

Dr David William Golding CBE

Dr David Golding, Development Coordinator of Make Poverty History North East, one of the country's leading regional campaigning coalitions, has been honoured with a CBE in the New Year's Honours List. The award is to be given for "services to the world poverty campaign."

Commenting on the honour, David said: "When I took up the cudgels for debt relief in 1997, first as a voluntary spokesperson for Tearfund and then on behalf of the wider Jubilee coalition, I was convinced nobody would listen to a word we said, despite the manifest justice of our case. 'It's us against the World Bank, the IMF, the US Treasury, etc.', I thought. 'What sort of contest is that?' Nevertheless, I knew I would not be able to live with myself unless I did everything in my power to support the campaign.

"Ten years later we can look back on a campaign which has put millions of children into school for the first time and spared millions of parents the agony of watching those children die for lack of treatments costing a pound or two. It has been an incredible privilege to be just one of thousands of campaigners who have pressed the case and made such a difference. I regard this as an honour for all the women and men who have worked to make poverty history and see justice done. It is they, "our lovely company", as Oliver Cromwell put it, who really deserve recognition and I acclaim them today with all my heart.

"We have made real progress, but there is still so much to be done. I'm looking forward to meeting up with campaigners again on 18 May 2008, when we will return to Birmingham ten years after the G8, and not only to celebrate what has been achieved, but to renew our commitment to continue the journey to justice. That will be a special event indeed! But campaigners' 'indefatigable efforts' (as Kofi Annan put it) will be required for years to come – not just for the ongoing scandal of inherited debt, but also for the grotesque injustice of international trade rules and the cynical, decades-long neglect of the explicit promises Western leaders have made on aid.

"But above all, everyone must be pressed into service to head off the impending 'catastrophe that will exacerbate human suffering to a magnitude that perhaps the world has not yet seen' (Desmond Tutu), namely that of runaway climate change. Today that suffering is already bearing down on the children of the world's poor, but the day after tomorrow, the catastrophe will surely engulf our own children or grandchildren unless we take vigorous action now. Truly, as Lord Robert May, President of the Royal Society, put it, 'Never before have we faced such a global threat.' And truly, never have we, as campaigners, faced such an immense challenge: not only do we need to press on to 'Make Poverty History', we must also 'Stop Climate Chaos'!

NOTES

Dr David Golding is a retired member of staff of the School of Marine Science and Technology, Newcastle University, and an Honorary Chaplain of the University. He is the Development Coordinator of Make Poverty History North East; a founder member of the national board of Jubilee Debt Campaign; a voluntary spokesperson for Tearfund; a supporter of WDM and Speak; and a member of Whitley Bay Baptist Church. He is married to Veronica, a most active campaigning colleague, and has two married daughters and three grandchildren.