



# Action by Christians Against Torture

*All that is required for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"*

Edmund Burke

February/March 2011

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If we have been too concerned about our own comfort to be concerned for those who suffer;  
If we have made excuses why we cannot become involved; If we have failed to recognise Jesus in  
the faces of the oppressed; We are not worthy to be called God's people *Michael Evans:*  
*'Let my People Go'*

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER.

Dear Members,

Two newspaper headlines caught my eye in late January:  
'UK linked to Bangladesh Torture Centre' and  
'The Stain of Complicity'.

Both articles were about Britain's involvement with countries where it is known people have been, and continue to be, tortured, particularly Bangladesh. When we read facts such as those it is easy to become disheartened.

Now, I was born a perpetual optimist, to the point sometimes of being regarded as naïve! But I still believe in the eventual transformation of human nature so that the evil of torture will no longer stalk the world.

Irrespective of any long-term outcome, good or bad, as Christians we must have faith that our campaigning, praying and letter writing will, like a lighted candle, spread a small shaft of light into a dark abyss. And that faith takes strength, perseverance and patience. Above all, it takes prayer. More and more I am convinced that without the prayer of not only you, our members, but also of our well-wishers, donors and church congregations, ACAT (UK) and all the other ACAT's throughout the world would fail.

I have been looking again at the excellent book 'Let My People Go - a Source Book of Prayer for Prisoners of Conscience', by Michael Evans. Now a Catholic Bishop and sadly nearing the end of his earthly life, Michael put together a host of helpful texts and prayers, first published as long ago as 1979. But it is as relevant today as it was then. It contains prayers, scripture and other readings, outlines for services of prayer, school assemblies, and ideas for action following prayer. In all, it is an enthralling and deeply practical book. If you want something to help you in planning a service for the tortured or for your own private prayer I would thoroughly recommend it.

You and I may well say on occasions that, in spite of our prayers and our actions, there seems to be no reduction in the use of torture in the world. And it is indeed strange that, although its practice is outlawed in every country, and almost every country has ratified the UN Convention Against Torture, it continues to serve the purposes of many governments.

Should we look elsewhere, therefore, for the cause of the need to torture? Why do governments decree, albeit secretly, that their security forces have to torture to obtain information they might not get, they argue, in any other way? Our campaigning, letter writing and praying for the end of torture are, of course, vital. But do we not need to try to find out first why situations arise where torture is thought to be necessary to maintain security and peace?

This is a much larger question, springing perhaps from the corruption within a country's officialdom, the determination within a government to hang on to power, a great divide between rich and poor, or a lack of education and the money to provide it.

These very big questions are outside the immediate brief of ACAT and yet they have a profound bearing on the causes of the need to torture. They should therefore be the subject of our prayers and, for many, our actions. Please then continue to pray earnestly for the tortured, the torturers and all those working to end this evil. But please also include in your prayers those engaged in finding solutions to the poverty, corruption, religious intolerance and human greed that fuel the decisions to permit torture.

May God richly bless you in your prayers and your actions, in the Name of Christ.

Richard Dent.

## **BANGLADESH - UK LINKS WITH TORTURE CENTRE**

The Guardian has carried out an exhaustive investigation which indicates that the British Government has been complicit in the torture of a number of men who held dual British and Bangladeshi nationality. It is understood that information about them was passed on to a number of notorious Bangladeshi intelligence agencies and police units, including the feared Task Force Interrogation Cell. The UK Intelligence Service then asked to be kept informed.

Some victims suffered horrific torture and abuse. Human Rights Watch produced a detailed report on the use of torture there. The Home Office and the Foreign Office would have been well aware of this report. A Home Office report also documented the routine use of torture in Bangladesh shortly before the Home Secretary met senior officers from the Directorate-General of Forces Intelligence in Dhaka in connection with the joint UK-Bangladesh counter-terrorism campaign. A senior Bangladeshi counter-terrorism official has said that about a dozen British-Bangladeshis were investigated at this time in a manner which would have been unlawful in the UK.



# SPOTLIGHT ON ALGERIA

Algeria is the largest country on the Mediterranean; it has borders with a number of countries, including Morocco to the west, Tunisia to the South-East, Libya to the east, Mali and Niger. It is a member of the Arab League, the African Union and OPEC.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The coastal area is mostly hilly and sometimes mountainous with few natural harbours. From the coast to the Tell Atlas is a very fertile region used for growing grain and a great variety of fruit and vegetables, much of which is exported. The Tell Atlas region gives way to a steppe landscape which leads into the Sahara desert.

The economy is based on fossil fuels - oil and natural gas, providing up to 60% of budget revenues. There are huge reserves of both. The Government has virtually eliminated Algeria's external debt and has seen a large increase in its trade surplus. Although 25% of the workforce is still employed in agriculture, there has been a large influx of people from the rural areas into the cities over recent years, resulting in a number of social problems, including a very serious housing shortage and poor health facilities. Women plays a leading role in the professions - over 70% of lawyers, 60% of judges are women; women also dominate in the field of medicine. Approximately 95,700 refugees and asylum seekers are living in Algeria, including roughly 90,000 from Morocco and 4,100 from Palestine. In addition an estimated 46,000 Sahrawis from Western Sahara live in refugee camps in the Sahara desert region.

## VERY BRIEF HISTORY

The region has had a very chequered history. In antiquity what is now Algeria and neighbouring coastal areas were known as the Numidian Kingdom - comprising various Berber tribes and sub-tribes. It had "relations" with the Carthaginians, Romans and Greeks. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Vandals filled the vacuum in some areas until it was taken by the Byzantine Empire, until the coming of the Arabs in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Algeria became part of the Ottoman Empire in 1517 and its boundaries were then fixed. The coast was made a base for Ottoman corsairs, who raided the coastal areas of England, Ireland and other European countries as far as Iceland, for slaves. This privateering peaked in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but continued until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Over 1 million Europeans were sold into slavery.

In 1830 the French invaded and after a very long, bitterly fought war of attrition, the country was taken. Between 1830 -72 the indigenous population declined by a third. Algeria became an integral part of France and tens of thousands of settlers moved from there, Spain, Italy and Malta. The Government confiscated the communal land for agricultural development which resulted in the uprooting of much of the population and the destruction of the fabric of their society.

## INDEPENDENCE AND RECENT HISTORY

In 1954 the National Liberation Front (FLN) launched a guerrilla campaign -the Algerian War of Independence. President de Gaulle held a plebiscite which resulted in a landslide vote for complete independence. Over a million -10% of the population - fled to France as well 81,000 pro-French Algerians serving in the French army.

By 1980 the government had become increasingly socialist and authoritarian; agriculture was collectivised, oil extraction nationalised; there was massive industrialisation. Two protest movements developed - communists, including Berber identity movements and the Islamic Salvation Front. There were mass protests against one-party rule in the 80's which led to its end in 1988. In December 1991 the Islamic Salvation Front won the first round of multi-party elections. The military intervened; all religious political parties were banned ; there was political conflict, leading to the Algerian Civil War when more than 160,000 people were killed in six months in 1992, including many civilians - by Islamic extremists, the army and foreign mercenaries. Thousands of others were "disappeared" by security forces or abducted by armed groups. In 1999 the current

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was chosen by the army. He was re-elected for a third term in 2009 but continued the State of Emergency imposed many years before. By 2002 the main guerrilla groups had either been destroyed or surrendered following an amnesty, although some attacks still occur. Dozens of alleged members of armed groups, such as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb (AQIM) have been killed in clashes with the security forces or in search operations in recent months. It is considered that some at least of the deaths could have been extrajudicial executions.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES**

There are widespread human rights abuses in Algeria. There are restrictions on freedom of the media and of assembly. The broadcast media is state-controlled. There are repressive press laws which make it difficult to criticise the government, the military and those in power. Fines and prison terms are imposed on those defaming the President, government officials or state institutions. Journalists, human rights defenders and others have been prosecuted on defamation charges and for other criminal offences because of their criticism of the government's human rights record. A 2000 decree banning demonstrations remains in place. Organisations need to obtain authorization from the local governor before holding public meetings.

Algeria amended its penal code in 2004 to make torture an explicit crime but the Department of Information and National Security continues to arrest terrorism suspects and detain them incommunicado for weeks or months. It is during this period that there is a risk of torture or ill-treatment. The International Committee of the Red Cross has access to the ordinary prisons in Algeria but not to those run by the Department of Information and National Security. Some of those charged with terrorism offences proceedings are tried in military courts. Prisoners are often denied access to their lawyers. Confessions made under torture are accepted as a basis for conviction. Allegations of torture and ill-treatment are not investigated. The right to a fair trial is not respected. Algeria refuses long standing requests for country visits from the UN rapporteurs on torture, human rights while countering terrorism, extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances.

No official efforts have been made to locate the "disappeared" or those abducted by armed groups. Perpetrators of atrocities during the civil war continue to enjoy impunity. The legal framework for this is the 2006 Law on Peace and National Reconciliation. This provides an amnesty to security force members for actions they took in the name of combating terrorism and to members of armed groups not implicated in the worst crimes. Associations of families of the disappeared, including the Association of the Disappeared in Constantine, face constant harassment and constraints on their work.

More than 100 people were sentenced to death in 2009 but the moratorium on executions put in place in 1993 is still in force. Most of the sentences have been imposed in terrorism trials, mostly in the absence of the accused, but some cases did involve premeditated murder.

## **LATEST INFORMATION**

Demonstrations have taken place in many cities - high food prices and unemployment are key themes, together with complaints about civic and government services. Opposition and dissent is being suppressed.

*Eleanor Newland*

Sources: Wikipedia; Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, The Guardian.

## UN CONVENTION AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE



The Convention came into force on 23 December 2010 - 87 states have signed and 21 ratified or acceded. This is indeed good news! The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on December 2006 and opened it for signature on February 2007. The UK has not signed the Convention and under the previous Government was not prepared to introduce legislation to ensure it meets with its conditions. This is very regrettable in view of the fact that the UK was one of the prime movers in support of the Convention in 2006. There seem to be a number of technical points causing problems including Article 18, which sets out the minimum information a lawyer or relative of a person deprived of liberty should have access to.

A few months ago ACAT asked members to write to their M.P's calling for the Government to sign and ratify the Convention and to bring in appropriate legislation to enable this to be done. We are asking members again to write to their M.P.'s c/o The House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA, asking what plans the Government has for ensuring that the UK signs and ratifies the Convention as soon as possible in view of the fact that the Convention came into force on 23 December and that 87 states have signed it and 21 have ratified it. This is an immensely important Convention, which hopefully will ensure that Governments do not use forced disappearances in future or at least think twice before they do. It will also enable action to be taken to locate victims and to prosecute those who have taken part in disappearances or have given the orders to do so.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE CONVENTION

The Convention is modelled heavily on the United Nations Convention Against Torture.

#### Disappearance is defined in Article 2:-

“the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.

#### Article 1 further states:-

No exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification for enforced disappearance.

In Article 6 the widespread or systematic use of enforced disappearance is further defined as a crime against humanity.

#### Parties to the Convention undertake to:

**Investigate** acts of enforced disappearance and bring those responsible to justice

**Ensure** that enforced disappearance constitutes an offence under its criminal law

**Establish** jurisdiction over the offence of enforced disappearance when the alleged offender is within its territory, even if they are not a citizen or resident.

**Co-operate** with other states in ensuring that offenders are prosecuted or extradited and to **assist** the victims of enforced disappearance or locate and return their remains

**Respect** minimum legal standards around the deprivation of liberty, including the right for imprisonment to be challenged before the courts

**Establish** a register of those currently imprisoned, and allow it to be inspected by relatives and counsel

**Ensure** that victims of enforced disappearance or those directly affected by it to have a right to obtain reparation and compensation

## PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

**NASRIN SOTOUDEH, IRAN**, (second appeal) member of the Million Signatures Campaign and prominent human rights lawyer, arrested in September 2010 and tortured in order to obtain a confession; she was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment and banned from practising law or travelling for 20 years for acting against national security and propaganda against the regime.

**SHIVA NAZARAHARI, IRAN**, member of the One Million Signatures Campaign, member and spokeswoman for the Committee on Human Rights Reporters, arrested June 2009 and intensively interrogated and held incommunicado; she was released on bail in September but re-arrested in December 2009 and sentenced to 6 years' imprisonment, banishment and 76 whiplashes in September 2010

**DR BINAYAK SEN, INDIA**, pioneer of health care, human rights activist and campaigner against the abuse of marginalised and indigenous peoples of Chhattisgarh State, was arrested in May 2007 and sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of sedition and conspiracy on December 24, 2010. He is held at Raipur Central Jail.

**GYAN BAHADUR BALAMI, his wife HERMIN RATU LAMA and MAKUR BAHADUR GJARTI MAGAR, NEPAL**, arrested separately 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> November, tortured and ill-treated and threatened with death following arrest on suspicion of robbery and drug smuggling; all three are still held in detention.

**CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED, ARRESTED, MURDERED, FORCED INTO EXILE, IN EGYPT, IRAQ AND IRAN**; there have been bomb and suicide attacks in Baghdad and in Alexandria in recent weeks, which have left many Christians dead and others very demoralised. In Iran at Christmas there were arrests of Christians in Tehran and other places; it is thought that at least 50 have been arrested-but some were later released; the authorities vow to arrest more evangelical Christians.

**WORKERS SUPPORT CENTRE, PUEBLA, MEXICO**, whose workers meet with constant threats and harassment and also other human rights defenders facing similar threats.

**THE DISAPPEARED AND THEIR FAMILIES** in so many countries, for an end to impunity and for justice for victims and their families.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?

As it is written, for your sake we are being killed all day long;

We are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Romans 8 v35 to end

## Spread the word around.

In December our Membership Secretary Margaret Russell gave a talk about ACAT to a very interested group at Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath. There was a lively set of questions and we hope that people will join us.

In January she and I told a group at St. Mary's Church, Clevedon about the international work of ACAT and FIACAT. Again there were some very interesting questions and a lot of interest.

Both talks were given with the aid of our new Power Point presentation equipment and although I still have to master the technology, which will not be easy, it is proving to be a great asset.

Our former chairman, Rev. Tom Bayliss, has very kindly put together an excellent set of images which make any talk simpler to present and, hopefully, will encourage more listeners to join us.

If any members would like to have a presentation at their church or group, especially if a congregation might be interested but have not committed themselves by becoming members, please contact Margaret or me and we will try to arrange a meeting.

Richard Dent.

## Membership

We are always needing new members. This is the only way we are able to continue the vital work in fighting to allieviate evils of torture in the world.

In my report at the AGM last year I suggested that if each of our members recruited one more person from their church, family or friends we would double our membership, if those new members each recruited someone in the same way we would quadruple.

Imagine what we could do as an organisation, the prisoners we could help, the letters which could be written to Governments, to organisations and the tortured. One of our members has likened this to the weight of a snow flake. One on its own means nothing, but a deluge can change lives.

Let's make 2011 a year to double even quadruple our membership and have a snowstorm of support for the tortured.

We can provide speakers should you want to arrange a talk, articles for your Church magazine and much more.

For details contact me through the Office or look on our website [www.acatuk.org.uk](http://www.acatuk.org.uk) for information on how to join.  
Margaret Russell

## **PRAYER FOR OUR PERSECUTED BROTHERS AND SISTERS UNDER HARSH PERSECUTION**

We have been asked by a member to pray for Christians arrested in Iran in a recent crackdown. Christians have also been subjected to bomb attacks in Iraq and Egypt, as well as many other forms of persecution.

**Loving Lord**

**We bring before you our persecuted brothers and sisters in Iran, Iraq and in Egypt**

**We remember all who have died in recent bomb attacks in Alexandria and in Iraq and those arrested in large numbers in Iran and those who will have been tortured there.**

**We pray for those who have lost loved ones, all who live in constant fear of attack or arrest, those who have fled to neighbouring countries that they may find sanctuary**

**We pray for all who face attacks, persecution, imprisonment, torture and death because they acknowledge you as Lord. We pray for the release of those arrested in Iran and for an end to arrests of Christians there. We bring before you those who face forcible conversion.**

**We pray for the leaders of the churches. Give them wisdom, and the words of comfort and faith to enable them to minister to their beleaguered flocks.**

**We give you thanks for the witness and courage of our persecuted brothers and sisters.**

**Grant that we may accompany them along their long Calvary road.**

**We ask this for Your Name's Sake**



## NEWS FROM GROUPS



The Saltash Group took part again this year in the Christmas Tree Festival held at St Nicholas' and St Faith's Church in the weeks leading up to Christmas. This year the Group chose as the theme - women suffering persecution. Photos were accessed of women from Iran, Thailand, Pakistan etc and added to the tree with cameos of each woman. They included Sakineh Ashtiani, Iran, sentenced to death by stoning and a Christian woman in Pakistan sentenced to death for blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed. The tree, decorated by Chairperson, Lesley Margetts, looked very effective and attracted considerable interest.

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS CAMPAIGN

One of our members received an unexpected phone call before Christmas in response to a card she had sent. Someone working at the Committee against Torture in Israel called her to say that many cards had been received but hers was the only one with a phone number. The Committee had been included on the List of Human Rights Defenders. The call was to say "thank you" and ask about ACAT. This was very pleasing!

Someone else also received a response a few weeks ago from a prisoner in Philippines - she had first sent a card to him six years ago when his name appeared on the Christmas Greetings List; she had sent further cards to him in the following years. She was quite overwhelmed to receive a reply from him.

We have heard from a number of individuals, J & P Groups, churches etc who took part in the Campaign - Anne Howarth tells us that 120 cards were sent by parishioners at St Joseph the Worker Church in Hutton, Brentwood. Anne Stapleton organised card signing at her church and its two sister churches - 200 cards were sent. These were terrific results and gave ACAT some welcome funds. These efforts should not detract from other churches, groups individuals who also took part in the Campaign, although at a lower level - each card sent is important and can make a difference to a prisoner, human rights group etc. Such cards also let the authorities know that they are not forgotten. Do continue to let us know what action you or your church took so that we can tell all our members about it.

**Horfield Parish Church, Bristol** also took part in the Christmas Card signing. For 2 consecutive Sundays I set up tables in the church hall following the morning Eucharist. Slips detailing prisoner's names and details were available together with a wide choice of cards donated by Church members. Also provided were pens so that the cards could be

written at the time. In total 60 cards were sent by the congregation including some sent by the youngest members of our congregation who were also very interested in the work of ACAT. Great interest was shown in to the work of ACAT and I am hopeful that in time more members will come from this Church.

Following a talk to Manvers St Baptist Church, Bath on the work of ACAT one Sunday evening, a challenge was given to the group by the Minister. 'What can this Church do? I thought he meant in the coming months and said I was willing to come back and help with setting up a group. "No" he said " I mean next Sunday" To cut a long story short, immediately plans were drawn up to hold a card signing following the morning service. One person to photocopy lists another to bring non religious cards, another to buy stamps and so on.

It just shows what can be done when the mind is put to work. Well done Manvers St for putting thoughts into action so quickly

Margaret Russell

## PRISONER SUPPORT NOTES

I must first apologise for the fact that there was a delay in the recent transfer of funds reaching Zambia. I took the necessary form into the Bank here in Reading before Christmas, and it was not until the monthly statement of account was received at the beginning of January, that we realised that a problem had arisen, as this showed that the funds were still in our account. The Bank's call centre which I contacted on Sunday the 10th could offer no explanation, and during a visit to the branch the following day I was advised that the e-mail that had been sent to the foreign department of the Bank authorising the transfer had never been received. I arranged for a fresh form to be completed at the committee meeting that was held the following day, and this was taken into the Bank on the 12th. The Bank was most apologetic for the situation that had arisen, and promised to ensure that the funds would be in Father Bohan's account on the 17th, and that is what happened. Father Bohan has now confirmed that he is organising the distribution in the usual way.

The new account to which we have previously referred has now been set up, please ensure that all cheques for prisoner support work are in future drawn in the name of the new account 'Christian Support for Overseas Prisoners'. I am sending new standing order forms to those who make monthly payments. The former account will remain open for a few weeks to receive standing order payments that may be received before the new mandate comes into operation. We expect to close the old account completely during March; the Bank will not transfer funds that are received for the credit of the former account directly into the new one after its closure.

So far as I am aware, Father Bohan will be leaving Zambia for his usual midsummer break towards the end of May and I should be glad to receive donations that are to be sent over on the next transfer by the 15th of that month.

If there are any questions or concerns concerning the operation of the new account, please contact either Richard Dent or myself.

Ken Watson

## OBITUARY - Dr MARY GIBB

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death at the age of 90, of Dr Mary Gibb in December. She joined ACT as it then was in its early days in the 1980's, and became a Life Member once the scheme was introduced. Until she moved to Chichester she was a regular at the annual conferences when they were held in London. She represented ACAT with Margaret Hodson, at the Fiacat Conference in Munster in June 1995 and served on the Committee from 1995 to 2000 until she left London to live near her family in Chichester. Hers was a voice of reasonableness and dedication greatly valued by members of the Committee. She was a volunteer at the Quex Road office in Kilburn at a time when, the Director, was on long term sick leave and was able to keep the office running effectively, resulting in many fewer headaches for the then Chairman. In addition she was involved in running a group. She was also determined to start a group once she moved to Chichester, although she approaching 80 at the time.

Terry and I remember Mary with great affection and visited her a number of times in Chichester during family visits to Portsmouth. She was always interested in ACAT and the work of the Committee and was totally committed to the fight against torture and was a great letter writer. As the years past she became increasingly crippled but lost none of her spark or her interest in others.

Ray Dunnett represented ACAT at her funeral in Chichester, although he did not know her. He has been able as a result to provide many details about her life that we did not know. She was born in South Africa and came to England for her education; she became a doctor and for a time a GP until her marriage to Derek, also a doctor. One of her sons suffered from cystic fibrosis which led Mary to help found the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. She helped to support families with a CF child when she lived in London. She also took part in regular evening soup runs to those living rough on the Embankment. In addition she became involved with her sister, who lived in South Africa during apartheid, in encouraging non-whites to go onto higher education and providing the means of doing so through a support organisation in the UK. Another of her concerns was for men on death row in the United States; she wrote regularly to a number of them. Mary was a woman of practical commonsense, determined and forceful but with a real understanding of other people and their problems and virtually no concern for herself.

*Eleanor Newland*

## SOS Torture News

We continue to receive urgent appeals on behalf of abused Human Rights workers, and indirectly on behalf of those for whom they risk themselves and often their families. Our response is twofold - to write letters to the relevant authorities, and to lift them in prayer to the God of justice and compassion.

If you feel called to help with this (and you are a paid up member of ACAT), let me know and you will receive about two appeals to write each month.

Anselm, SSF

(Brother Anselm works really hard for the SOS Torture scheme; the Committee would like to thank him for all his labour and commitment)

## CHRISTIAN SUPPORT FOR OVERSEAS PRISONERS

As the new organisation is not a charity, although in due course we hope to register it as one, we cannot claim Gift Aid on donations. In the past we have used some of the tax refunds from this to cover the costs of the scheme which amount to some £300-£400 a year, primarily for bank transfer charges and Father Bohan's necessary expenses in Zambia in getting the money to the various prisons.

The new organisation has no funds for this so we would ask all those of you who send money for prisoners to make a small extra contribution to the costs involved, perhaps once a year.

If you do this please make it clear to Ken Watson when you send him a cheque how much of the money how much is for this.

Ray Dunnett

### **Introducing John Tearnan, Coordinator in the Campaign for the Abolition of the Death Penalty**

**If I run the film backwards**, it will start today where I am a six years (2004-11) retired Anglican priest with permission to officiate in the Diocese of Peterborough. It then passes through a ten year stint as a mission priest in Venezuela (4 years) living and working with indigenous people, then comes Guyana, the only English speaking country in South America, where I served as parish priest and prison chaplain, particularly to people on death row, and to two young men who went to the gallows.

**From there the film runs through 20 years (1969-89)** as a primary school teacher, 12 years of which were as head teacher, all of them in Northamptonshire; then the scene changes to serving for three years (1966-69) ordained ministry in a parish, four years at theological college, three years as an engineer with a major oil company, and three years (1956-59) at the University of Bristol reading Mechanical Engineering.

**It is here that I stop the film** - you may have seen enough to know something from where I am coming, and being linked with ACAT and being against the death penalty.

John Tearnan



# **STOP PRESS**

## **CONFERENCE AND AGM DETAILS**

**AGM and CONFERENCE**

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

**10.30 - 4.30**

**At**

**Broadmead Baptist Church,  
Union St, Bristol**

Please could you make every effort to come. The last few years have had a very small number gather. Often we have only just had a quorum and if important decisions need to be made this causes problems.

The Committee is discussing how best to deal with this problem. Any suggestions would be gratefully received and considered.

# Prayer and Meditation

## A Meditation on the Lord's Prayer

« A local group of the Christian Workers' Movement of Bolivia, an extract from "La force de la prière" HS Prier

Don't say: "Our Father"  
if you don't behave like a son in your daily life,  
if you don't treat others as if they were your brothers.

Don't say «which art in heaven»  
if you only care about material things.

Don't say: «Hallowed be thy Name»  
if you don't respect God, if you do not honour his name.

Don't say «Thy will be done»  
if you don't accept it when it hurts

Don't say «on the earth as it is in heaven»  
If you don't even believe that heaven exists  
and if you put all your faith in material possessions.

Don't say: «Give us this day our daily bread»  
If you don't concern yourself with people who are hungry,  
with people lacking in culture, without recourse,  
without faith and if  
you don't concern yourself with those who torture and those who are being tortured.

Don't say: "Forgive us our trespasses"  
if you feel resentment against your brother,  
if you can't put up with his defects.

Don't say: «as we forgive those who trespass against us»  
if, from the bottom of your heart, you can't forgive,  
and if you only want to give back the harm you have received.

Don't say: "And lead us not into temptation"  
If you don't mean to turn away from evil yourself.

Don't say: « Deliver us from evil »  
If you don't take a stand yourself.

And don't say : «Amen»  
unless you have taken the Lord's Prayer seriously.

ACTION BY CHRISTIANS FOR THE ABOLITION  
OF TORTURE [www.thenightvigil.com](http://www.thenightvigil.com)

## A Prisoners Prayer

O Lord  
Remember not only the men and women of good will  
But also those of evil will.  
But do not remember all the suffering  
They have inflicted on us.  
Remember the fruits we have borne  
Thanks to this suffering -  
Our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility,  
Our courage, our generosity,  
The greatness of heart  
Which has grown out of all this;  
And when they come to the judgement,  
Let all the fruits that we have borne  
Be their forgiveness.

*This prayer was found scribbled on a piece of paper near the body of a dead child at Ravensbruck concentration camp*

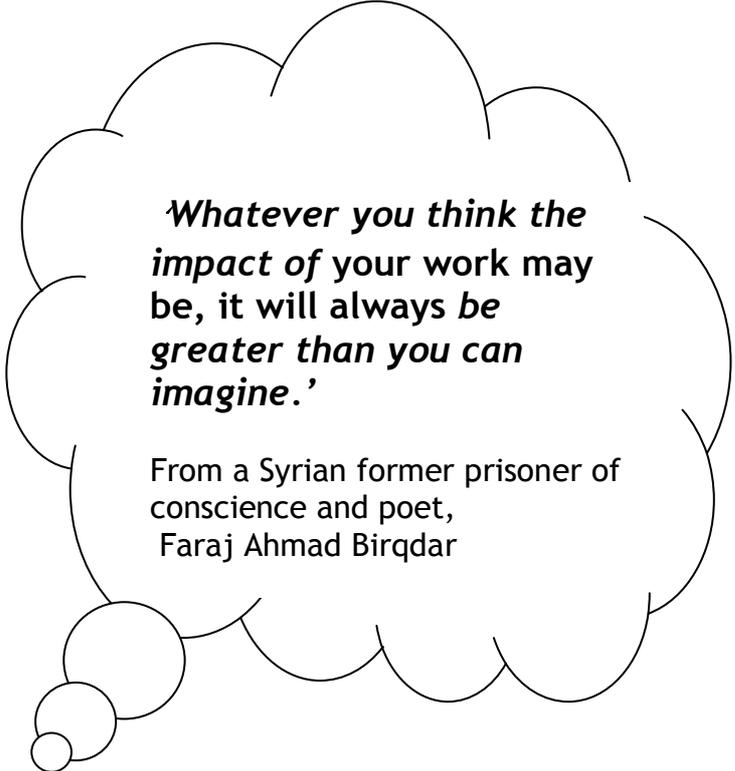
*From 'Let my people go' Michael Evans*

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Anglican Collect for week commencing  
16 January



# Pause for Thought



***‘Whatever you think the impact of your work may be, it will always be greater than you can imagine.’***

From a Syrian former prisoner of conscience and poet,  
Faraj Ahmad Birqdar

We hope you will find this mailing both stimulating and challenging!  
We welcome contributions from members - from your own experience or your recent activities in ACAT or other human rights work.

Contributions, written, typed or e-mail to:-

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