



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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Through the looking glass: A visit to Cuba

In late March, two staff members of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns visited Cuba to explore the possibility of establishing there a collaborative project. A potential project would explore the experiences of the Cuban people during the past 50 years in order to analyze the learnings which might apply to the U.S. and other countries in a time of questioning the centrality of corporate economic growth for a democratic society.

This exploration was generated by Maryknoll's desire to move into its second century of its existence with fresh energy for understanding the world of today, in order to respond with creativity to its needs.

The March 26-28 visit of the Holy Father provided an excellent opportunity to enter Cuba. The Daughters of Charity, through the archdiocese of Havana, provided the required religious visa and also hospitality to the MOGC staff. It was an immense grace to lodge with the sisters; they went out of their way to be of help and provide guidance, and even provided tickets to the Mass of the Holy Father; this enabled witnessing the ceremony at close range and gave the chance to talk to people about the impact of the papal visit.

It would seem that the papal visit served as a profound reminder to the Cuban people that the world beyond their island borders has not forgotten them. The isolation imposed by the U.S. embargo against Cuba and the Cuban government's strict control both limit information from the world beyond Cuba, a heavy privation given that the present period in the larger world is characterized by information sharing.

In his homily in Havana, the Holy Father drew attention to religious freedom as the harbinger of all human well-being with the following words: "Strengthening religious freedom consolidates so-

cial bonds, nourishes the hope of a better world and creates favorable conditions for peace and harmonious development, while at the same time establishing solid foundations for securing the rights of future generations."

These remarks speak to the Catholic Church's relentless work in Cuba to steadily claim the space of social justice within its jurisdiction. Under the leadership of Cardinal Jaime Ortega, the Church has moved forward along a difficult path that hopes not

to return to the capitalistic and corrupt past before the Revolution, but to find its way forward into a new time that upholds the universal rights of all people in a free society.

In the work of acquiring concessions in the realm of religious freedom, Cardinal Jaime, as he is affectionately called, has created an archdiocese that follows his valiant leadership in a remarkable commitment to solidarity. In spite of many limitations and restrictions, consid-

ering the intense persecution of the Church in the early decades of the Revolutionary government, the present time in the Church is a blessing.

One positive sign is the Instituto Maria Reina: Fifty religious congregations belong to this institute which serves to form young religious and some lay people in theological sciences. After years of arduous work to get the institute on a solid foundation, it is now affiliated with the Jesuit Unibersidad Iberoamericana in Mexico, which confers a licenciatura degree. While the Cuban government does not recognize the degree, the mere fact of establishing an educational institution where thinking not limited by official state ideology is allowed is in itself a large achievement.

Five decades ago the seminary was forcibly closed. Today a new seminary exists and the former



Pope Benedict XVI greets Cuban President Raul Castro at the Mass held on March 28 in Havana

site is being slowly renovated as a Diocesan Cultural Center that honors Fr. Felix Varela, who in the 19th century was deeply committed to social transformation. In 1836 he wrote, "There is no authentic fatherland without virtue," a statement which belies the promotion of materialistic atheism which has left Cuban society with weakened moral and ethical systems. It is in this Center that the archdiocese offers an MBA program that carries with it hope for economic reform undergirded by a structure of correct business ethics. Each of these gains negotiated by the Church with the government is more than it

seems; each is a container that holds the promise of expansion toward total human development.

Some of the other experiences of this visit will be shared in the months to come. What is ultimately harvested from the trip may well be different from what was originally anticipated. Certainly, the experience of the Church was illuminating and inspiring. The visit and its meaning for Maryknoll will be ruminated upon, prayed over and thoroughly analyzed during this Easter Season and in the light of Pentecost. §

Honduras: Continued concern for human rights

In April, a number of religious groups, including the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, wrote a letter to the State and Foreign Operations subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives' Appropriations committee, urging that the 2013 appropriations bill reflect a commitment to promote human rights and to reject military oppression in Honduras. The text of the letter reads:

We are faith-based organizations who have worked for many decades to help improve the human rights situation in Latin America. Recently we have been especially concerned about rising levels of abuses by police and military officials in Honduras.

We write to you as you work to prepare the 2013 appropriations bill with two requests to help improve the human rights situation in Latin America: 1) maintain the human rights conditions on military and police aid to Latin America and the Caribbean that were signed into law for FY2012; and 2) cut all military and police assistance to Honduras

Human rights conditions on U.S. military assistance are critical to encouraging positive changes in the hemisphere.

In the case of Honduras, while there has been a dramatic increase in street crime in the aftermath of the illegal coup, we are especially concerned about repeated examples of police and military officials using excessive force against non-violent protesters; threatening and attacking journalists, human rights defenders and landless peasants; credible

high-level allegations of institutional corruption; and undermining investigations of security forces.

In July 2011 the U.S.-supported Truth Commission, established by President Porfirio Lobo's administration to investigate events before and after the coup, delivered its report. The commissioners documented the cases of 20 people, 12 of whom they concluded had been killed due to excessive police or army force, and eight of whom had died in selective killings by government agents. The commission also reported that police and army officials were responsible for "systematic obstruction" of investigations into these abuses, including altering crime scenes and official documents, criminal negligence, and helping suspects escape. The overwhelming majority of these cases remain in impunity.

We ask that the U.S. suspend military and police aid to Honduras until that government uses civilian courts to seriously investigate police and military officials who are credibly alleged to have violated human rights and the police and military cooperate actively with these cases.

We hope that you will see the importance of including these items in the 2013 budget and thank you for your consideration.

Faith in action:

Contact your member of the U.S. House; use the language in the letter to remind him/her to suspend military and police aid to Honduras until the government investigates and prosecutes those responsible for human rights abuses. §

Sustainable peace: Costa Rican consensus

On March 28, Nobel Laureate and former president of Costa Rica, Óscar Arias Sánchez, gave a speech that encapsulates many of the themes put forth in the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns' Sustainable Pathways to Inclusive Peace and Security program work. The speech, proposing the "Costa Rican Consensus," was given at the Affordable World Security Conference, sponsored by the W.P. Carey Foundation and East West Institute and held at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. In his talk, Arias relays his experience in Costa Rica, not so that other countries repeat Costa Rica's plan of action, but because the Costa Rican experience "can provide concrete lessons for the international community as it seeks maximum impact (in human security) with minimum spending." The following article emphasizes some of the more salient points that Arias proposes.

Born in 1940, Arias was eight years old when his country suffered a violent 44-day civil war. When the war (which claimed over 2,000 lives) was ended, Costa Rica made a radical decision -- one that other countries had not been willing to try -- to "abolish its army and declare peace to the world." By doing this, Arias says, "My country promised me, and all its children, that we would never see tanks or troops in our streets ... My country promised to dismantle the institutions of violence, and invest in the progress that makes violence unnecessary. Quite simply, my country invested in its people."

Arias goes on to tell the story of Costa Rica, a story that sounds like a fairy tale in this world of want. This decision made Costa Rica a "healthy, educated, and free society" and established concrete gains in national and regional security. "When conflicts and civil wars swept our region in the 1980s, Costa Rica was able to maintain its stability and freedom from violence. What's more, this enabled my little country to become the platform for the peace accords that gradually ended the unrest in our part of the world. And today, while the terrible consequences of drug trafficking in our region and consumption in the developed world are posing serious challenges to our government, Costa Rica

continues to maintain its foothold in the world of peace. Here in the developed world, those achievements might seem distant, or even insignificant. But an oasis of democratic stability in a region that is among the most dangerous in the world, and whose exports of goods and people have a direct effect on its northern neighbors, is valuable indeed."

In his speech Arias elaborates three important concepts regarding human security. First, security does not lie in weapons or fences or armies, but in human development. "Investing in human development is not a competing priority to defense spending. Such investment supports security ... A comprehensive approach to security cannot postpone attention to the world's neediest people. In this new century, it is not only foolish and immoral, but also impractical, to spend on the symptoms, but not on the disease -- to spend on threats, but not on their cause." Arias challenges to imagine the impact on security if we would choose to reduce poverty by half; provide universal primary education; eliminate the digital divide; and drastically reduce hunger and sickness.

Secondly Arias uses the "sad story of Haiti" to elaborate the Costa Rica Consensus -- a simple idea that "uses international financial resources to support developing nations that spend more on environmental protection, education, health care and housing for their people, and less on arms and soldiers. "It would end the ridiculous policies that punish countries when they make good choices, and reward corrupt or misguided governments that create conflict and deprivation. It would make a real difference in some of the most dangerous and conflict-ridden nations on earth." He tells of how he had worked with Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1995 to bring about the abolition of Haiti's armed forces. In spite of his efforts and Haiti's present state of poor ecological and economic health, the current president, Michel Martelly, is now considering the reestablishment of Haiti's army, which would cost \$95 million.

The third concept that Arias discussed is much like the Costa Rica Consensus, embracing a responsible Arms Transfer Treaty has the power to

improve international security “without any spending to speak of.” Like the Costa Rica Consensus, this idea emerged from the painful lessons learned in the 1980s.

“For many years after arms suppliers channeled weapons to Central American armies or paramilitary forces in the 1980s, those weapons were found in the hands of the gangs that roamed the countryside of Nicaragua, or of teenage boys on the streets of San Salvador and Tegucigalpa. Other weapons were shipped to guerrilla or paramilitary groups, as well as drug cartels, in Colombia, ready to destroy yet more lives. We learned the hard way that a shipment of weapons into a developing country is like a virus in a crowded room. It cannot be contained; we do not know whom it will attack; and it can spread in ways we would never have imagined. As I watched what was happening to my region, I real-

ized that the same story was being repeated, time and time again, in developing countries all over the world...As any Central American can tell you, the weapons sold to the Middle East today might end up in anyone’s hands. We cannot foresee their consequences. The only certainty is that we cannot control the outcome...”

Arias aptly ended his speech giving us a new vision for the work ahead: “If we can rise to the challenge, the day may finally be in sight when we begin to write a new story for humankind. The day may finally be in sight when violence ceases to be the birthright of our sons and daughters. The day may finally be in sight when, at long last, the Art of War gives way to the art of peace.”

Dr. Arias’s speech in its entirety can be found at Foreign Policy in Focus’s website: http://www.fpif.org/articles/the_costa_rica_consensus. §

The power of religious peacebuilding

As the violence in Libya escalated to all-out war last year, an interfaith group of African religious leaders, including Muslims and Christians, visited the conflict zones in an effort to facilitate a negotiated end to the violence. As war in Colombia raged on and war clouds hovered over the border between Sudan and South Sudan, Mennonites worked diligently for peace on the ground in both situations. As Islamic separatist movements and the Filipino government vied for control in Mindanao, religious peacebuilders were present and talking to both sides. In Israel and Palestine, Christian Peacemakers Teams and Ecumenical Accompaniers move on a regular basis through zones of real or possible violent confrontations to reduce by their presence the likelihood of violence.

Peacebuilders who are “motivated and strengthened by religious and spiritual resources” and who have “access to religious communities and institutions” (see www.religionconflictpeace.org/node/22) are present and active in just about every situation of actual or anticipated violence in the world.

Clearly, religion can be a force for peace as well as it can provide motivation or “cover” for violence.

Heather DuBois, in the article “Religion and Peacebuilding” (Journal of Religion, Conflict and Peace, Spring 2008, referenced above and quoted below), reflects on some of the characteristics of religious peacebuilding. She includes

- humility, in recognition of the difficulty and complexity of peacebuilding vis-à-vis human capacity;
- the use of different tools, including spiritual guidance, prayer, modeling, ritual and myth, moral and prophetic imagination, readings from sacred texts and fasting; and
- the application of concepts such as forgiveness and restorative justice in combination with their theological or spiritual understandings

Religious actors function at the three levels of society’s organization as described by peacebuilding expert John Paul Lederach: grassroots, mid-level and elite. Often, these three levels of engagement are linked through religious networks, with the world’s largest religions able to network their peacebuilding activities across local, inter-communal, national, regional, and international levels and to exchange support and information both horizontally and vertically.

Religious actors also tend to be engaged long term and in different facets of the peacebuilding process, thus their efforts are more stable. Because they are often either members of the affected communities or have well established institutional links with affected communities, they are able to provide “channels of information and/or resource distribution in the absence of state-sponsored alternatives.” And because they are frequently supported financially by local religious bodies, they are less dependent on the changing priorities of large funders.

The legitimacy of religious peacebuilders in a given context often depends on whether local communities and parties engaged in conflict consider spirituality or religious practice important; whether the religious peacebuilders themselves have personal or institutional credibility; and whether the religious peacebuilders are perceived to have ulterior political motives. If they are accepted as legitimate, their effectiveness may be enhanced if their religious tradition is familiar to the local community – or in some circumstances, if their peacebuilding efforts are inter-religious.

DuBois also notes that religious peacebuilders may benefit from local connections, making them better able “to draft volunteers, challenge religious and secular traditional structures, and communicate with governments.”

Referring to these characteristics of religious peacebuilding, she continues, “Listing this multitude of factors begins to illustrate the complexities

that determine the impact of religious peacebuilding. The cumulative effect may be one in which religion plays a significant role in portions but not all of society, or, as can be the case with large, transnational traditions, religion may permeate every level of society—institutionally, socially and culturally. In that case, the significant elements of authority, ideology, spirituality and fraternity are all at the disposal of religious peacebuilding.”

Religious peacebuilding, DuBois writes, has at least four strengths:

- It is a vehicle for addressing the spiritual aspects of conflict experience.
- It can counter violence that is rooted in religious and/or communal identity.
- It can offer a moral alternative during times of state collapse, threats of war and outright war.
- It can offer vehicles for internationalizing peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

Despite the ambivalence of religion; the possibility that religious motivations can fuel violence; the fact that religious actors often enter the field of peacebuilding “without the benefit of professional training and experience” or that they are (or are perceived to be) proselytizing; and that many of the world’s religions themselves have poor records in terms of human rights and inclusion, religious peacebuilders can make a significant contribution to peacebuilding by teaching “the peaceful doctrines of their traditions.” §

The U.S. budget: A tell-tale heart

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” As the United States Congress considers legislation to shape the country’s budget, these words from Luke 12:34 (NRSV) stand as a stark reminder that investments made with taxpayer dollars point directly to the health of our nation’s heart – the underlying beliefs, ethics and priorities that shape our collective decisions about how our money is spent. Washington-based faith groups formed a coalition to scrutinize the budget and budget process and advocated a more kindhearted, people, community and earth-centered approach.

As the current budget proposals took shape, a coalition of the nation’s largest and most prominent Jewish, Christian and Muslim congregations, denominations, institutions and faith-based organizations formed the Faithful Budget Campaign – working throughout the long months of budget debate to encourage members of Congress to adopt a “Faithful Budget.” The coalition drafted a comprehensive set of compassionate budget priorities – asking Congress to invest in the country’s needs. These priorities are gathered in one document called “Priorities for a Faithful Budget: Acting with Mercy and Jus-

tice as one Nation under God” and can be read in their entirety at the Faithful Budget Campaign website.

For communities of faith, the budget has long been seen as a moral document, in which each proposal can be judged “not by the arbitrary fiscal support it provides, but rather by the human impact it holds.” People of faith in the United States take a more community-focused approach understanding themselves “to be ‘one nation under God,’ not a mere collection of isolated individuals.”

The campaign’s message delivered to policy makers is rooted in sacred text: “Act with mercy and justice by serving the common good, robustly funding support for poor and vulnerable people, both at home and abroad, and exercising proper care and keeping of the earth.” The underlying principles of the faithful budget campaign proceed from this call to serve the common good through acts of justice and mercy. Some of these principles are examined below. The first is to restore economic opportunity – especially the opportunity to work, to improve one’s economic condition.

The Campaign urges Congress to make investments in high-quality, affordable education, sustainable jobs with living wages, and policies that help families build assets. It is only with these kinds of long-term investments that the United States can sustain economic renewal, create economic opportunity for all, and work toward ending poverty.

The United States’ tax system was established as a progressive tax system – based on the ability to pay – but over last few decades, the tax structure has become less progressive and increasingly the middle class bears a greater portion of the burden. “The tax system also creates financial incentives for individuals to act in ways that are thought to strengthen our social fabric, such as investing and saving for retirement, starting a business, owning a home, getting a college education – even charitable giving. Because of the way tax benefits are structured, however, too often low-wage workers do not earn enough to access those benefits. This results in a system that perpetuates inequality by reward-



ing behavior that generates financial security for those who already have it, while excluding those who are working hard at low-wage jobs and need help the most. An equitable, moral tax code should reward the efforts of low-income people to work and save at every level.”

Since well over half of the U.S. discretionary budget is dedicated to military spending, the United States is unable to invest in other areas that build substantial human security in our communities. “Our budget priorities should reflect a more balanced approach to the full spectrum of investments that build meaningful security for individuals, families, and communities.”

Faith communities have often stood in solidarity with vulnerable populations at home and around the world while working to change policies to reduce poverty and hardship. In this capacity at this time when so many are experiencing financial insecurity, people of faith call on “Congress to adequately fund critical human needs, social service, environmental protection, and humanitarian and poverty-focused international assistance programs, all of which ensure human security in its broadest sense.”

Thinking of what really makes our communities safe, people of faith know when well over half of the discretionary budget dedicated to military spending, the United States is unable to invest in other areas that build substantial human security in our communities. Global threats to peace and security need not instill a national inclination to make an imbalanced investment in new weapons systems, detention centers, and militarized border walls, while we become less secure in so many other ways.

Nor can we leave our children to inhabit a planet diminished of the natural resources needed to sustain life. “A Faithful Budget must encompass a reverence for our created environment, making choices that protect air, water, and land—the entirety of Creation—gifts from God that must be available to and protected for this generation and those to come.”

Read more of the faithful budget principles and actions at [http://faithfulbudget.org/the-document/ §](http://faithfulbudget.org/the-document/)

South Sudan: Urgent recalibration is required

Recent assaults by Sudan on South Sudan have included increased aerial attacks; according to reports, more than a half million people in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states are at risk of starvation due to the ongoing conflict. Smith College professor Eric Reeves writes that the “outlook for North and South Sudan is extremely bleak.” The following are excerpts from Reeves’ April 25 article. Read the entire piece on his website, www.sudanreeves.org.

[I]n January 2003, months after a ceasefire agreement had been signed ..., an unnerving conviction, a grim certainty, was expressed to me by every military and civil society official I spoke with ...: if war comes again to Sudan, it will be the most destructive of all our wars. ... In recent weeks, those terrible premonitions from 2003 seem on the verge of becoming a vast and uncontrollable reality.

The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) leadership has long understood ... that there would be no international guarantors of the security arrangements in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), completed in 2004 and finally signed on January 9, 2005. The SPLM/A was adamant about maintaining its own army, because in the event that the National Islamic Front/National Congress Party regime violated the peace, no other country would offer meaningful help or protection to the South.

The moment they had feared appears almost at hand. In the last few weeks, the SPLA has repeatedly repulsed a (northern) Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) assault on the border settlement of Tishwin in Unity State, South Sudan. In the process of driving the SAF north, the SPLA temporarily seized the critical oil hub of Heglig, which lies in a complicated and contested border area (Heglig is called Panthou by most Southerners). The fighting was

particularly significant in the wake of Khartoum’s May 2011 seizure of the large Abyei area just to the west of Heglig – another contested area of immense significance to southerners, and in which Heglig had been placed by the CPA’s Abyei Boundaries Commission.

The SPLA withdrew forces from Heglig at the behest of the international community (or, according to Khartoum, pressure from the SAF), but the situation is now explosive. As of [April 25], the northern Sudanese regime was openly bombing targets across the border from Heglig.

...

Over the past year, fighting has spread from Abyei to South Kordofan to Blue Nile to the border regions, and in each instance Khartoum has been the clear aggressor, evidently convinced that it can somehow seize southern oil fields or create a situation on the ground that will strengthen its negotiating position. The SAF began (or, rather, resumed) indiscriminate aerial assaults on civilians in November 2010, shortly before the southern self-determination referendum. This

has accelerated in recent months and weeks; the very recent bombing of Bentiu, a major city and the capital of Unity State, signals a willingness to attack civilians on a large scale.

For its part, the leadership in Juba is bewildered and dismayed. While appropriately fearing the military threat posed by Khartoum, the SPLM/A did not anticipate during peace negotiations that it would be abandoned diplomatically, allowing Khartoum to pick which elements of the CPA Protocols it would observe and which it would ignore. To understand the current dire situation, ...remember that the international community never secured from Khartoum good faith participation in negotiations over delineation and demarcation of the North/South border, per the explicit terms of the CPA. ...

For border delineation to begin in earnest, substantial diplomatic commitment will be needed. Immediately following delineation of any section



of the border, the UN should begin demarcation as a means of creating a credible, effective tripwire along the North/South border to prevent, if possible, future aggressive military actions against the South by Khartoum.

In all likelihood, none of these measures will

be taken, with Khartoum's obduracy used to justify diplomatic fecklessness. But the responsibility for that war will not be Khartoum's alone. It will be shared by international leaders who chose the expedient route, even with millions of lives at risk. §

Zimbabwe: Update on a country in crisis

In recent years, Zimbabwe has suffered profound economic insecurity and rampant human rights abuses perpetrated by its government. Today it moves along a tentative course toward some stability, but grave challenges continue. In late April, the tepid participation in an international trade fair accentuated Zimbabwe's chronic fragility.

On April 27, the BBC reported that India and Russia skipped Zimbabwe's international trade fair; other investors from Europe also avoided the event, held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city. The boycott, according to the BBC, "highlights how relations, which soured between Zimbabwe and Western countries over allegations of human rights abuses, are still far from restored. ... Chinese firms, however, have come to the trade fair ... in droves ... China is the single biggest investor at the trade expo, with Chinese companies taking up 90 percent of the stands."

In addition to protesting human rights abuses, other nations are boycotting Zimbabwe due to the new "indigenization policy," a demand by Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party that all foreign firms give majority control of their companies to Zimbabweans. According to the BBC, "Mugabe says such moves are needed to right the wrongs of the colonial era, which left most of the economy in the hands of the white minority. But his seizure of most of the country's white-owned land has been widely blamed for causing the country's economic collapse. Mugabe's coalition partner and long-time rival, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, has always opposed his plans to seize control of foreign firms."

A Maryknoll sister who has served in Zimbabwe for many years recently wrote: "Zimbabwe provides the Chinese with rough diamonds (straight from the fields) in exchange for military arms and

supplies. Blood diamonds indeed. This has strengthened the stranglehold of the ruling party on the people of this country."

She writes of the profound challenge faced by average Zimbabweans who are unable to secure funding for their small businesses; cash flow is non-existent. "Money goes in pockets, or out of the country, and does not generate for the good of those trying to make a living. ... Everyday life is an exhausting, tireless, and frustrating existence."

"Water supplies are controlled by local governments in towns and cities, but tariffs on water – which have increased 300-400 percent – are dictated by the government in Harare," she continues. "Even if very little water is supplied, the tariffs alone are unaffordable. Wherever mining is present, water is turned off to households and small businesses so that mines have priority, with only a few hours of water available for families after midnight. The entire country is shaken by the water cost."

Due to rising education costs and exam fees, more children, particularly girls, are dropping out of school. Health services have diminished, she writes, and "clinics run by church groups are an absolute necessity. It has been reported that the HIV infection rate has decreased, but the reality is that fewer people can afford any medical services and shy away from clinics where blood testing could be done ... It can be argued that increased illegal mining and cross border trading have both provided the commercial setting where HIV infection increases."

Zimbabwe's economic and social forecast continues to be bleak, though programs such as the Mavambo Trust, organized by missionaries and human rights workers, provide support, educational opportunities and care. Learn up-to-date news about Zimbabwe at www.zimbabwesituation.com. §

NAFTA, free trade, and “exporting obesity”

The industrialization of agriculture and subsequent explosion in the availability of low cost, low-quality, calorie-dense foods (not to mention a more sedentary lifestyle) have fueled the U.S. obesity epidemic over the past 20 years. The U.S. now claims first place worldwide for the highest percentage of overweight and obese people in its population; Mexico, with a population that has experienced a 12 percent increase in being overweight or obese between 2000 and 2006, is in second place. With the rise of a global obesity epidemic, and the saturation of “food environments” of poorer countries with the same low-quality, calorie-dense foods, governments and public health experts are facing a dilemma: Where once chronic hunger and malnutrition were the dominant food-related concerns, rising rates of non-communicable chronic diseases related to obesity now demand greater attention. Experts are beginning to look at the link between the industrialization of agriculture in wealthier countries and the free trade agreements that export these “food environments” to poorer countries.

A new report by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) in the latest issue of the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health examines the link between the industrialization of agriculture in the U.S., and the liberalization of trade and investment rules in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its ensuing effects on Mexican food environments and obesity trends.

IATP’s report names three crucial results of the industrialization of U.S. agriculture and the consequent overproduction and depressed value of commodities, particularly corn and soybeans. First, lower prices attracted livestock and dairy producers to begin using these commodities as feed—meat and dairy producers are now the largest end users of corn and soybeans—and inspired novel derivative products like high fructose corn syrup from corn, and hydrogenated vegetable oil from soybeans. These new and, most importantly, inexpensive derivative products led to the proliferation of a “plethora of processed foods, usually relatively dense in

calories but low in nutritive value,” according to the report. Second, overproduction and lowered domestic prices led the U.S. to seek new export markets for these commodities. This practice of “dumping” U.S. grains (and more recently meat) undercuts domestic production in countries like Mexico. Third, a defining aspect of the globalization of agriculture has been the “increase[d] movement of food-related capital, technology, goods and services throughout the globe.”

The passage of NAFTA in 1991, the report notes, essentially created an “obesogenic environment” in Mexico. Agricultural trade flows since the passage of NAFTA have generally trended towards an increase in seasonal fruits and vegetables flowing north and an increase in inexpensive commodity crops, livestock, and low-quality, calorie-dense snack foods and soda products flowing south. For example, corn exports have quadrupled since the passage of NAFTA, and the average annual sales of snack foods increased by 38 percent from 1999-2001; the U.S. controls more than 98 percent of the import market for snack foods in Mexico. These new Mexican food environments created by the increased export of low quality, processed foods from the U.S. to Mexico have in turn amplified the demand for foods low in nutrition.

In addition, the report notes the profound impact of NAFTA’s liberalization of investment rules and promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI), which led to U.S. agribusiness investment “across the spectrum of Mexico’s food supply chain,” expediting the industrialization of Mexican agriculture. The liberalization of FDI also led to a massive expansion of U.S.-based fast food companies and large food retailers into Mexico: McDonald’s now has more than 500 points of sale, and Mexico is the largest regional market for Yum! Brand Inc. (owner of KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell and Long John Silver’s). Similarly, Wal-Mart stores grew from 114 to 561 between 1993 and 2001.

In total, the coupling of increased low-nutrition, calorie-dense exports and massive amounts of FDI from the U.S. to Mexico, enabled by NAFTA, represents the exportation of an unhealthy U.S.

food system to Mexico, and the rise in overweight and obesity rates and the chronic disease that accompany it. IATP's report offers three recommendations moving forward:

- Require Health Impact Assessments of proposed agricultures trade policies, including active engagement of public health communities;
- Reconcile trade goals with programs that aim to strengthen global food security; and
- Expand provisions in pending trade and investment agreements that allow stronger protection for public health, safety and environment.

According to the report, officials are beginning to take notice: In 2002 the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization secretariats undertook a joint study to examine the issue. Domestically, the American Public Health Association, American Medical Association and American Dietetic Association have published statements supporting healthy food systems and trade systems. While these are encouraging developments, it is clear there is much work to be done in order get these new considerations incorporated into existing and future trade agreements. §

UNCTAD: Battle over global economics

At a time of desperate need for more public debate about global economic policies, the United States, European Union and other countries in the global North are trying to silence one of the very few official voices that analyzes reality from the lens of the global South and offers policy alternatives to the Washington Consensus model favored by most international institutions.

The rich countries are trying to take advantage of a routine quadrennial planning meeting of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to weaken its mandate and shift its focus away from the impact of international economics on the global South to less controversial (and less essential) topics. Assessing economic impact, these countries believe, should be left to the IMF and World Bank which have a worldview more similar to governments in the North. Around the world, civil society organizations have reacted vigorously to defend UNCTAD, while the response of governments in the global South shows that the dominance of the Washington Consensus may be coming to an end.

Two voting blocs are the main players in this controversy. The G77+China bloc represents 132 of the 194 countries in the UN, and so should be the most powerful alliance. But in reality, a smaller coalition of countries from the global North (Japan, the United States, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand, called the JZ group) is more influential.

The JZ group doesn't want UNCTAD to in-

vestigate the effects of finances, energy and climate change on hunger as its findings are likely to conflict with the free market analysis of the IMF and World Bank. The group has removed positive statements from UNCTAD's planning document such as "Securing access to food - one of the most basic human needs - is a priority" and "Adequate regulation and supervision of financial markets, and debt management, can play important roles with regard to crisis prevention and resolution."

In the view of Rubens Ricupero, UNCTAD secretary general from 1995-2004, "The rich countries don't like an organization that is outside their control, and has the capacity for independent analysis, giving advice to African countries, for instance, against the neocolonialist intentions of France and of European countries in general."

UNCTAD's research has been incredibly perceptive in naming significant economic problems before they reach crisis stage. In a letter warning about this current offensive against UNCTAD, current and former employees point out, "UNCTAD was ahead of the curve in its warnings of how global finance was trumping the real economy, both nationally and internationally. It forecast the Mexican tequila crisis of 1994-95. It warned of the East Asian crisis of 1997 and the Argentinian crisis of 2001. It has consistently sounded the alarm of the dangers of excessive deregulation of financial markets," warning for many years about the global imbalances that led to the financial crisis of 2008. If more of UNCTAD's recommendations were fol-

lowed, many of these crises and untold human suffering could have been avoided.

Instead, IMF and World Bank dictates have reigned with negative results in many parts of the world. As the current UNCTAD Secretary-General Dr. Supachai Panitchpakdi said about Africa, “The combination of macroeconomic austerity, rapid liberalisation, privatisation, and deregulation not only failed to produce a supply-side revolution but, instead, set the region back economically; productivity growth stalled in most sectors, and the informal economy had grown rapidly” in countries that followed their prescriptions.

The possibility of losing such an important institution sparked a rapid response from hundreds of civil society organizations around the world who wrote letters in protest, calling for the continued mandate of UNCTAD. The G77 + China also responded firmly:

“While we have always held firmly to our principles, the Group of 77 and China has tried to be as flexible as possible on how we have articulated them in our various negotiations in UNCTAD ...



UNCTAD Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi

[We believe] that the global economic and financial crisis marks for once and for all the end of the bad old days, and perhaps the dawn of an international regime of global economic governance based on the highest principles and ideals of the UN, including sovereignty, equality, and mutual respect. [Yet] we see behaviour that seems to indicate a desire for the dawn of a new neocolonialism. We cannot, we will not, accept this... Perhaps, in our desire for consensus, we have accommodated too much and this good faith was misunderstood, and abused. Perhaps this should end now.”

The strongly worded response is indicative of a more fundamental change that is occurring not just within UNCTAD, but all around the world, especially since the 2008 financial crisis. People and governments of the global South are moving beyond the stronghold of the Washington Consensus free trade model, are developing workable alternative models of their own and leaving behind those who continue to cling to failed ideologies. §

Functionally, sustainable development is built on three fields of endeavor and concern: economic development, social development and environmental development. Since the first sustainable development conference in 1992, also in Rio de Janeiro, it has become very clear that integrating these three areas of development is immensely difficult. Often, the environment, on which all life depends, is degraded in an effort to achieve short term economic benefits. This, in turn, too often fails to take into account the social rights of indigenous people and local communities, resulting in over exploitation of natural resources and people.

In the light of past experience, governments

Rio + 20: The future we want

At the UN headquarters in New York, representatives of governments are currently in session tirelessly engaged in preparations for the June Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro, commonly referred to as Rio+20. The principle work of these days is to move toward finalization of a proposed conference outcome document that will embrace the future of all of humanity within the setting of the entire community of life on Earth. The governments are narrowing down the choices for wording of the document, searching for clear and unambiguous language that best describes the current global aspirations for the future.

In the light of past experience, governments

must work to find the words to inspire actions and compliance. The words chosen to encompass this task must be transparent and ambitious.

Following is proposed text for the document's preamble that attempts to set a tone that meets the criteria of transparency and ambition.

We, the heads of State and Government and other representatives, having met at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20-22 June 2012, and having consulted with civil society, resolve to renew our commitment to sustainable development, and to work together for a prosperous, secure, equitable, inclusive and sustainable future for our planet and its present and future generations.

Challenges: Since most people are aware of how difficult it has been to achieve agreement regarding climate change on a global scale under UN leadership, there is a strong element of skepticism regarding the possibility of achieving a universal agreement at Rio, especially a universal agreement that affects the economy and lays down principles for achieving economic fairness. It is, therefore, very important to bear in mind that the Rio+20 conference is not just about the work of governments – it is about all of civil society, all the stakeholders on the planet, and the future they want to create through their own actions as well as the actions of governments. The failure to achieve agreement on an outcome document would not mean that the Conference has failed unless the Conference also fails to ignite renewed energy directed toward future planetary well-being. This is everyone's responsibility and there are numerous ways of meeting the responsibility. Following are two courses of action open to everyone:

Advocacy: Do all that you can by way of advocacy to influence governments, especially the U.S., to respond cooperatively to the negotiators of other nations regarding their needs and the projected needs of future generations. Future people will need a flourishing planet along with a legacy of social protection and human rights guarantees.

Action: Next, no one can underestimate the impact of private and group actions aimed at a sustainable future.

For example, the Maryknoll Sisters have undertaken a project for the well-being of the Earth

community, now and in the future: Some years ago, the Sisters began an exploration regarding the possibility of placing over 40 acres of their forested property in Westchester County, NY under a Conservation Easement with the Westchester Land Trust, with the intention of preserving the property, with its forest and wetlands, in perpetuity. As the Maryknoll Sisters approached their centennial year (2012), the desire to leave such a land legacy for the future became a strong motivating force for doing all the work necessary to meet the requirements of creating a Conservation Easement. When the Rio+20 Conference was announced, efforts were redoubled, so that all would be completed in time to publically announce and celebrate its establishment in time for the opening of the Conference in June.

Since all the required work was actually completed in April, the legal document between the Maryknoll Sisters and the Westchester Land Trust was signed on Earth Day, with much joy and loud clapping on the part of the Sisters. At the brief signing ceremony, Candace Schafer, executive director of the Westchester Land Trust, read the following words from the writings of Aldo Leopold, a forester who is honored as the Father of Conservation.

That land is a community is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethics. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

The words of Aldo Leopold ought to be reflected upon deeply as the Rio+20 Conference approaches in order to know how to use the land in an economic sense that honors the hard earned social achievements of humanity, while never forgetting that future generations will require adequate, if not generous, resources on which to build their lives.

Faith in action:

Send pre-printed postcards to President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton, urging the U.S. to play a positive role in creating new measurements of progress at Rio+20. Order postcards from the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns to distribute to your communities; each card requires a 32 cent stamp if mailed in the United States. §

Korea: UN asked to evaluate human rights abuses

The following was published by the Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN). Read about Jeju Island and its residents' efforts to stop the construction of a naval base in the September-October 2011 and November-December 2011 issues of NewsNotes.

The People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) [on April 18] filed a petition to the UN Human Rights Commission to review alleged abuses against protesters of a proposed naval base on Jeju Island.

The petition was filed on behalf of four protesters, including Father Bartholomew Mun Jung-hyun, who was recently injured during an attempt to block construction at the site in Gangjeong village.

Some 450 activists and residents of the village have been arrested or detained by police for protesting the naval base since 2010, according to the

PSPD petition.

"The petition to the UNHRC is one of the ways to inform people worldwide about rights violations in Jeju," said Baek Ga-yoon, coordinator at PSPD.

Kang Dong-kyun, head of Gangjeong village and one of the petitioners, said he and fellow activists would continue to publicize the Jeju abuses in the international community.

The petition urges the UNHRC to investigate claims of abuse and urges special rapporteurs to prevent future violations of individuals' rights.

The naval base project was announced in 2007, at which time the government selected Gangjeong village on Jeju Island as the site for the new 400,000 square meter facility.

The base will be home to a new fleet of destroyers set to patrol the East China Sea between China and Japan. §

Legacy of Citizens United v. FEC

In 2012, overall election spending is predicted to reach as high as \$8 billion, thanks to the 2010 Supreme Court 5-4 decision in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (FEC), which essentially granted corporations the First Amendment right to spend unlimited amounts in support of or against political candidates.

The 2010 Citizens United ruling overturned laws which had prevented corporations from making independent expenditures from their general treasuries, and undermined a more than 100-year old legal framework in place through the FEC. (However, the Court did not lift the prohibition against corporations' *direct* donations to candidates.) As long as they do not coordinate with the candidate's campaign or give to the campaign directly, individuals and corporations with enough money can now run ads, make phone calls, and knock on doors to help elect or defeat a candidate for any public office (in a town, a district, a state, or nationally).

According to Public Citizen, a consumer advocacy group, the 2010 election cycle saw spending by outside groups rise 427 percent, reaching \$294.2

million, which made a big difference in congressional elections. Also, "super PACs" (political action committees), created after an appeals court applied Citizens United, collectively have spent more than \$45 million during this current election cycle. How will our elected officials be able to support the well-being of society when they fear that defying corporate interests will mean that millions of dollars of corporate money will be used to defeat them in the next election?

The United for the People coalition, including Public Citizen and other organizations, along with public officials, is calling for constitutional remedies to overturn the Citizens United decision and related cases. Though there are a range of tactics and views on how to fix the problem, all understand that a constitutional amendment is the long-term solution to fully reverse the court's decision.

Join the effort to pass a resolution in your own city or state. Find out more about raising awareness in your area the week of June 11 at <http://www.resolutionsweek.org/>. Also, check out the animated eight-minute film, *The Story of Citizens United v. FEC*, on the www.storyofstuff.org website. §

Investors call for human rights framework

In 2010, the California State Legislature passed a law, the Transparency in Supply Chains Act, which requires every retail seller and manufacturer doing business in California and having annual worldwide gross receipts that exceed \$100 million to disclose its efforts to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from its direct supply chain for tangible goods offered for sale. Since January 1, 2012, companies are required to make the disclosures available through a “conspicuous and easily understood link to the required information placed on the business’ homepage.” Socially responsible investors are working to make sure this is doesn’t consist of a superficial checklist that companies fill out.

According to the law, the information the company provides must indicate the extent to which the company: 1) verifies supply chains to evaluate and address risks of human trafficking and slavery; 2) conducts unannounced and verified audits of suppliers for trafficking and slavery in supply chains to evaluate compliance with company standards; 3) maintains internal accountability standards and procedures for employees or contractors failing to meet company standards regarding slavery and trafficking; 4) trains employees and management with direct responsibility for supply chain management, to mitigate risks within the supply chains of products; 5) certifies that materials incorporated into the product comply with the laws regarding human trafficking of the country or countries in which they are doing business.

Members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) want companies to go beyond minimum compliance of the law. There must be evidence of programmatic commitments and public reporting that reflect a holistic human rights framework to address all forms of human trafficking.

ICCR, along with Christian Brothers Investment Services and Calvert Investments have published a document, “Supply Chain Accountability: Investor Guidance on Implementation of the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act and Be-

yond,” to help companies address a wide range of human rights issues. Companies can take a number of steps to demonstrate to stakeholders and shareholders that they are evaluating and addressing key risks in the supply chain. These range from establishing a human rights policy and a human rights due diligence process, to conducting human rights assessments and developing mechanisms for independent and unannounced auditing, verification and traceability.

A human rights due diligence process and human rights assessments could, for example, identify commodities frequently associated with trafficking and areas of the world where trafficking is pervasive. This would enable companies to target key training programs and conduct supplier audits. There are already examples of these efforts: Hewlett-Packard’s supplier management system that evaluates risks posed by supplier activities; and the work Gap has done to chart elements of its supply chain and the state of working conditions within various levels of that chain, and determine where Gap has the most to least influence in that supply chain.

Auditing recruitment and hiring practices, such as debts that workers have incurred in order to obtain employment, should be standard practice. A traceability program—the capability to identify the origin of a particular unit located within the supply chain—can be a helpful tool in the auditing and verification process as companies assess their risk beyond first-tier suppliers to include materials and commodities. For example, when serious concerns surfaced about forced child labor in the cotton fields of Uzbekistan, retailers and brands initially had difficulty determining where the cotton in their garments was sourced since cotton can be blended from a number of different countries. Approaches to traceability have been developed by organizations such as Historic Futures, which offers apparel retailers one method of tracking and tracing by uploading receipts on individual components within entire supply chains onto a secure network.

Critical to these efforts are the training of suppliers, vendors, contractors and auditors on company policies, on ways to identify trafficking, on steps

to take to report suspected cases and to protect victims, and on workers' rights.

Finding and addressing slavery and trafficking in complex global supply chains will require companies to collaborate. In addition to working with contractors, suppliers, and joint venture partners, there are a wide range of local, national and

international external stakeholders with whom a company should consider engaging such as labor ministries, anti-trafficking law enforcement, child welfare agencies, social service and human rights non-governmental organizations, unions, and other civil society groups. §

Stop Wall Street offensive against reform

Happy with their victory of passing the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010, which contains a number of strong reforms, many civil society organizations moved on to other battles. Yet in order to actually become law, the details of the Dodd-Frank Act must be defined by regulatory agencies. During this interim process, Wall Street financiers stepped up their lobbying efforts, and now are able to claim success: None of the significant reforms in Dodd-Frank have been implemented, and most are being watered down or are even in danger of being thrown out.

One key reform – limiting the amount of speculation in food and energy futures markets – would help lower and stabilize world food and energy prices. Congress stressed the importance of this change and gave only six months, rather than the standard one to two years, for the Commodities Trading Futures Commission (CFTC) to implement this rule. Despite the urgency, the CFTC was not able to define the new rule until last October, more than a year after the passage of Dodd-Frank.

Even though the limit is ridiculously high (no single investor can own more than 25 percent of an entire commodity market at one time), Wall Street has sued the CFTC to reject the limit. That case is now being considered in federal court. A number of amicus briefs in favor of the law have been filed by senators and market analysts. If Wall Street's attempt is successful, it could have negative repercussions for other reforms like the Volker rule, which prevents banks that are insured by the federal government to trade in dangerous derivatives.



Wall Street seems to be following the same plan that polluting industries used against the Clean Air Act. Even though the law was passed in the early 1990s, industry was able to hold up its implementation through a series of lawsuits. Now, more than 20 years later, many important parts of the Clean Air Act have yet to be applied. If Wall Street is able to delay the financial reforms, there is little doubt that another global financial and economic crisis will result.

House Republicans have joined the fray, introducing a number of bills aimed to weaken Dodd-Frank reforms by providing more exemptions and other loopholes to the rules.

Underfunding regulatory agencies is another strategy to weaken the financial reforms: If the improvements are actually implemented, the CFTC will be responsible for regulating hundreds of trillions of dollars instead of the many billions of dollars it now controls. In light of the larger workload for the CFTC, the administration has called for an increase for the agency's budget, from \$205 million to \$308 million, a difference that would not even be a rounding error in the larger government budget. The proposed House budget would actually cut the agency's current budget.

Faith in action:

Call or write your legislators telling them not to be penny wise and pound foolish – 1) fully fund the CFTC at \$308 million in order for it to help stabilize food and energy prices; and 2) do not vote for any bill that grants more exemptions from Dodd-Frank reforms. §

CTBT: Time to ratify

On March 30 the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released a report on technical issues related to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The report states that the United States is better able to detect clandestine nuclear weapons tests abroad than ever before and that it can ensure the reliability of its own nuclear arsenal without conducting tests. The report has prompted arms control and disarmament advocates to make a new push for treaty ratification, urging senators to support the CTBT when it comes up for consideration.

The CTBT bans nuclear weapons testing and establishes an International Monitoring System to verify compliance. This prohibition on testing would prevent the development of new nuclear weapons and the expansion of current systems.

The treaty has been signed by 183 countries and ratified by 157. However, the U.S. and eight other holdouts (China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan) must ratify for CTBT to enter into force. President Clinton signed the treaty in 1996 but the Senate refused to offer its advice and consent in 1999. The chief objections at the time were concerns over whether treaty violations could be verified and the reliability of the U.S. arsenal in the absence of regular tests.

The report makes clear that these are no longer valid reasons for refusing to ratify. It concludes that U.S. capabilities to detect nuclear tests have improved dramatically. The International Monitoring System established by the CTBT now has over 250 stations around the world, meaning even low level nuclear detonations cannot evade detection.

The report also states that the United States can be confident in the reliability of its nuclear arsenal for the “foreseeable future.” The U.S. has conducted over 1,000 nuclear tests, more than any



other country. With the information from past tests and technological advances in simulations the safety and security of the weapons can be confirmed. The Obama administration has demonstrated its commitment to continue these efforts by increasing the funding of the National Nuclear Security Administration, which is responsible maintaining the arsenal through the Stockpile Stewardship Program. (In 2009, President Obama pledged to pursue ratification.)

In a recent editorial, Daryl Kimball of the Arms Control Association stated, “Senators and their staff need to take a serious look at the merits of the CTBT in light of the new NAS findings and not rush to judgment on the basis of old myths and misconceptions.”

Pope Benedict XVI has declared his support for the CTBT. In a 2008 statement, Vatican spokesman Archbishop Dominique Mamberti stated, “The Holy See is convinced that, in working together, the signature, ratification, and entry into force of the Treaty will represent a great leap forward for the future of humanity, as well as for the protection of the earth and environment, entrusted to our care by the Creator.”

Faith in action:

Ratification of the CTBT – an essential instrument for reducing the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and moving us toward disarmament – is possible with sustained pressure from the general public. Contact your senators today and ask them to support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Consider using the alert on the Friends Committee on National Legislation’s (FCNL) website, www.fcnl.org/action/alert/2012/0405. §

Resources

- 1) **Video: Solitary confinement: Torture in your backyard:** In time for June, Torture Awareness Month, this 20-minute video produced by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a resource for churches/communities to learn about the destructive use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and to engage people of faith in calling for its end in their state. The film could also work well in a college group setting, prayer group, prison ministry or social justice committee, and interfaith groups. NRCAT has prepared discussion guides and promotional materials to use to facilitate a group discussion. Visit NRCAT's website for details: www.nrcat.org.
- 2) **Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Advocacy Conference:** CMEP's annual conference will be held at Catholic University in Washington, D.C. on June 18-19. Advocates, leaders, experts and more will gather to be better informed, equipped and supported in raising our voices for U.S. policies and actions that work for justice and peace in the Holy Land. In addition to plenary lectures and workshops, a lobby training and lobby day will be held so you can take what you've learned directly to your elected officials in Washington. Visit CMEP's website for further information: www.cmep.org.
 
- 3) **Land Matrix:** The Land Matrix is an online public database of large-scale land deals around the world. At this point, it provides a visualization of half of the available land deal records since 2000. The remaining deals are being crosschecked and added, together with new data, on an on-going basis. The site's producers have documented 1,006 deals since the year 2000, amounting to 70,217,083 hectares of land, which equals the size of half of Western Europe. The site answers questions such as: Who are the top investing countries? Who are the top 10 investors? Which countries have the highest or the lowest score in making land acquisition data available? Data can be searched by region or country. Visit <http://landportal.info/landmatrix>.
- 4) **Video: The high price of materialism:** This five and a half minute film, produced by the Center for a New American Dream and available on YouTube, is a quick and effective tool that explains the downside of excess materialism and points toward solutions that promise a healthier, more just, and more sustainable life. Go to www.newdream.org and click on "High price of materialism" in the right side column.
- 5) **"Blessed are the peacemakers:"** The Pax Christi International Youth Summer Camp, for ages 18-30, will be held July 9-13, 2012 at Casa per la Pace in Florence, Italy. Organizers want this to be a truly international event with representatives from as many Pax Christi sections as possible. For more information contact Fleur at Pax Christi France (paxchristi_jeunes@yahoo.fr) or Matt at Pax Christi UK (education@paxchristi.org.uk).
- 6) **Economic justice resources:** The New Economics Institute offers a variety of online resources on topics including banking and finance, responsive government, production and consumption, measuring well-being, sharing the commons, among several others. Visit <http://neweconomicsinstitute.org/conference/resource/index> to learn more.
- 7) **Voices of our world/Voces de nuestro mundo:** These weekly public affairs radio programs are sponsored by Maryknoll. They feature shows on social justice, peace projects, environmental concerns, and other critical issues. Check the website to learn if they are broadcast in your area, or listen to podcasts online: www.voice-sofourworld.org.