

**WELCOME**

## **Introducing ‘Engaging the Powers’**

‘The Powers’ today are the big international corporations, the international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank and also the governments of the rich Western powers, particularly those of the US and the EU which includes the UK.

Churchgoers and those of Christian sympathies are all too familiar with the devastating effects of famines, wars, floods and other natural disasters around the world, and they commit themselves to offering support in the form of cash, practical help and in many cases personal work at disaster sites.

The activities of ‘the Powers’ are less well understood. Campaigning charities like Christian Aid and Global Justice Now draw our attention, fairly forcibly, to their more direct depredations such as the ruthless exploitation of indigenous people in areas where gold and other mineral mining take or to the exorbitant and unfair demands that big corporations make on poorer countries as the price for bringing them foreign investment.

There is today a growing body of literature which sheds light on the activities of ‘the Powers’ not only in more detail than media headlines can convey but also revealing the enormous increase in their activities and influence over the past 30 years, much of it hidden from public view. Not everyone has time – or the commitment – to read these books. The *Engaging the Powers* project provides reduced versions of key texts in this area, thus making important information more accessible.

The object of *Engaging the Powers* is to offer an account of the activities of ‘the Powers’ which is sufficient to motivate people to commit themselves to join in the task of unmasking and combating their harmful activities.