

FAIR DEAL FOR FARMERS

It is estimated that we eat an average of three bars of chocolate each week – the UK chocolate business is worth £4 billion per year! Yet cocoa farmers are living on the breadline in poverty. Do we want to know about supply chains used by large companies – about conditions and incomes of the workers who manufacture the commodities we use?

The Fight For Living Incomes Campaign is trying to see a living wage for everyone, so they can buy food, clothing and education. Fairtrade Fortnight (22nd February to 7th March) encourages each of us to buy fair trade goods so farmers can earn sufficient to invest in better farming methods and facilities, helping themselves and their communities in sustaining the natural world.

Haydn Highton

DUMFRIES FAIRTRADE GROUP

To mark Fairtrade Fortnight 2021, Dumfries Fairtrade Group will be holding an online Coffee Morning, with a quiz, short films, and recipes, as part of this year's campaign to raise awareness of the urgent message of Fairtrade and climate change.

Saturday 6th March, 11am online

(find details on their website <https://dumfriesfairtrade.org.uk> or on FaceBook)

CHOOSE THE WORLD YOU WANT

Fairtrade Fortnight: 22 February to 7 March 2021

Fairtrade Fortnight is coming up! The annual campaign kicks off on Monday 22 February and I'll be one of many campaigners across Scotland taking part. Will you join me?

Taking part in Fairtrade Fortnight is as important as ever. We may be at home but we are still relying on and buying essential items thanks to the dedication of key workers.

But key workers at the start of many supply chains are struggling. Farmers of crops such as tea, coffee and cocoa are still being paid poorly for their produce and work. Workers who make our products and clothes are subjected to dangerous conditions and have little power in the multimillion-pound supply chains they supply to. And worryingly, alongside the coronavirus crisis, the climate emergency looms large.

Farmers tell us that they are feeling the effects of climate change now. Freak weather, erratic rainfall and the increasing prevalence of plant diseases are affecting their crops. A farmer in Malawi told us:

'Climate change means there are now seasons when the harvest fails. If this happens the immediate impact is hunger for the already vulnerable families.'

Fairtrade coffee farmer, Bayardo Betanco of the Prodecoop co-operative in Nicaragua, said:

'There is a chain on earth that starts where the producers are. They are the ones who suffer the consequences of climate change, the ones who get the least help, and carry all of the burden. It's not fair.'

Now, more than ever, we need to ensure that farmers receive a fair price for their crops and their work. We need to change the way we do business and trade to benefit people and our planet. This is about justice and ensuring trade is fair.

With Fairtrade, farmers get a fair price and can respond better to the effects of climate change. With Fairtrade, they have a voice in the global trading system and we, as members of the global Fairtrade community, can ensure those voices are heard.

This Fairtrade Fortnight, although we can't hold our usual coffee mornings, stalls and school visits, there is no shortage of ways for you to get involved and spread this important message.

On Saturday 27 February, join us online for our big climate justice coffee morning. Sign up soon for a chance to receive a free sample of coffee to enjoy as you hear from the farmers from the Rwandan Fairtrade cooperative who grew it. Sign up at: www.scottishfairtradeforum.org.uk

Also online, the UK-wide Choose the World You Want Festival is a chance to find out more about Fairtrade and stand with the farmers severely impacted by the climate emergency. From cooking demos to virtual tours of Fairtrade coops and creative workshops, there is something for everyone: fairtrade.org.uk

If you can't join an online event, look out for Fairtrade when you are shopping and write to your MP and MSPs asking them to take urgent action on trade to respond to the climate emergency.

At its heart, Fairtrade is about people and partnerships. Even from our homes and behind our screens, we can still campaign, challenge the status quo and choose the world we want.

Colleen Tait, the Scottish Fair Trade Forum

Interested in buying, selling or supporting Fairtrade but don't know where to start? Contact us at the Scottish Fair Trade Forum for ideas and a chance to connect to others interested in Fair Trade.

@FairTradeNation

www.scottishfairtradeforum.org.uk

info@sftf.org.uk / Tel: 0141 353 5611



THOUGHT FOR TODAY

Lord, for tomorrow and its needs

I do not pray,

Keep me, my God, from stain of sin

just for today,

Let me both diligently work

and duly pray;

Let me be kind in word and deed

just for today

Let me be slow to do my will,

swift to obey;

Keep me in thy loving care

just for today.

Let me no wrong or idle word

unthinking say;

Set thou a seal upon my lips

just for today,

Let me in season, Lord, be grave,

in season gay:

Let me be faithful to thy grace,

and if today my tide of life shall ebb away

grant me, dear Lord, thy sacrament divine.

So for tomorrow and its needs

I do not pray.

O, keep me, guide me, love me Lord

~~~ just for today.

*Church Gardener*



## **CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORK**

Church related community work is a distinctive form of ministry developed over the last forty years in the United Reformed Church. Yet the work is not widely known and what follows is an article in Reform last November.

“CRCWs train for four years in theology and community development at Northern College, and this includes 1,600 hours of placement leading to a community development qualification and a degree in theology. They are a different kind of minister. They are assigned to an accredited community church or group of churches for a five-year term which can be renewed for another five years.

“Their training is designed to give them skills to develop groups in a way that enables everyone concerned to participate. Their job is to bring different groups of people together in an area in order to identify their hopes, assets and opportunities, and to collaborate in change-making local ventures working in partnership with other organisations.

“Free from organising the church as a worship community, CRCWs make links with people who have no other connections to the church. They also ensure that the church’s focus is not just on its own organisation but ensures it has an understanding of poverty, racism, loneliness and the many other aspects of wider society – they help churches widen their mission by identifying local needs and opportunities and organising community action. Churches are helped to develop initiatives to improve the well-being of local people.

“CRCWs are skilled professionals providing a bridge between church and community without any strings attached.”

*Haydn Highton*

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ON A LIGHTER NOTE ~

Robin thought we might all enjoy a smile from these quips as we can all relate to them, being churchy folk and tending to make similar grammatical errors. We’re told these sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services:

- The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your partners.
- Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

Commitment for Life

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Moving Stories

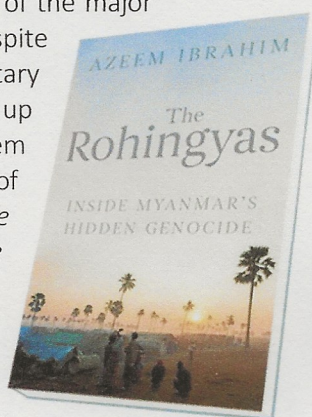
NEW, VIEWS, STORIES: BANGLADESH

Dhaka, Bangladesh – Many Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh have condemned the military coup in Myanmar. However, others say they do not “feel sorry” that Aung San Suu Kyi has been removed from power.

Speaking to Al Jazeera at the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar district, Rohingya community leader Mohammad Yunus Arman said the Myanmar military had killed their families in Rakhine state while Aung San Suu Kyi was in power.

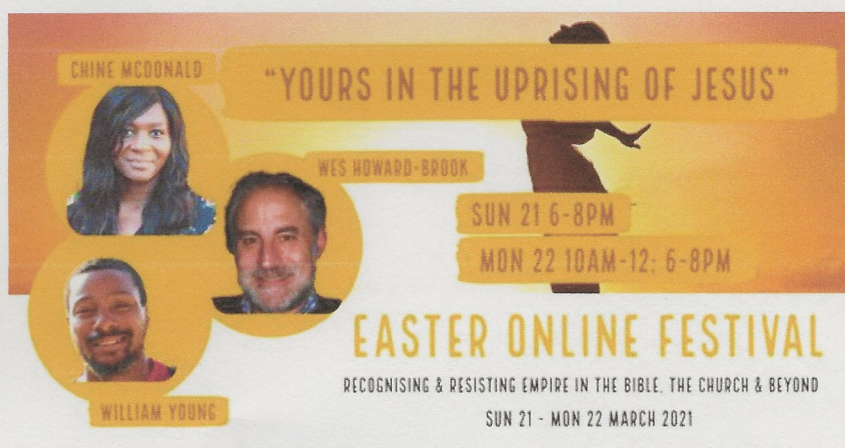
“She remained silent about it. She didn’t even utter the word ‘Rohingya’. Once we used to pray for her success and used to treat her like our queen. But after 2017, we realised her real character,” he said.

International relations experts say the coup in Myanmar has removed the “facade of democracy” in the country, and that the probability of repatriating the Rohingya has further diminished. “You can’t have a real democracy when 25 percent seats are automatically allocated to the military, which also controls four of the major ministries. So despite elections, the military never really gave up power,” Azeem Ibrahim, author of the book, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar’s Hidden Genocide*, has said.



Christian Aid provides critical support for the Rohingya refugees at Cox’s Bazar, and Commitment for Life is honoured to be partnering with Christian Aid in this work.

Please diarise our Easter Festival, and support our ‘gratitude for our vaccines’ initiative below.



Join in with this Easter Online Festival

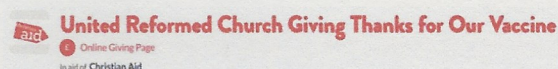
3 sessions: Sun 21st Mar & Mon 22nd Mar

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95283244787?pwd=SFBjT2VmcVdMQWljRE82amQrU1Y2dz09>

Meeting ID: 952 8324 4787: Passcode: 784428

Support our Vaccination Gratitude Giving Page



<https://events.tapsimple.org/page/christian-aid/united-reformed-church-supporting-a-just-vaccine-rollout>

Commitment for Life is the Global Justice Programme of the United Reformed Church in the UK

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