



Regional Service of

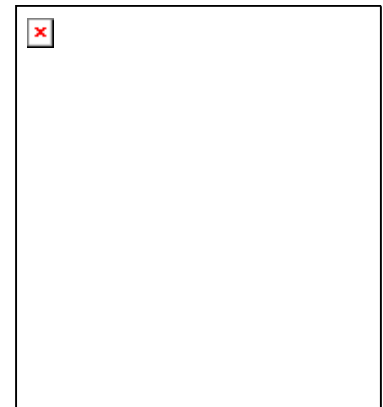
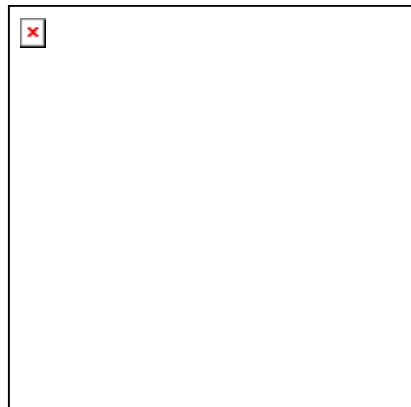
**Thanksgiving and Recommitment
for
MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY**

Durham Cathedral*

Saturday 21st January, 11.00am
(entrance from 10.30am)

**Guest of Honour,
Margaret Sentamu**
(near right, with Most Revd Dr
John Sentamu)

**Preacher,
Lord Carey
of Clifton** (far right,
formerly Archbishop of Canterbury)



In kind attendance,

**The Mayor and Mayoress of Durham,
Cllr John Lightley and Mrs Margaret Lightley**

Service to be led by Mr John Marshall (Chair of Make Poverty History NE)

with the participation of:

**Bishop John Pritchard,
Bishop Kevin Dunn,**

**Dr Roberta Blackman-Woods MP,
Martin Callanan MEP,
Fiona Hall MEP and others**

Service co-sponsored by Dioceses of Durham and Newcastle, R.C. Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, Methodist Church, Mothers Union, Northern Baptist Assoc'n, Northumbria Community, Society of Friends and United Reformed Church.

Everyone welcome, Families invited

***By kind permission of the Dean and Chapter**

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

2005 – The Verdict

Make Poverty History in 2005 was an unprecedented movement of passion, energy and solidarity. Never before have so many people in the world come together, fully united in demanding action to end poverty, with a roar for justice that they felt was impossible to ignore. The campaigning year began with a bang, with Nelson Mandela addressing twenty thousand supporters in Trafalgar Square. It ended with a whimper, not by us, but by trade ministers at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Hong Kong.

Only time will reveal the true value of 2005's campaign, but it is possible to make a tentative assessment now. That found here is mainly adapted from www.MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY.org, with some views of my own on debt.

SUMMARY. We demanded *“Trade Justice, Drop the Debt, and More & Better Aid”* – they've promised Aid (quite a lot, actually), Debt relief (some), and just a little (very little) Trade Justice! Bizarre – and revealing.

TRADE – Shocking Betrayal. The WTO meeting could have been a turning point in making poverty history – in the event, its outcome was only “one step up from failure”, according to the UK's Alan Johnson.

But the potential for justice for the world's poorest people was squandered and the responsibility for this failure rests with rich countries whose governments did not show willingness to deliver trade justice. The agreement reached is far from just for the poor of the world. *“Betrayal”* (Oxfam) is not just 'our' assessment. Some rich country trade policies were even branded *“shocking”* and *“a scandal”* in an editorial of the Financial Times. Some real if modest reforms were agreed, such as ending agricultural export subsidies, although these will not be eliminated before 2013 and represent only a small part of a system that is dooming many millions of poor farmers and their dependents to abject poverty.

But perhaps the real achievement in 2005 was the extraordinary transformation in the declared position of the British government. If it can be persuaded to put its full weight behind this internationally, as it has on aid for example, we could see great progress in the future.

Does all this really matter? *“In Mali”*, said Mary Robinson (the former Irish President, now Oxfam's Honorary President), *“I saw babies lying in a ditch and children who couldn't go to school... because of subsidised dumping of US cotton.”* Asked her opinion of Western trade policies, the international writer and former Malian government minister, Aminata Traori, put it bluntly: *“Hypocrisy. They are killing us while they say they are developing us, but they are lying. We are not developed, we are subjugated more and more.”* **But not in our name, Aminata, nor with our meek acquiescence!**

DEBT – Welcome Development. The commitment to cancel 100% of the debts owed to the IMF, World Bank and African Development Bank by 19 poor countries, a number that should rise to 28 as others complete the current (HIPC) debt relief process, is an important step forward. It's worth only 'one cheer' at present, since over 60 countries need total debt write-off and the damaging economic policy conditions attached to debt relief remain in place. However, we may well have reason for at least another 'cheer' later, since this move involves, at long last, the complete abandonment of the arbitrary (and absurd) criteria that have for so long barred the way to debt relief and gives real grounds for hope of further progress.

AID – Unprecedented Progress. Aid to Africa will increase by \$25 billion p.a. by 2010, and aid in total by \$48 billion, if the G8 keep their promises. True, this falls far short of what is needed and much more needs to be done to improve the quality of aid. However, added to the G8 summit's great success in pledging universal AIDS treatment, wherever possible, by 2010 and commitments to curb malaria, it represents a major breakthrough.

CONCLUSION. This has been an unprecedented year in which millions of people have campaigned to make poverty history. The UK government also deserves very great credit for its international leadership on these vital issues.

"Abolition Committees in every city and town!"

As we enter 2006, we have to ask ourselves, "Are we really serious about Making Poverty History"?

In 1787, twelve men met in a printers workshop in London and effectively launched the anti-slavery campaign. They were very serious about that and they needed to be since, according to Adam Hochschild: *"If you had then stood on a London street corner and insisted that slavery was morally wrong and should be stopped, [your] listeners would have laughed you off as a crackpot... the British Empire's economy would collapse."*

He goes on: *"Within a few short years, there was an abolition committee in every major city and town... More than 300,000 Britons were refusing to eat slave-grown sugar... Parliament was flooded with abolition petitions... Public opinion had undergone a sea change."*

'Abolition (of poverty) committees' in every city and town would be of great value for our campaigns and we call for their formation and/or strengthening.

Adapting the words of Richard Curtis, Director of Comic Relief, spoken at the start of 2005, *"We ask all supporters of Make Poverty History to persevere in this great work, because otherwise the promises we have received this year will become dust, nothing further will be achieved, and 30 years from now, our children and grandchildren will say to us, 'You let 30,000 children die unnecessarily each day on your watch. Shame on you!'"* Happily, another future is possible. Let us press on together - on to the jubilee; on to trade justice and on to Make Poverty History!

MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY NorthEast

But what sort of committees should we have? Multiple or even competing committees? Hardly! A jubilee debt committee in one town and a trade justice committee in the next? Not much better! Here in the NE, those involved in trade justice, jubilee debt and MPH campaigning - including regional leaders of Cafod, Christian Aid, Justice & Peace, Oxfam, TUC and Tearfund, and supporters of other groups - have unanimously decided to unite their efforts with immediate effect.

Furthermore, we intend to give top priority to encouraging the emergence of such groups (however small and whatever they call themselves) in every parliamentary constituency in the region and have called for this pattern to be rolled out across the country. How wonderful if the NE was first to reach this goal! Please consider whether you could be part of this initiative and let us know - it wouldn't need to be burdensome.