

# Fairtrade refreshes faith



## Express our faith

Fairtrade is all about developing good relationships with:

- the people whose products we buy
- our Creator who asks us to live with concern for others
- our communities who need to see a faith that is lived

Isaiah 58:1-12 tells us that our lifestyle is every bit as important as the hymns we sing and the liturgy we say. Proverbs 22:22 is explicit about not exploiting poor communities. In Amos 8:1-6 we read of a basket of fruit as the prophet condemns practices that drove down prices for farmers.

Fairtrade gives our faith integrity.

## Mission Action Plans

Committing to Fairtrade is a relatively easy way to meet a goal in your Mission Action Plan: *Global thinking – Local Living*.

As a commitment to working towards a better Devon and a better world, it counts as one of our choices to 'foster and develop a culture of social responsibility action and community engagement in emerging Mission Communities.'

## What about the climate change?

Fairtrade coffee and tea and many other Fairtrade supplies usually come by ship rather than air.

Fairtrade producers learn to use their local environment in a sustainable way.

**In Devon every Sunday more than 26,000 cups of tea or coffee are drunk. In the UK we drink 165 million cups of tea and about 70 million cups of coffee a day.**

When we buy and drink tea and coffee we connect to the people who grow the key ingredients whether it is the Devon farmers who produce our milk or farmers overseas who grow our tea and coffee. And it's big business - the coffee trade is second only to the oil trade.

However, spend £1.75 on a cappuccino and less than 4p may go to the coffee farmer struggling to feed and educate his children.

Fairtrade enables us to love our neighbours – those who grow the coffee, tea and sugar we drink everyday.

Choosing Fairtrade is making a real difference to the lives of more than 7 million disadvantaged farmers, workers and their families in 59 developing countries. Today people choose Fairtrade in many venues across our towns. Christians, who were among the first to join the movement years ago, want to express their commitment to trade justice in their churches too by serving Fairtrade refreshments.

## What is Fairtrade?

The Fairtrade Mark is a consumer label which can now be found on more than 3,000 different products.

The Fairtrade Foundation is an independent non-profit organisation that licenses use of the mark in the UK.

The Fairtrade Mark means:

- a fair and stable price to farmers
- a Fairtrade Premium - an additional sum to invest as they choose in their community such as education and health projects
- sustainable development with respect for the environment
- a stronger position for small-scale farmers in world markets
- a link between consumers and producers.

## What about Devon farmers?

Both Devon farmers and small-scale farmers in developing countries deserve our support. Both may well be able to identify with Proverbs 13:23: "The fields of the poor may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away." (NIV)

The same theology that informs our Fairtrade, should challenge all our shopping. Many people take for granted how the supermarkets operate to fulfil our desire for economy, choice, convenience and variety through thousands of product lines on the shelves.

Fairtrade coffee, tea and sugar isn't in competition with local produce and Exeter Diocese encourages people to buy local milk and produce as well as Fairtrade supplies. We need to love our neighbours whether they grow our coffee or our carrots.

Recently a report from the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) highlighted some of the practices that directly or indirectly threaten the economic well-being of farmers in the UK.

The report urges consumers to ask more questions about the impact of reduced or very low prices on farmers and recommends a properly monitored Buyer's Code for retailers. British farmers do not want special treatment but they also deserve 'a fair price for a fair product'.

We may need a change in thinking to apply the concept of Fairtrade to the farming sector at home as well as to the developing world.

Meanwhile we need to remember that farmers in the developing world who grow the refreshments we take for granted, are struggling to feed their families and earn a livelihood. There is no reason why we can't support both Fairtrade and local farmers.

## Free or Fairtrade?

Small-scale farmers in developing countries don't have easy access to information and markets. Without these advantages, farmers in developing countries are marginalized in global trade.

Does Fairtrade hold back true development by sustaining poor farmers and inadequate practices? No - Fairtrade has been shown to encourage sustainable development by enabling farmers to strengthen and diversify their business.

Does Fairtrade make other farmers worse off? There's no evidence for this. In fact, Fairtrade co-operatives report that increased knowledge about market prices makes it more difficult for private traders to rip off farmers in the area, so often prices are better for everyone as a result.

## The Easy Fairtrade Church

Can your leadership commit community to these simple steps?

**1. Use Fairtrade tea and coffee** when you serve refreshments, after services and for all church events.

Churches that do not usually serve refreshments after their services *are still eligible* as long as you serve Fairtrade whenever refreshments are served. You do not need to sell Fairtrade.

**2. Move forward on using Fairtrade sugar**, biscuits and fruit as they become available and look for local milk and produce from our Devon farmers whenever possible.

**3. Feature and explain Fairtrade** principles throughout the year but particularly during Fairtrade Fortnight (annually in Feb/March).

If yes, then please use the application to register as a Fairtrade Church with the Diocese and the Fairtrade Foundation.

### Fairtrade Foundation

020 7440 7676

[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)

### Traidcraft

0845 330 8900

[www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)

### Fairtrade Devon

01392 438811

[www.globalcentredevon.org.uk](http://www.globalcentredevon.org.uk)

## Make a start

- ✓ Gather a small group of people to discuss how to promote Fairtrade within your parish, church or mission community.
- ✓ Talk to clergy, PCC and anyone involved with refreshments - enlist their interest and support.
- ✓ Download prayers and reflections from the **Fairtrade Foundation** to help incorporate Fairtrade into your worship throughout the year.  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)
- ✓ Talk to local farmers and find out how they are doing and encourage people to buy local produce as well as Fairtrade.
- ✓ Make it friendly and fun. Hold an event like Traidcraft's Big Brew or a Fairtrade cake and coffee tasting session. A Christmas fair or fashion show can attract a wide range of people. There are local suppliers who can help.
- ✓ Order free leaflets and posters from the **Fairtrade Foundation** on 020 7440 7676 [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)
- ✓ Identify your allies - it's vital to involve those responsible for refreshments! If volunteers bring coffee, tea and sugar – explore together why it's good to choose Fairtrade supplies – all easily available these days in most stores. Take time to use Traidcraft and Fairtrade Foundation resources to help each other understand the issues.
- ✓ If people think Fairtrade coffee, tea and sugar is more expensive (it isn't always) suggest they buy a smaller pack of Fairtrade. Discuss who it is that bears the cost of cheaper products – farmers in poor communities?
- ✓ Find out where you can get Fairtrade coffee and tea supplies from. Many supermarkets now stock it but growers get more if you buy from a local trader. You can find a local supplier from [www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)
- ✓ Arrange a tasting session – there are hundreds of different Fairtrade coffees and teas available now to suit everyone's taste.
- ✓ Explain how Fairtrade benefits the people who grow our coffee, tea and sugar and how this can bring people together, strengthen the church witness and reach out into the wider community.
- ✓ Put up Fairtrade posters in your kitchen and welcome area. Show videos and use other promotional resources from the **Fairtrade Foundation** [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk) or **Traidcraft** [www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk).
- ✓ Stock your kitchen with Fairtrade and keep it well-stocked. Put up notices about your commitment to Fairtrade and where to buy Fairtrade supplies locally in an emergency.
- ✓ Consider a change to **Porterion Fairtrade Communion Wine** £8.50, supplied by the case from [www.vinosacro.co.uk](http://www.vinosacro.co.uk) 01363 772333 join up with other churches in your area or deanery.
- ✓ Find out whether your nearest town is working towards Fairtrade status and see how you can join in and help. Devon is a Fairtrade County and there are 14 Fairtrade Towns so far see [www.fairtradedevon.org.uk](http://www.fairtradedevon.org.uk).
- ✓ Once Fairtrade is part of your church life consider the next step and order an application form to become a **Fairtrade Mission Community or Parish** from the Exeter Diocese - Joan Harris on 01392 294940 or [joan.harris@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:joan.harris@exeter.anglican.org)
- ✓ Tell your story through church, diocesan and local newspapers. Share your experience and expertise with others in the diocese. Sally J Farrant, Social Responsibility Officer, [sally.farrant@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:sally.farrant@exeter.anglican.org)