

MAKE**POVERTY**HISTORY

NorthEast

With the support of Christian Aid and Traidcraft

HEED THE CALL

THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN

Celebrate the Great North Run & Salute the Runners!

Saturday 18th September

St Thomas' Church, Haymarket, Newcastle upon Tyne

4.30-5.15pm

Welcome the Progress and Call for More!

*With Nick Dearden, Director of Jubilee Debt Campaign,
and contributions by aid agency speakers.*

This is not a meeting of religious worship

--- Interval with refreshments ---

5.45-6.30pm

**Service of Blessing for the Great North Run
and the United Nations Millennium Campaign**

*Presiding, Revd Catherine Lack
Master of St Thomas the Martyr
And Newcastle University Chaplain*

Those of all faiths and none will be welcome

And coming up soon!

We'll be supporting the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition to call for people to lobby their MPs on climate change on 5th and 6th November. This is a key time for climate politics and we will have a good opportunity to influence big issues.

We really need your email address!

Are you getting emails from us? If not, please, please let us have your address! Given the size of our mailing list, it is impossible for us to keep you informed without it.

Make Poverty History *NorthEast*

Chair, Judith Sadler; Vice-Chair, Kevin Haigh; Secretary and Website Manager,
Tim Kenny; Treasurer, Mike Waller; Development Coordinator, David Golding;
Minutes Secretary, Maureen Osborn; Mailing List Manager, Veronica Golding.

Website: www.mph-northeast.org.uk Contact: 0191 222 5282; d.w.golding@ncl.ac.uk

Support the United Nations Millennium Campaign

Celebrate the Great North Run & Salute the Runners!

St Thomas' Church, Haymarket, Newcastle upon Tyne

Saturday 18th September, 4.30-5.15pm and 5.45-6.30pm

I invite you to attend the meetings we are holding on Saturday 18th September to support the United Nations Millennium Campaign (UNMC) and to celebrate the Great North Run, with the support of Christian Aid and Traidcraft. This is the *first time* we have attempted to stage such an event and hope you will help make a success of it.

The occasion will also mark both the re-launch of Make Poverty History NE as "North East **CALL TO ACTION** on global poverty and climate change", and the launch of our 4th Annual 'Autumn Study Roadshow'. The latter features a programme of local gatherings across the region, Tees-Tweed, and is unique in the UK and probably world-wide.

The weekend, Fri 17th - Sun 19th September, is the weekend of action called by the UNMC. It coincides this year with the Great North Run on Sunday 19th.

In the past, MPH-NE has made notable contributions to the campaign, including, in 2008, proposing a target for the participation of 1% of the global population (67 million), which was picked up even by the UNMC's Director. [We got nearly 2%!]

A special year and a doubly special weekend – the year is 10 years after the historic *Millennium Declaration* was signed by all the world's leaders, and 5 years before the date (2015)

set for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), intended to halve severe poverty. *The weekend* precedes the meeting of the UN General Assembly to review progress towards the Goals *and* it's the weekend of the GNR – the greatest running event in the UK.

Is there progress to celebrate?

Yes, there is! Many of the world's poorest countries are making the most overall progress towards the MDGs. *"This establishes that much of the negative reporting on the MDGs is misleading,"* says Salil Shetty, Director of the UNMC. *"Instead of just lamenting that Africa might miss the MDG targets, we should be celebrating the real changes that have happened in the lives of millions of poor people."* Well said!

So can we just relax? No, we can't, because we still have far to go! Furthermore, 'those who could be blamed the least, the poorest people in the poorest countries, are suffering the most' from the financial crisis. In spite of this, commitments to provide aid for those in '*abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty*', as the Millennium Declaration put it, are under attack as never before.

Our position is clear: *"We will no longer stay seated or silent in the face of poverty and the broken promises to end it!"* (United Nations Millennium Campaign, 2010)

CALL TO CHURCHES IN NORTH EAST ENGLAND

MPH-NE invites all churches in the Region to support

- The United Nations Millennium Campaign on Sunday 19th September -
- The 10.10.10 initiative of Micah Challenge on Sunday 10th October -

UNITED NATIONS MILLENNIUM CAMPAIGN

Sunday 19th September

“We will no longer stay seated or silent in the face of poverty and the broken promises to end it!”

This is a special year and a special weekend, before world leaders meet to review progress.

“The summit will be a crucially important opportunity,” says UN Secretary General, Ban ki-Moon. ***“We have many successes on which to build... However, time is short...”***

MPH-NE invites all churches in the Region to pray for the outcome of the summit at their services on Sunday 19th September. Congregations can stand to show their support for the Goals, and the *Stand Up Pledge*, written specially for the occasion, may be read or displayed.

For further information, go to www.standagainstopoverty.org

MICAH CHALLENGE 2010

Sunday 10th October - 10.10.10

With the Archbishop of Canterbury and other church leaders (see below)

Micah Challenge is an international Christian movement campaigning for the relief of global poverty. 10.10.10 is “a special campaign to focus on our promise to the poor, ten years after all nations

committed to halve world poverty by 2015... We want to declare God’s heart for the poor and remind our leaders that action to halve poverty is worth every effort.”

The Prayer: *“Imagine 100 million Christians praying for justice in the nations... using the global prayer for Micah 2010....”*

The Promise: *“Our dream is for 10 million people to promise to remember the poor.”*

The Hand-Over: *“A church could invite their MP to an event... contributing to our target of at least 1,000 meetings with political leaders in 20 countries.”*

10.10.10 is receiving support from regional, national and international church leaders, ranging from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and Commissioner Christine Macmillan, Salvation Army, to Peter Maiden, International Director, Operation Mobilisation; and from [ex-Bishop!] Tom Wright to John Singleton, Northern Baptist Association; and many more.

I urge church leaders to see for themselves the truly beautiful materials (video, prayers, actions) produced for 10.10.10 – go to www.micahchallenge.org/get-involved/micah-2010

4th Annual Autumn Roadshow

(20th September – End of November)

We are planning another 'Autumn Study Roadshow' this year - the 'jewel in the crown' of our grouping, unique in the UK and probably world-wide! ☺ We would greatly value your collaboration to enable us to have an event in your city/town/village.

We are hoping to have events in locations throughout the North East (Tees-Tweed). We can provide *brief* (15 mins) presentations on progress towards the MDGs and one or two other topics - for example, one from me, possibly entitled "*Whatever happened to global warming? - Questions about Climate Change*", etc., and another by one of the aid agencies (Cafod, Christian Aid, or Tearfund). We also provide campaign

cards for signing. It would be good if supporters were to use these occasions to involve their MPs.

However, the format is infinitely variable - a brief interview or a more substantial address in a church service by one of us, for example; a contribution to a school lesson; or an informal meeting with half a dozen of your friends at home.

Please do give this a bit of thought! Your interest and involvement, in however small a way, will be much appreciated. And do remember my 'bottom line': "*Here in the North East, there is little we can do to influence global events, but that little we can and must do!*"

THIS-IS-WHAT-YOU-DO!

If you would like to involve your MP, you need to invite him/her as soon as possible. The easiest way is to email him/her at www.writetothem.com (you can also ring the constituency office, or write to "House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA"). [I will be happy to provide you with a draft letter.]

Ask him/her to suggest a date, or preferably two, when that would be possible. Tell him/her that you hope he/she will be willing

to say 'a few words' (15 mins maximum!). But if he/she turns you down, or you don't want to involve him/her, you could still host an event!

You then need to find somewhere to meet - eg, a church or community hall; large living room.

Finally, please check on our availability before entering into any firm commitments!

“Who’s ‘aiding’ who?!”

(As abbreviated by Metro, 15th February, 2010)

“None of the responses about foreign aid has even hinted at the other side of the story. As a result of unfair trade rules, poor countries lose several times as much as they get in aid. In addition, there are the still enormous repayments of debts inherited from earlier generations, and losses due to

tax fiddles by multinationals using tax havens. So who’s ‘aiding’ who?! As far as international aid is concerned, we don’t have to make these promises to the poorest people in the world, but if we do make them, we should keep them.” Dr David Golding, Newcastle University.

Jubilee shoots down Vulture Funds – with North East help!

Newcastle University's Press Release, 8th April, 2010

The House of Lords has this afternoon rubber-stamped the so called 'Vultures Law', a landmark bill which will protect the poorest countries in the world, a bill which was uniquely supported by Newcastle University.

The Debt Relief (Developing Countries) Bill, led by the Jubilee Debt Campaign, is the world's first law to restrict the ability of Vulture Funds to sue some of the world's poorest countries for full repayment of debts that they have bought up cheaply. Last November two Vulture Funds were awarded \$20 million in the High Court from Liberia - the second poorest country in the world - for a debt dating back to the 1970s. This law is expected to make that verdict unenforceable.



Dr David Golding, who led the campaign on behalf of the university, said: *"I was furious when I learnt unscrupulous corporate predators ('Vulture Funds') were hijacking the relief process. Buying up poor country debts at knock-down prices, these Funds sue for full repayment when debt relief is granted, siphoning off resources earmarked for health care, schools, etc., and making astronomical profits in the process."*

Director of the Jubilee Debt Campaign, Nick Dearden, said: *"We hugely appreciate the contribution that the North East has made towards this bill becoming law, from*

grassroots supporters to Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Paul Younger and staff and students unions at Newcastle University. Your support for debt relief over many years has made a big difference."

Andrew Gwynne MP, Sponsor of the bill said: *"I am absolutely thrilled that my bill has been passed into law... These 'vulture funds' were completely unjust and it is to the credit of this parliament, and the efforts of the Jubilee Debt Campaign that we have finally managed to pass this law. I said I would put a stop to these vulture funds, and I did."*

David Golding comments: "This was hard work, but immensely gratifying! Thank you, everyone who spoke up for us - no region of the country did more to secure this historic victory, which is a world 'first'. Particular thanks to Newcastle University, whose globally unique support ranged from Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Professor Paul Younger, and student and staff unions; and to honorary graduates Sir Alan Beith MP, Ann Pettifor (formerly Director of Jubilee 2000),

Susan George and William Mkapa, former President of Tanzania.

"Added weight was given to our submissions by statements of support I secured from Nobel Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (an Honorary Freeman of the City of Durham), and Bharrat Jagdeo, President of Guyana (who was a participant in Jubilee's 70,000-strong 'Human Chain' in Birmingham in 1998!)."

No Position to 'Throw Stones'

The response of the American public and its political leaders to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico perfectly illustrates why 'people in glass houses should not throw stones'.

BP and its corporate associates certainly deserve severe censure for their failure to provide adequate safeguards for their hazardous operations, and their behavior brings to mind the recent reckless folly of the banks. However, the resulting damage is hardly a drop in the ocean compared to the impact of America's contribution to global atmospheric pollution resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels.

David Golding, Mike Goodfellow, Sharon Joyce, Sara Maioli, Elizabeth Oughton, Allen Parker, Marian Raley, Vincent Theobald-Vega, Gunther Uher, Bryan Vernon, Jim White (Members of the academic staff, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne, England)

[Letters by the editor on this subject were also published by The Independent, Metro, and were the subject of two nearly whole-page feature articles in the Newcastle Journal. For other letters by the editor published nationally, go to our website.]

Climate Scepticism, Climate Incompetence

The outcome of the 'Climategate Affair' (see p.7) is just one more nail in the coffin of 'climate denial' and it's time for serious and sensible people to move on. As 60 top scientists, including 20 Nobel Prize winners, stated at the St James's Palace Symposium in May 2009, "*Political leaders cannot possibly ask for a more robust, evidence-based call for action... We know what needs to be done. We cannot wait until it is too*

At least BP has offered fulsome apologies, is compensating those affected, and is making strenuous efforts to prevent further damage. Has the United States accepted responsibility for the impacts of its energy profligacy on climate change? Has it committed itself to providing full restitution for the now well-documented misery which global warming is already inflicting on countless millions of the world's poor? Is it making urgent and determined efforts to de-carbonize its economy and life-style?

In each case, we think not. It really is in no position to throw stones.

late. We cannot wait until what we value most is lost."

Agreed that Copenhagen was a terrible disappointment, but as Ann Pettifor once said to me (rather sharply!) about debt, "*We never said it would be easy!*" And look where persistence has taken us with that – the best part of \$20 billion has been cancelled in the past 18 months alone (to Haiti, Liberia and DRC)! There is still everything to play for.

There was an amusing postscript to the Wave event (see p8). When I was interviewed on BBC Radio Newcastle on Monday 7th December, a 'climate denier' called the programme to say that I only say such things because I'm paid by the Government to do so. *Ha, ha - if only!* A transcript of the interview is available on our website.

Three independent panels clear UEA climate scientists

Scientific integrity and competence vindicated,
but failure to respond to FOI requests criticised

Their critics “just plain nasty and ill-informed”, says Chairman

The weighty panels have now reported on allegations of malpractice at the University of East Anglia (UEA) resulting from the publication of hacked emails last November (the ‘Climategate Affair’). All three, which included eminent international experts nominated by the Royal Society, have completely vindicated the scientific integrity and competence of Professor Phil Jones and his colleagues. However, the unit and university are criticised by their failure to respond to FOI (freedom of information) requests.

The editor comments: “This was a nonsense from the start! At issue was the basic fact of global warming and that is beyond doubt – findings similar to those of the UEA have been reported by other centres; 95% of glaciers are in retreat worldwide; sea levels are rising; the distribution of tens of thousands of species of plants and animals (yes, really!) is moving towards the poles, buds are bursting earlier, and so on.

One panel looked in detail at the UEA research and found it had been carried out perfectly properly. Its statistics could have been better, but this would not have altered the conclusions. Another “*handled the matter cleverly and conclusively... It carried out its own test... and found that the raw data were freely available elsewhere, and that competent researchers could [easily] write the computer code required to analyse them... [The results were] almost identical.*” (George Monbiot)

“True, Prof Jones had spoken of using a “trick” on the data, but he was referring to a ‘trick’ already published in the top science journal, *Nature*. My GCSE (‘O-Level’) maths teacher’s favourite phrase was, “*It’s a trick, but it works!*” Nor did they hide their data and methods from other experts – they were just sick and tired of being bombarded with requests from people whose only interest was to distort and discredit them.”

Speaking personally...

Although “*there is little we can do to influence global events*” (see p.4), it would be a mistake to assume that this ‘little’ is insignificant. Alongside the printed statement, “*2009 was a mixed year for campaigning*”, the campaigns’ director of one national NGO had written, “*but MPH-NE was phenomenal, as ever!*” Another wrote to me last summer to say, “*Everyone’s talking about your coaches!*” – i.e., for the Wave. Our stance helped to galvanise people throughout the country, although I have to admit to deep disappointment at the regional response. *We can and should do better than this!*

Make your personal promise! The vision of Micah Challenge for 10.10.10 (p.3) is for “*10 million people to promise to remember the poor.*” I’ve made my promise and, whether or not you have a religious faith, I urge you to make yours at:

www.micahchallenge.org/get-involved/micah-2010

With every good wish, David Golding

'COACHES FROM EVERY CITY, TOWN AND VILLAGE!'



This was the heading for our 'commercial' for *The Wave*, the big national gathering for Stop Climate Chaos last December. About 250 people from the North East of England made the trek to London for "The Wave", the 50,000-strong parade organised by Stop Climate Chaos.



They included Pastor Virgilio Pansacola and three of his Philippino Congregation; Sarah Haswell and her daughters, Charlotte and Sophie; and a big contingent from St Joseph's, Birtley. But pride of place must go to two doughty octogenarians, with limited mobility, who wish to remain anonymous. They put the rest of us to shame by their fortitude (let alone 'gentlemen still abed' in the NE!).

My wife Veronica and I were joined by four members of our family, including Joey, seven, and Gracie, 18 months. *"I promised it would be 'that sort of event', and it was - not a brick was thrown, nor a voice raised in anger! 'Little Gracie' loved it - shaking her head from side to side in response to the samba band!"*

Everybody had an inspiring day - satisfied that they had 'done what they could' to encourage the government to take urgent and vigorous action to head off this greatest of all threats to the world's poor and to our own grandchildren. *[And talking about grandparents, how about these two? It's 'Wor Kev' - Kevin Haigh, Vice-Chair of MPH-NE, and Kathleen.]*



Copenhagen – A Shambles and a Disgrace

The conference proceedings were a shambles and the outcome a disgrace. As Jeremy Hobbs of Oxfam said, "This 'agreement' [the Copenhagen Accord] barely papers over the huge differences between countries which have plagued these talks for two years. The deal is a triumph of spin over substance.... It kicks back the big decisions on

emissions cuts and fudges the issue of climate cash. Millions of people around the world do not want to see their hopes for a fair, binding and ambitious deal die in Copenhagen. Leaders need to get back round the table in 2010 and take the hard decisions they copped out of in Copenhagen." *But see page 6 for brief comment by the editor.*