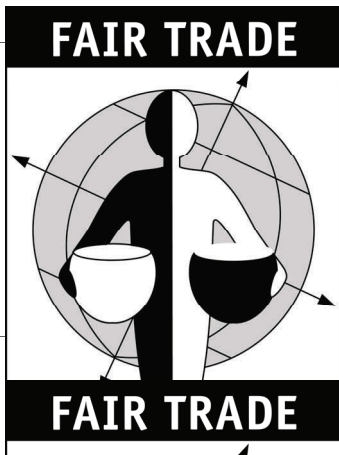




*Fair Trade for Me?*



**Blessing**

O Lord Christ, who became poor that we might be rich, deliver us from a comfortable conscience if we believe or intend that others should be poor that we might be rich; for in God's economy, no one is expendable. Grant us instead the riches of love.

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*"The fields of the poor may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away." (Proverbs 13:23)*

**Discussion Starters**

1. Our congregation has a tradition of offering relief to the poor. It's a tangible expression of our faith, including financial support to help carry on vital mission in Jesus' name. Look over the the fair trade info in this newsletter. Talk about whether our *consumer* dollars could economically harm the people our *offering* dollars help.
2. You recall Jesus' encounter with the moneychangers at the temple (Jn. 2:13-17). They were extorting people who were coming to the temple to worship...taking advantage of their plight and hindering their ability to worship God. Could we, who are economically prosperous, unknowingly be the "moneychangers" of our day? What awarenesses could you begin to develop to avoid unintentionally taking advantage of those who struggle economically? Do you believe your choices and actions will make a difference in the world, exemplify your faith and honour God?
3. Because coffee is one of the world's most heavily traded commodities, it affects a tremendous number of people globally. Coffee is grown primarily in economically disadvantaged countries and consumed mostly in economically prosperous countries. What would it take for you, your group or our congregation to make the next cup of coffee a fair cup?

**Fair Trade Facts**

- Small family farmers grow more than half of the world's coffee.
- In fair trade cooperatives, small farmers can earn three to five times the amount they would earn through conventional trading, or \$1.26 US per pound.
- In North America, fair trade sales totaled \$35 to \$40 million in 1998.
- Fair trade coffee is the fastest growing segment of the North American specialty coffee market.
- For every daily coffee drinker in North America, there is one worker elsewhere in the world who depends on coffee for their livelihood.
- Maxwell House (Kraft) and Folgers (Procter & Gamble) provide coffee to 56% of the US market.\*
- The average \$3 latte delivers less than 2 cents back to farmers on conventionally traded farms.
- 108 million people in the US drank coffee yesterday. Americans consume more coffee each year than any other nation -- 2.3 billion pounds.
- Fair trade certification guarantees that farmers are paid a fair price, assures product quality and ensures environmental preservation.

**Prayer for Fair Trade**

Tilt the scales,  
 O God of the mustard seed:  
 That the poor shall see justice.  
 Share the feast,  
 O God of Eden's abundant garden:  
 That each crop may fetch a fair price.  
 Upset the tables,  
 O God of the upside-down Kingdom:  
 That the least can benefit from their trade.  
 Open our eyes,  
 O God of life in all its fullness:  
 That we may learn to walk the way of your son  
 tilting, sharing, upsetting this world  
 Not satisfied  
 until the products we bring to our table  
 Give a better deal, to all who hunger for one.

In His name, Amen.

*"There has never been but one question in all civilization - how to keep a few men from saying to many men: You will work and earn bread and we will eat it." Abraham Lincoln*

## Dregs of a Bitter Cup

Coffee is big business -- one of the most heavily traded commodities in the world. Unfortunately, small coffee farmers don't benefit from the global demand for their crop. The process that leads from the field to your cup is a long one that usually leaves subsistence farmers with little to live on.

Most small coffee farmers live in isolated communities in the world's poorer countries. Because of their remote locations, these farmers have to resort to selling their crops to middlemen (called "coyotes" in Central America) who offer them the lowest possible price and then sell and resell at higher prices. The result is that the subsistence farmers who produce a rich crop get only the bitter dregs of the coffee trade from our global economy in terms of a living wage. In hard numbers, a small independent coffee farmer may receive as little as one-fourth current market price for their crop.

Globally, 20 million people living near the equator depend on coffee for their income. 70% of the coffee we drink is grown by them. Most small farmers don't make enough income to cover the cost of producing their crop, much less feed their families, send their children to school, see a doctor, or even consider the comforts we associate with "home."

The good news is that there is an alternative. Fairly traded coffee broadens the benefits of the coffee trade to include the small farmers who grow most of the crop. Using fairly traded coffee helps subsistence farmers build a better future for themselves and their communities.

Helping transform communities in the name of Jesus Christ is what the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is about. By participating in the Fair Trade Coffee Project, your small group, class, church, or organization can make your next cup of coffee a fair one, right down to the very last -- just -- drop.



*"Before you've finished your breakfast this morning, you've relied on half the world."  
- Martin Luther King Jr.*

Some may object that Fairtrade products cost more, as indeed they often do. But the question then becomes: who pays the price if we don't? As the rich, in relative terms, Jesus reminds us that we have a responsibility: "where someone has been given much, much will be expected of him." (Luke 12:48b)

## May Calendar

National Day of Prayer (1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in May)  
Mental Health Week (May 1-7)  
Fair Trade Day (8)  
World Sunday for Peace (22)

Agenda for Synod 2011 now available at [http://crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/resources/2011\\_agenda.pdf](http://crcna.org/site/uploads/uploads/resources/2011_agenda.pdf)

## CRCNA Fair Trade Resources

Buying a product is a bit like eating a sausage – easy to enjoy, until you know what's gone into making it. We need to see what goes before and after our purchases: the producers, and the impact of our consumption.

<http://justiceseekers.ning.com/profiles/blogs/direct-trade-honduran-coffee>

[http://carpenteros.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=80](http://carpenteros.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80)

[http://www.crcna.org/pages/osj\\_fairtrade.cfm](http://www.crcna.org/pages/osj_fairtrade.cfm)

[http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=61248169769](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=61248169769)

*see Redeemer CRC's Fair Trade brochure for local listings of fair trade products*

Articles in this newsletter excerpted from *"The Advocate"* a paper and portal serving Christian Reformed social activists by the Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action of the CRC: [www.crcjustice.org](http://www.crcjustice.org) and *Kairos Times*, a monthly e-newsletter of KAIROS, the social justice organisation of eleven Canadian churches and church agencies. [www.kairoscanada.org](http://www.kairoscanada.org) and of Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ)'s monthly newsletter *OLA* <http://cpj.ca/index.html> and the *Mobile Justice Newsletter* of the Committee for Contact with the Government (CCG) [http://www.crcna.org/pages/ccg\\_mobilejustice.cfm](http://www.crcna.org/pages/ccg_mobilejustice.cfm)

## CRC Justice Seekers

*let justice roll on like a river*  
[JusticeSeekers.ning.com](http://JusticeSeekers.ning.com) is an online community for Christian Reformed folks to discuss, inform, and share their thoughts on justice with others in the denomination.  
<http://justiceseekers.ning.com/groups>

This newsletter is a publication of the Social Justice Team of Redeemer Christian Reformed Church, Sarnia ON  
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