

Rice for the hungry

World Food Day : 16 October

2004 is the United Nations International Year of Rice. It is a year to ponder the value of sustenance for our bodies and for the millions who live in the majority world. In remote villages of southeast Asia, farmers still compare a grain of rice to a "grain of gold". This is not surprising considering the World Health Organization has linked good nutrition to better eyesight, increased school participation and higher work productivity.

It is also a year to question whose responsibility it is to provide that sustenance. Forceten's slogan "live simply so that all may simply live" continues to encourage people to question the motivation behind over consumption in Australia. Sometimes it is difficult to see

how our own personal life choices or how the decisions of our government, have a direct link with world poverty.

It has been estimated that it would take 13 billion dollars a year until 2015 to end hunger for the Earth's poorest citizens. That sounds like a lot of money, but

- In 2002 global military spending totaled \$1000 billion
- Africa spends \$33 billion a year on debt repayments
- Australians spend \$1.5 billion a year on confectionary

Now is the time to start thinking about how your school, congregation, local community will celebrate World Food Day on October 16th. For some ideas on actions you could take please contact Kirsty on Ph: 02 9299 2215 or email: krobertson@ncca.org.au



Photo: Kirsty Robertson

At work in the rice fields of East Timor

The Power of a Dream

We all need dreams and ideals to empower our passions. Chairperson of the Solomon Islands Christian Association, Archbishop Adrian Smith, shared his dream and vision with us at the Pacific in Focus Forums in July.

He spoke of the need for Solomon Islanders to be in love with their nation and to be able to embrace and own its Constitution. "We love the constitution because we love the country and therefore wish to obey and respect the freedom it provides. Aspirations of nationhood are currently limited to a desire for education, health, communication and transport infrastructure, which does not encompass the cost and expression of nationhood. The national provision of such services can't happen without thinking 'nation'".

"There is a great need to love and dream for the completed thing, within the complexity of 80 different people groups. No one can do this for the Solomon Islands but us. It must happen within itself. The role of the churches is to re-ignite, to enliven the dream of being a nation, to help people dream of a rich diverse country where there is a respect for basic laws and people live in harmony."

"When 80 languages are brought together as one country it will be an extremely rich country when dreams to be a nation come to fruition. The crossroads for the Solomons is rising above tribalism and entering into being a nation".



Photo: Kaylea Fearm

Mark Hobson, Adrian Smith, Tom Anabayere, Fe'iloakitau Kaho and Koila Costello-Olsson, speakers at the Pacific in Focus Forums

This is equally the dream of Christian World Service, through its partnership with the Solomon Islands Christian Association. As we bring Australians together to understand the dream of our friends in the Solomons, we grow in our own desire to see their dream being realized.

Mark Hobson

The complete versions of the papers presented by our four Pacific visitors are available at www.ncca.org.au/christian_world_service/the_pacific_at_the_crossroads