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# Worship

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Traidcraft Stakeholder Event  
& Annual General Meeting  
Traidcraft, Kingsway, Gateshead  
Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2009



**Approach:**

**Leader:** Creator God, Lord of high heaven and the good earth, you call us into being, shape us and name us and make us in your image.

**All: We praise you and bless your holy name.**

**Leader:** Bountiful God, Lord of the seed and of the harvest, you cause life to spring up in all its richness, beauty and variety, and we are nurtured and fed.

**All: We praise you and bless your holy name.**

**Leader:** Loving God, Lord of all goodness and of grace, you call us into communion with you and community with each other and you come among us in word and flesh and spirit to share our life and lift us to you.

**All: We praise you and bless your holy name. Amen**

**Song:**

Beauty for brokenness,  
 Hope for despair,  
 Lord, in your suffering,  
 This is our prayer:  
 Bread for the children,  
 Justice, joy, peace;  
 Sunrise to sunset,  
 Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives,  
 Cures for their ills,  
 Work for the craftsman,  
 Trade for their skills:  
 Land for the dispossessed,  
 Rights for the weak,  
 Voices to plead the cause,  
 Of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor,  
 Friend of the weak,  
 Give us compassion we pray.  
 Melt our cold hearts,  
 Let tears fall like rain;  
 Come, change our love  
 From a spark to a flame.*

Refuge from cruel wars,  
 Havens from fear,  
 Cities for sanctuary,  
 Freedoms to share;  
 Peace to the killing-fields,  
 Scorched earth to green,  
 Christ for the bitterness,  
 His cross for the pain.

Rest for the ravaged earth,  
 Oceans and streams  
 Plundered and poisoned –  
 Our future, our dreams.  
 Lord, end our madness,  
 Carelessness, greed;  
 Make us content with  
 The things that we need

*God of the poor,  
 Friend of the weak,  
 Give us compassion we pray.  
 Melt our cold hearts,  
 Let tears fall like rain;  
 Come, change our love  
 From a spark to a flame.*

Lighten our darkness,  
 Breathe on this flame,  
 Until your justice  
 Burns brightly again;  
 Until the nations  
 Learn of your ways,  
 Seek your salvation  
 And bring you their praise.

*God of the poor,  
 Friend of the weak,  
 Give us compassion we pray.  
 Melt our cold hearts,  
 Let tears fall like rain;  
 Come, change our love  
 From a spark to a flame.*

**Leader:** Let us pray...

Holy God,  
though this world depends upon your grace,  
it is governed and tended by mortals.

So we pray for those,  
who walk the corridors of power  
in the parliaments of this and other lands,  
whose judgements we value or fear.

*(Silence)*

May they always consider those they represent,  
make decisions with courage and integrity,  
and resist any temptation  
to abuse the trust placed in them.

Lord hear us

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

**Leader:** We pray for those who hold key positions  
in the worlds of finance, business and industry,  
whose decisions may profit some  
or impoverish many.

*(Silence)*

May they always value people more highly than profit;  
may they never impose burdens on the poor  
which they would not carry themselves;  
and may they never divorce money from morality  
or ownership from stewardship.

Lord hear us

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

**Leader:** And let us remember  
those for whom we are responsible  
and to whom we are accountable  
in all that we will do today.

*(Silence)*

May we show to them  
the thoughtfulness, tolerance  
and kindness of Jesus.

Lord hear us

**All: Lord, graciously hear us.**

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**Reading:** Ecclesiastes 3: 1 -13

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

What does the worker gain from his toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on men. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for men than to be happy and do good while they live. That everyone may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all his toil – this is the gift of God.

**Reflection:**

That reading sets before us a vision of a world where everyone may eat and drink and find satisfaction in their toil. This is the gift of God. Yet we know that for billions of God's children that gift is denied to them by the disordered and unjust way we structure, run and exploit the world God has given us. If the gift is to be realized, then, as Ecclesiastes reminds us, we must be prepared to act in due season.

Traidcraft has been taking action for 30 years as we have sought, in various ways, to fulfil our mission of fighting poverty through trade – but we have not fought alone.

We thank God for the churches and individual Christians across the UK, whose support has enabled us to add our voice and our effort to those of other agencies, groups, and of the church itself, in the fight to end the scandal of poverty. And that fight goes on...

Working with denominational initiatives in the churches and with wider coalitions like Christian Concern for One World, One World Week and, more recently, Micah Challenge, we are striving to ensure the fight for trade justice remains at the heart of the fight against poverty. It is how, in the words of Ecclesiastes, we seek to do good while we live.

### **Act of commitment:**

**Leader:** Next month, in our churches, we will have the opportunity to stand up and take action, as part of the global call to action against poverty. Today, at the start of our AGM we invite you to stand up as an act of re-commitment to all that Traidcraft stands for and all we are still seeking to achieve.

We can't be included in the official total for this year's action – that takes place between October 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> – but what we do today could be the encouragement that others need to stand up and take action also. That is why, with your permission, we want to take some photographs which we will send to the stand against poverty website.

As we make these promises we'll turn in the direction indicated by the signs (*North, East, South, West*). If standing is uncomfortable or not possible, raising a hand will be just as important as an act of commitment.

#### **(All stand)**

**All: We commit ourselves, as followers of Jesus, to work together to pursue justice, to act generously and to walk humbly with God.**

*(Face "North")*

**Leader:** We say to the people of the North:

**All: We promise to stand up for promoting fairness and respect. So we speak out today for all those working for justice and equity in trade.**

*(Face "East")*

**Leader:** We say to the people of the East:

**All: We promise to stand up for reducing child mortality. So we speak out for the 30,000 children who will die today due to poverty.**

*(Face "South")*

**Leader:** We say to the people of the South:

**All: We promise to stand up for stopping extreme poverty and hunger. So we speak out for the billion people who will go to bed hungry tonight.**

*(Face "West")*

**Leader:** We say to the people of the West:

**All: We promise to stand up for responsible consumption and a fair and just distribution of the world's resources. So we speak out for all those already suffering the consequences of climate change and for those working to ensure the riches of God's world are shared by all.**

**We promise to stand up and speak out against poverty whenever we can, wherever we can, again...and again.**

*(Please be seated)*

**Leader:** Let us pray...

Lord Jesus, you turn the tables on the Temple traders and rage at those who take advantage of the poor and the powerless.

You seek out and stand in solidarity with those discarded and damaged by the system and tell them they are beloved of God.

Lord Jesus, give us your heart for the poor so that their needs shape the choices we make; fill us with a righteous anger so that we are moved to action on their behalf and raise our voice in the face of injustice; guard us from the peril of empty prayers and faith without deeds.

So may we help build your kingdom. **Amen.**

And now, as Jesus taught us, we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread,  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us in the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom, the power  
And the glory are yours,  
Now and for ever. Amen.**

**Leader:** The Christian commitment to seek justice for the poor was the inspiration for our next song. It was written by a Traidcraft Fair Trader, Michael Breuck, and it was the winning entry in a national hymn-writing competition organized by the Coward Trust for the United Reformed Church. We are grateful to Michael, the Coward Trust and to the URC for permission to use it here today.

**Song: *Come, God of freedom...***

Come, God of freedom, fill the world you fashioned,  
release the people you have made and met;  
you offer us humanity unshackled –  
to break the chains of steel and greed and debt.

*Come, God of freedom, draw us to each other  
that each may lead the other to be free.*

Come, God of justice, help us see as brothers  
who feel their lives are mortgaged stacking shelves,  
as sisters those still trafficked for their bodies,  
whom few will love, who cannot love themselves.

*Come, God of justice, draw us to each other  
that each may lead the other to be free.*

Come, God of mercy, seek us on the High Street;  
we see you in a sweatshop sewing shirts:  
our fashion's cost an economic bondage  
where middlemen must have their profits first.

*Come, God of mercy, draw us to each other  
that each may lead the other to be free.*

Come, God of healing, hold us to our calling  
in seeking out the truth, that all may see,  
in speaking for the broken and the silenced,  
in praying that the captives may go free.

*Come, God of healing, draw us to each other  
that each may lead the other to be free.*

Words: © Michael Breuck (2009)  
Tune: *Som Stranden* by L.A. Lundberg.

**Blessing:**

**Leader:** Let us ask for God's blessing on all that we will do here today:

**All: Lord, give us wisdom before we speak,  
understanding while we listen,  
sensitivity to those with whom we disagree  
and the perspective of your kingdom  
in which to see the things of earth.  
Bring us to the ending of this day together  
blessed through having shared in its beginning.  
In Christ's name we ask it. Amen.**

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