**Another world is needed. Together it is possible!**

by Andrew Conradi, ofs

On climate change: third in a series on the 2016 World Social Forum

Climate change and agroecology bring together so many related subjects which exemplifies Pope Francis (*Laudato Si’*, 49): “Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

The Holy Father continued: “Ecology studies the relationship between living organisms and the environment in which they develop. This necessarily entails reflection and debate about the conditions required for the life and survival of society, and the honesty needed to question certain models of development, production and consumption. It cannot be emphasised enough how everything is interconnected.” (*LS*, 138)

Studies predict full Arctic ice melt by the 2050s: sea levels are rising



Animalsavers.com Sept 19, 2012

The interconnections related to climate change as they relate to agroecology will be dealt with in the next article. But first we should deal with the climate deniers who have managed to hold up action to counter climate change. We mentioned earlier (in the article on mining) that Pope Francis wrote that we would face opposition. "Fossil-fuel companies have spent millions funding anti-global-warming think tanks, purposely creating a climate of doubt around the science." (Bryan Walsh, *Time* Magazine).

An example given by Bill McKibben: “ExxonMobil, the world’s largest and most powerful oil company, knew everything there was to know about climate change by the mid-1980s, and then spent the next few decades systematically funding climate denial and lying about the state of the science.”

I mentioned previously that “captured” governments are complicit with corporations. Why do I say that? Consider that the fossil fuel industry spent millions on climate change denial at the same time that governments subsidized them with public money - $444 billion in 2013 and 2014 according to the Overseas Development Institute.

These subsidies are reminiscent of corporate bailouts in the financial sector after the financial crash of 2008. We have an economic system of socialization of cost and risk but which allows privatization of profit. Although corporations pay some tax there are many loopholes to lessen and avoid paying which are not available to individuals.

There is hope because some financiers do understand. In a statement issued ahead of the G20 conference in China 4-5 September 2016, insurers with more than $US 1.2 trillion in assets under management warn that support for the production of coal, oil, and gas is at odds with the nations’ commitment to tackle climate change agreed in Paris (December 2015). The statement calls for governments to set “a clear timeline for the full and equitable phase-out by all G20 members of all fossil fuel subsidies by 2020.” It adds that the phase-out should begin by eliminating all subsidies for fossil fuel exploration and coal production and that fossil fuel subsidies distort the energy market. These subsidies are simply unsustainable.

Also 24 August 2016, a group of 130 major institutions controlling $13 trillion in investments called on the G20 nations to ratify the COP21 Paris climate agreement along with committing to increasing investment in clean energy and disclosing climate-related financial risks.

What did Pope Francis say about climate change in Laudato Si’? “A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system. In recent decades this warming has been accompanied by a constant rise in the sea level and, it would appear, by an increase of extreme weather events, even if a scientifically determinable cause cannot be assigned to each particular phenomenon. Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production and consumption, in order to combat this warming or at least the human causes which produce or aggravate it.”(23) And: “Climate change is a global problem with serious implications, environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods; it represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day.” (25)

*Third in a series of articles by Andrew Conradi, ofs on the World Social Forum. The first was a general introduction and touched on lifestyle and values, the second with mining. The next will cover agoecology and the final articles will have suggestions on what we can do to help bring about the necessary changes.*