisation landscape. Indeed, the annual number of such mergers and acquisitions doubled between 1990 and 1997 when the total value reached \$236 billion.<sup>11</sup>

Another aspect of this growth-driven economy is currency speculation. Some say a trillion dollars, others say 2 trillion dollars, is now turned over each day on the currency markets. As Giddens says, "in the new global electronic economy, fund managers, banks, corporations, as well as millions of individual investors, can transfer vast amounts of capital from one side of the world to another at the click of a mouse. As they do so, they can destabilise what might have seemed rock-solid economies – as happened in East Asia".<sup>12</sup>

The following figures show how this is such a recent phenomenon:

- Flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) in 1995 reached \$315 billion, almost a six-fold increase over the level for 1981 – 85: over the same period world trade increased by little more than a half.
- Total borrowing on international capital markets increased from an annual average \$95.6 billion between 1976 and 1980 to \$818.6 billion in 1993 – a 34.3% increase on the previous year alone.
- Between the mid-1970s and 1996 the daily turnover of the world's foreign-exchange markets increased a thousand-fold from around \$1 billion to \$1,200 billion.<sup>13</sup>

Many agree that free trade is the best way forward. Indeed, it is inarguable that market capitalism has led to increasing global wealth as "the proportion of GDP traded internationally has risen from 5% in 1946 to 25% now".<sup>14</sup> The Sachs/Warner study from Harvard University found that "developing countries with open economies grew by 4.5% a year in the 1970s and 1980s, while those with closed economies grew by 0.7% a year".<sup>15</sup> However, poverty and increased inequality seem to be endemic to globalisation and a key debate centres around what causes that.

The debate splits; on the one hand, into those who think that markets are the way of creating wealth and those those who would stop markets acting efficiently (by making a special case for poor countries) will in the end destroy the wealth of those nations. In other words, it may be a tough option but in the long run joining world markets is the only way to create wealth. These people note the number of countries whose wealth has risen remarkably because they have become more open to markets. Such people also argue that many countries are held back, not by unfair terms of trade, but by internal corruption or by the lack of an economic infrastructure that would allow them to deliver the goods in world markets (e.g. education, communication

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<sup>10</sup> New Internationalist (NI) (November 1997), 18.

<sup>11</sup> NI (Jan/Feb 2000), 24.

<sup>12</sup> Giddens, Reith Lectures.

<sup>13</sup> NI (November 1997), 18,19.

<sup>14</sup> LEB, 81.

<sup>15</sup> M. Moore, "Trade Rules for Global Commerce", *Global Future* (First Quarter 2001), 2.

systems, trained labour force etc.). This side of the debate wants markets to do all the work and no government interference.

On the other hand are those who think in terms of power. They see the gap between rich and poor widening and blame the growth of global capitalism for that gap. They point out that the collapse of communism has led to a much more ruthless kind of capitalism. They see that the way to change the operation of multinationals is by exposing their practices in the press and protesting publicly about their power. This side of the debate wants massive intervention to stop poverty caused by capitalism and partnership between nation-states, NGO's, Multinationals and Global Agencies to bring about reform.<sup>16</sup>

## **2. The rules for how economic globalisation works are governed by the World Trade Organisation.**

The WTO hit the headlines in 1999 when its meeting in Seattle was thrown into disarray by protestors and its trade round stopped by leaders from the South. Up until this time it was a little known organisation that gained little attention. The WTO was founded in 1995 as a successor to the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) with its aim being to promote and regulate trade between its member states. GATT was a part of the effort after World War 2 to secure peace and stability for the world: an effort which led to the establishment of the World Bank and IMF at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944, and also the UN. When first signed, in 1947, GATT had 23 nations. When the WTO was officially established there were 115 signatories and now there are at least 140.

The WTO has within its constitution the potential for working to benefit those who are poor. Its Generalised System of Preferences does, at least on paper, recognise that the poorest and least developed nations need positive discrimination, even if recognition alone is not enough. The IMF and World Bank still very much reflect the political situation after World War 2. For example, seven countries (the US, UK, Germany, France, Japan, Italy and Canada) control nearly half the votes at the World Bank and the US holds nearly 20% of the total votes in the IMF. In the WTO decision-making is via consensus and so is potentially more democratic.

However...

## **3. The WTO has problems**

The reality is that the wealthy countries, particularly the US, Canada, Japan and the EU, dominate it. For a start, its headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland, which has one of the highest costs of living in the world. There are mountains of paperwork and legal documents attached to any negotiation and a country needs a host of specialised experts and lawyers to be able to deal with these. The wealthy countries are able to have people there permanently whilst poorer countries cannot afford to keep anyone there. For example, Japan has 25 representatives while Bangladesh has only one and over half the least developed country members have none at all.<sup>17</sup> Discussions are thus weighted from the start.

Perhaps the WTO's most significant weakness is that free trade is its sacred cow (as with the IMF and World Bank) and is given priority above all else, at the expense of issues such as the environment and human rights. Joseph Stiglitz, the former Chief Economist at the World Bank, has said that they take "privatisation and trade liberalisation as ends in themselves, rather than means to more sustainable, equitable and democratic growth".<sup>18</sup> WTO rulings can even go against laws that are adopted to comply with international agreements, as when it ruled American regulations to protect turtles to be illegal, even though they were done in accordance with CITES

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<sup>16</sup> My thanks to Roy McCloughry for clarifying these two sides for me.

<sup>17</sup> Christian Aid, "Trade for Life" campaign.

<sup>18</sup> Cited in Oxfam Policy Paper on globalisation.

which was signed by 146 nations.<sup>19</sup> Other examples are where it has prevented legislation to ban cosmetics testing on animals; protected companies trading with Myanmar and prevented Thailand, concerned at the increase in young smokers, from banning cigarette imports.<sup>20</sup> It is a sad fact that the WTO has never upheld a ruling in favour of social or environmental issues.

Interestingly, of course, the meaning given to 'free trade' seems to change chameleon-like according to the interests of the wealthy. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a huge case in point, and the subject of much frustration on the part of the Southern countries. CAP gives enormous subsidies to European farmers whilst demonstrating great reluctance to open up markets to agricultural produce from the developing world. As the subsidies encourage over-production, excess produce is dumped on other, poorer, countries that then see the price of their national produce slump, which affects the livelihoods of the farmers. It is worth pointing out, in addition, that 80% of CAP subsidies go to the 20% biggest farms. It encourages European farmers towards intensive farming, which is having such a detrimental affect on the environment.

#### **4. Prices of commodities are at the mercy of market forces, with huge amounts of money sloshing around the world every day.**

We have seen already the currency speculation that is such a feature of globalisation. It not only affects a nation's economy, but it can have far-reaching consequences for specific commodities and the people who produce them. Bananas have already given us an example of that and of the low wages paid to the producers when the big companies are taking massive profits. Coffee is another example and is currently going through a crisis, with prices at their lowest level since the 1930s. Despite this, the price of a cup of coffee in a coffee house is increasing and the big coffee roasting houses, such as Sara Lee and Nestle, are reporting big profits. Nestle saw a rise in profits of 20% in 2001. For those producers who are not with a Fair Trade scheme the future is bleak. Raw commodities are on a general downward trend and it is the producers, not the big companies, who will lose out.

#### **5. Economic globalisation is dominated by the TNCs.**

Our case study of bananas gave us an obvious example of how this works, but this domination affects producers the world over. As we have seen, TNCs are often larger, financially, than the countries in which they operate and hence can control how they do things. This leads to the 'race for the bottom dollar', which pushes aside human rights and environmental concerns.

In *No Logo*, Klein wrote a brilliant expose on the free-trade zones in countries such as Indonesia, China, Mexico, Vietnam and the Philippines.<sup>21</sup> These Export Processing Zones (EPZs) are the areas in which the products we buy are actually made and they operate tariff-free: no import or export duties and sometimes no income or property taxes either. It is thought that there are around 1000 EPZs operating in seventy countries, employing roughly 27 million workers. The workday is long (up to sixteen hours) and the workers are mostly young women working for contractors from Korea, Taiwan or Hong Kong who are usually filling orders for companies based in the USA, UK, Japan, Germany or Canada. The working conditions are very much below standard, with the minimum wage seldom reached, and trade unions are banned. The EPZs are designed to attract foreign investors with the hope that they will contribute to lasting development in the chosen country. Thus the tax-free incentives are offered, as well as other things such as the cooperation of a military that will suppress any labour unrest. The reality, of course, is that foreign investment rarely touches the country and the EPZs operate as "off-shore" tax havens benefiting only the companies involved; companies which fly-off to another country as soon as conditions in the EPZs turn against them.

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<sup>19</sup> CITES was an agreement to import prawns only from countries that used fishing means that did not kill sea turtles.

<sup>20</sup> LEB, 85.

<sup>21</sup> This section is all taken from Naomi Klein's fascinating and challenging account of EPZs in *No Logo* (2000), 195 – 229. Read this and you will never buy GAP or Nike again!

With the WTO only interested in free trade, there are no internationally respected laws to govern TNCs and ensure they are putting people and the environment before their profit-driven shareholders.

## **6. Those who do not have the resources to participate are pushed into poverty**

Statistics on poverty can be daunting and overwhelming in their enormity. Yet, it is helpful for us all to be reminded again of the state of the world in which we are living:

- 1.3 billion people have to live on less than 70p a day and more than 800 million people do not have enough to eat.<sup>22</sup>
- World bank studies show that almost half the world's population live on less than \$2 dollars a day. Every year, 8 million children die of diseases linked to impure water and air pollution; 50 million children are mentally and physically damaged due to poor nutrition and 30 million children – 80% of them girls – are denied the opportunity to go to school.<sup>23</sup>
- A Nike quilted jacket costs £100 in a London shop, but only 51p of that goes to the Bangladeshi women who make it.<sup>24</sup>
- The 20% of people living in the rich countries now consume 86% of the world's resources.<sup>25</sup>
- The wealth of the 225 richest people in the world has nearly tripled in the last six years and their assets now equal the entire annual income of half the world's population.<sup>26</sup>
- The income gap between the top and bottom fifth of the world's people jumped from 30:1 in 1960 to 74:1 in 1997<sup>27</sup>.
- In 1976 Switzerland was 50 times richer than Mozambique. In 1997 it was 500 times richer.
- The top 1% of households in the US have more wealth than the entire bottom 95%.<sup>28</sup>
- Whilst financial transactions have been growing fast, 2/3 of them are between the few already-rich countries of the OECD. Although the share of poor (non-OECD) countries in FDI has increased, China alone accounts for about a third of this share and just 9 countries for another third. The remaining third is split between 135 countries: the Least Developed get just 0.5%.<sup>29</sup>
- In 1996 sub-Saharan Africa paid \$2.5 billion more in debt service than it received in new long-term loans and credits. The external debt of the region has ballooned by 400% since the IMF and World Bank began managing African economies through imposed 'structural adjustment' conditions.<sup>30</sup>

There are many aspects that we could consider, with regards to those who are poor, but I wish to focus on two.

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<sup>22</sup> Cafod briefing.

<sup>23</sup> Global Futures (First Quarter 2001), 7.

<sup>24</sup> Cafod briefing.

<sup>25</sup> LEB, 34.

<sup>26</sup> LEB, 36

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> NI (Nov. 1997), 18,19.

<sup>30</sup> NI (Jan/Feb 2000), 25.

Firstly, HIV/Aids.<sup>31</sup> It is thought that Aids will eventually kill half of all 15-year old Ethiopian, South African and Zimbabwean boys. The numbers are immense, but in those numbers is the individual suffering that must be born by every person who contracts HIV and by every person who sees a loved one die from it. The psychological effects of the trauma cannot be envisaged. One of the key problems is the huge numbers of orphans that this disease is causing. Since the beginning, 13.2 million children have been orphaned. HIV/Aids has huge implications economically. The workforce of some African nations is being decimated, as people either cannot work through having the disease or through having to care for those who do. And medicine is expensive, stripping families of money that should go on food and education.

As well as being the result, poverty is one of the causes of HIV/Aids as a struggling healthcare system that the poor cannot get to leads to a greater risk of infection as other STDs are ignored. Once infected with HIV, a lack of medicine increased the likelihood of other infections. In a situation where the future looks hopeless there seems little point in taking care with life and young people do not take, and are unable to take, the necessary precautions.

Bearing in mind our subject of globalisation, Patterson makes this interesting comment: “a society’s vulnerability to HIV/Aids is closely bound up with its lack of ability to resist global economic forces, including the results of structural adjustment, the debt burden, privatisation of services, and WTO policies on intellectual property rights, trade and services. Corruption at national level can be seen as the result of loss of autonomy of national governments and the feeling ... that you are caught up in a spiral of increasing poverty from which there is no escape”.<sup>32</sup>

Secondly, the environment. With global warming, the loss of species, soil erosion, deforestation, air and water pollution and the loss of biodiversity, it is not just human beings who are suffering, but the rest of creation is also involved in the subject of poverty. It is interesting to note David Gosling’s connection of unsustainable debt with environmental problems.<sup>33</sup> He cites the example of Brazil where repayment takes place primarily through the exporting of cash crops. This leads to the inevitable clear-cutting of invaluable and irreplaceable forests and all the evils that we have seen with bananas: intensive use of chemicals, soil erosion, loss of forest cover leading to species extinction and loss of biodiversity and a destruction of trees to absorb carbon dioxide.

Again, as with HIV/Aids, it is clear that environmental degradation is linked inextricably with poverty: caused by it and leading to it. It is no coincidence that 96% of deaths from natural disasters occur in developing countries.<sup>34</sup> However, unlike HIV/Aids, it is also clear that the underlying cause is not poverty (i.e., people cutting down trees to make a livelihood etc.), but the global structures that promote the transport of goods all round the world and the elevation of profit above all else. So, the World Disasters Report 2000 calculates that the rich nations have amassed a climate debt of \$13,000 billion, which is growing at an increasing rate. This is currently more than five times the total Third World Debt.<sup>35</sup> Industrialised countries generate over 62

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<sup>31</sup> Much of this information comes from Gillian Paterson’s chapter on HIV/Aids in C. Reed (ed.), Development Matters: Christian perspectives on globalisation.

<sup>32</sup> Development Matters, 46.

<sup>33</sup> Development Matters, 54.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> ‘Climate debt’ refers to the environmental damage caused by the rich nations. As they use up the earth’s resources; pollute the atmosphere with greenhouse gases which cause devastation to countries in the South; use chemicals which harm the food chain and soil, and over-fish the oceans so they deplete the natural capital of the world and thus have a massive debt to other nations. See further, LEB, 79-80 and NI edition 342 (Jan/Feb 2002).



times more carbon dioxide per person than the least developed countries.<sup>36</sup> One billion people suffer from a shortage of fresh water and it is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population will suffer severe water shortages in 25 years. This shortage is entirely human-made as priority is given to industry and industrial agriculture rather than to people.<sup>37</sup>

The issue of our care for the rest of the created world is an important one because it leads to the question of what we mean by human development. We must not be content with an answer that focuses only on the economic. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the beauty or otherwise of the area in which we live are all an integral part of what it means to be human.

## **7. Not everyone in the wealthier nations is content with the current situation and there are those who will fight to see things change**

A Mori poll in October 2001, timed to coincide with the release of Anita Roddicks's book on globalisation, *Take It Personally*, gave some surprise new findings as to people's opinions on globalisation. The results showed that the people are suspicious of globalisation and sympathetic towards the anti-globalisation protestors. Only 13% agreed with the official view that globalisation enhances everyone's quality of life, whilst between 87% and 92% of people thought that the government should protect the environment, employment and health – even when it conflicted with the interests of multinationals. Bob Worcester, Mori Chairman, said that the survey was, “a timely indicator of people's underlying distrust of big companies when it comes to acting in people's interest. The fact that 41% of the British public believe the anti-globalisation protestors have a point should prompt a serious rethinking of the globalisation debate”.

As we saw when we looked at bananas, there are alternative ways of doing things and people who are prepared to use their voices and purses in the push for change. The WTO meeting in Seattle not only brought the WTO into public focus, but also brought attention to the ‘anti-globalisation movement’, mentioned above. It needs to be said, of course, that the ‘anti-globalisation movement’ is a name coined by the media. Those who belong to it are clear that, if they are anti anything, then it is *economic* globalisation not globalisation as a whole. The ‘anti-globalisation movement’ really refers to a huge array of pressure groups, individuals, charities and NGOs, from all around the world, that are working to see a change in the way the global rules, and especially the TNCs, operate in order to see more justice for the poor. This is a phenomenon that is peculiar to our time. Never before have there been so many organisations working outside politics (i.e., not belonging to a political party). Today, there are 26,000 international NGOs: four times as many as a decade ago. Some of these are specifically involved in the anti-globalisation movement, such as Adbusters, Reclaim the Streets, the Direct Action Network and the Ruckus Society.<sup>38</sup> What is interesting about this movement is that there is no organisational centre, just lots of individual groups and campaigns, all linked with each other like hotlinks on a website: “a chaotic network of hubs and spokes”.<sup>39</sup>

Single-issue campaigning has become one of the hallmarks of our day, with people increasingly perceiving the real power to lie with the TNCs, rather than with the political leaders. With our world so vast and complex, it seems easier to take one issue to campaign on than get involved in the quagmire of the political corridors that can seem somewhat irrelevant. Nearly all of the major NGOs, therefore, are turning campaigning into one of their main focuses.

Alongside campaigning is the growth of the concept of ‘ethical consumerism’, as seen in the Fair Trade bananas. There is a growing awareness of how, in our inter-linked world, the way that I consume here directly affects the lives of others in other countries and affects the rest of creation. So, if I buy a banana with a label on it that says Dole, Chiquita, Fyffes or Del Monte,

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> LEB, 31.

<sup>38</sup> [www.adbusters.org](http://www.adbusters.org); [www.reclaimthestreets.net](http://www.reclaimthestreets.net); [www.directactionnetwork.org](http://www.directactionnetwork.org); [www.ruckus.org](http://www.ruckus.org).

<sup>39</sup> Klein in A. Roddick, *Take It Personally*, 38.

then I am giving my consent to the way they treat their workers and the environment. However, if I buy a Fair Trade banana then I am taking away that consent and giving my money to a system that will benefit the lives of the producers of that banana. People are recognising that this applies to all sorts of areas: clothes, pensions, toys, food, mortgages, electrical equipment, holidays, investments.... It also applies to the way I consume energy in the form of petrol, gas and electricity and whether I throw things away rather than reusing or recycling them.

## Conclusion

To return to the beginning, our motivation behind this paper has been to see justice for those who are poor. A consideration of the world in which we live today shows us the mechanisms and structures that are behind the poverty that so many are facing today. We chose to do this by looking at what lies behind the bananas that we eat every day and we saw seven features of the relationship between globalisation and poverty. Firstly, the overarching meta-narrative within which we are working is that of free trade, market capitalism and the belief that that is what will ultimately save the world. Secondly, the rules for how this works are governed by the WTO that acts to promote free trade. However, thirdly, the WTO has problems, being weighted towards the wealthy countries and refusing to give preference to issues of human rights or the environment. Fourthly, one of the effects of all of this is that commodity prices are at the mercy of market forces and another is that, fifthly, the economic world is dominated by the TNCs. The consequence is that, sixthly, those who do not have the resources are pushed into poverty. There are many aspects around this, but we looked particularly at the issues surrounding HIV/Aids and the environment. We did not finish here, though, because, seventhly, the good news is that not everyone is prepared to put up with this situation and there are many people, from all around the world, who are fighting to see things change.

It is not enough simply to rehearse where our world is going wrong without seeing what we can do to begin to make a difference ourselves and so we looked at some of the ways in which people are currently taking action. Each one of us is called to respond to the needs of our world. For some, that will mean working within the economic and political structures, bringing God's Kingdom principles to bear right at the heart. For others, we will stay outside, campaigning and calling for justice and righteousness to prevail. For all of us, it means a broader understanding of what it means to live right lives before our God: an ethical spirituality that embraces the issues we have considered in this paper.<sup>40</sup>

I want to conclude with what Roy McCloughry has called the 'four voices of the church', which, I believe, aptly sum up our response to globalisation.<sup>41</sup> Firstly, we are the voice of *responsibility*: for the weak and the vulnerable, for freedom, dignity and peace. Secondly, we are the voice of *celebration*: rejoicing over the colour and cultural diversity of our world. Thirdly, we are the voice of *prophesy*: standing against the unjust and amoral structures of the world and, fourthly, we are the voice of *suffering*: suffering with those who suffer and working to see it alleviated.

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<sup>40</sup> In a forthcoming Cred Paper we will look at the richness and depth involved in living a more simple lifestyle: a choice that often comes from a desire to live a more justice-orientated life.

<sup>41</sup> McCloughry, *Living In the Presence of the Future*, 18.

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