



# Friends in Action



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611 West Wayne Street Ft. Wayne, IN 464802 2167 260-422-6821 800 401 2672 A nonprofit membership group 501(c)3

## Procott vs Boycott— Consumer Activism in Time of Social Distancing

### History of Boycotts

In the 1760s Colonists began boycotting certain goods from England, a protest that ultimately included the Boston Tea Party. The term “boycott” was coined a century later, in 1880, after Captain Charles Boycott, who was an agent for an unfair absentee landlord with whom Irish renters (joined by neighbors) refused to pay rent as a way to force changes. In recent years, people have come together to boycott, that is refuse to buy or do business with, in order to stop unjust practices such as racial discrimination.

### Definition of Procott

In the year 2000, a group of five friends in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, decided to discuss various ways to obtain basic needs by sharing and evaluating possible solutions. They developed a process for looking at different ways to obtain food, health care, transportation, or housing. This study group adapted the term “procott”, the opposite of a boycott.

This idea is a way to encourage people to buy products and services that help bring about good. For example, a boycott encouraged folks to not ride the bus in Montgomery, Alabama in 1956 to force changes in laws that treated white and black bus riders differently, yet a procott today would be an effort to encourage bus riding to avoid air pollution, avoid traffic and parking congestion caused by driving single rider passenger cars. History has shown that ideas shared first by one or a few individuals are the most common way that positive change has come. In political language, citizens vote, that is, make a choice to change or retain policies in civil society. We vote for an elected official once or twice a year, but we vote almost daily when we choose a laundry soap, decide which gas station to patronize, choose a neighborhood to live in, buy clothing, or purchase food.

### Voting Each Time We Spend A Dollar

The choices with which we are presented by our current marketplace are usually limited by and controlled by large corporations. They decide which type of bananas they will export from the country of origin, how much the banana grower and picker will be paid, whether any pesticides will be allowed and who will share which part of the final selling price all along the chain of events. These companies will also control what information the final consumer will be given in order to choose the product. Often one or two companies, if large enough, will control the market and choices for each kind of product.

This change has come within my lifetime. In my parents’ time, buying and selling was much more local, with consumers having better information to make better choices, often personally knowing the farmer who produced the food. Today many consumers again desire locally produced products, or, if not available, to have more complete information on a product’s background. The Procott decision-making process may help consumers make better choices, and along with the expanding Fair Trade movement can help consumers make better decisions by providing sourcing information from farm to kitchen. We invite each reader to be personally part of this decision making movement, even with the current stay-at-home recommendations because of health concerns.

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*Live Simply, that Others May Simply Live... Eliz. Seton c. 1795*



## At the Center...

We are writing on the 50th Anniversary of the Earth Day Celebration. (See separate article)

This year is also the 48th Anniversary of Friends of the Third World's work in partnership with some of the world's poorest. Many partners have experienced some of the most heart-wrenching crises, war and civil unrest; tsunami, earthquake, famine; racism and economic exploitation.

**Today the Corona 19 pandemic is unique in our lifetime - its solution is unpredictable, something that hard work, strong leadership or allocation of resources can not promise to control. It is a threat that transcends national boundaries, economic status and religious belief.**

A U.S. President once said, talking before the United Nations, "to achieve world peace will take an invasion of aliens from space, as it will bring us all together to fight a common enemy". Today we have such an invasion. This enemy has laid bare the weaknesses of civil society—systems which provide our basic needs—the food system, the health care system, education of our children and more.

This crisis is threatening the fair trade movement. Our mission is helping low-income workers support their families. Many of us in the United States are now also joining with millions globally who will immediately lose access to basics needed for life: food, shelter and clean water. Everywhere health care is overwhelmed. In many poor countries it is nonexistent. This pandemic is worldwide, and the recovery will not only require new ways of thinking, it will require international cooperation. Recovery will be delayed if we continue to blame others. (We have experienced one political party, one level of government, even national governments accusing each other of the lack of leadership. The American government is now cutting aid to International health-related programs and aid to some of the most vulnerable — victims of violence.)

As a Christian, I have to remain true to the principles I have been taught, to stand alongside those in greatest need, while believing that over the long term, good will come from even the most bleak of situations. Ethical standards are universal, the fabric of a civil society. While we as a private group cannot help millions in need we hope to assist some, and encourage others to do similar work. We have always sought partners among the needy, whether they be across the street, or across the ocean. For example, a women's cooperative can sew shirts in Haiti, while a women's association in the United States will embroider each one.

*As we look forward, there will need to be changes in our daily routines & the way we engage the marketplace. In a separate article we propose a process to rebuild interactions with our friends and neighbors as we regain control of our lives, a process we call "Procott".*

*In addition, we are offering an opportunity for those who are financially able to donate. We'll aid some of the world's neediest, both low-income folks we work with here in Indiana, and three of our producer partners in the Middle East, in an area already lacking support systems.*

*Our goal is \$10,000. Here's the link*

**<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/digging-at-the-roots-of-poverty-rebuilding-together-globallylocally>**

And as for us, since we are healthy and financially stable (as we've had years of practice living on less), we are ready to rebuild our fair trade business, perhaps in new and creative ways. We are still collecting hygiene supplies for refugees, have sent a special donation to feed homeless youth in Colombia, helped with an online concert to support refugees in Uganda, printed and mailed fundraisers for Clean Water for the World, providing clean water in El Salvador and Guatemala, and Care and Share, providing health care in India and Zambia.

***Won't you work together with us to invent a better future. Please include us in your prayers.***

*Jim Goetsch, Administrative Coordinator*

Attention: As we involve more younger folks in our movement, we ask a special favor. If you are able, please consider becoming a monthly donor or even list Friends of the Third World, Inc. EIN #23 7183804 in your will. Ask for details.



## Team Member Wanted



*Friends of the Third World is seeking one or two full-time partners.. Friends is planning to expand our Fair Trade program while at the same time providing work experience for local unemployed adults. While we market*

*products from 80 producer groups in 35 countries including the United States, our primary mission is to educate the public about ways individuals can take action to address the root causes of poverty and allow low income families to become economically self-reliant.*

We work cooperatively in voluntary simplicity and share space in an 130 year-old mansion.

Housing, Food, Transportation and Other Basics provided plus a Stipend.

We are a nonsmoking community. We host two cats.

### **We work as a team sharing tasks which can include some of these:**

- \*mentor training participants with hands-on tasks*
- \*research and write Information relating to international and domestic cultures, history and politics — digitally or in print*
- \*operate a variety of printing machines including digital printers, offset and letter presses, special processes including silk screen, dye sublimation, photography, etc.*
  - \*roast and package coffee;*
  - \*repair and maintain the building, vehicles, computers & equipment;*
  - \*grow organic vegetables and haul recyclables;*
  - \*make presentations to schools, churches & community groups;*
  - \*organize and participate in international and local cultural events ;*
    - \*program websites and social media;*
    - \*create designs using Adobe software and video equipment,*
    - \*post bookkeeping and accounting using Quickbooks;*
    - \*collect and organize information in library via books; video, digital, etc.*

**Preferred experiences include college level classes, experience supervising small groups, & basic computer skills. Mechanical abilities helpful. Interest in earth care, international peace, economic and cultural education, or simple and responsible lifestyles will complement our mission. Specific training can be provided.**

**To apply please write a letter or email explaining why you wish to join our team and What skills or experiences you have to offer, and include a resume with three References. Send to Coordinator, Friends of the Third World, 611 W. Wayne St., Ft. Wayne, IN 46802 or email to [info@friendsofthethirdworld.org](mailto:info@friendsofthethirdworld.org)**

**Call 260-422-6821 for details.**

### **More Resources..**

**Green America** is a membership group promoting sustainable business. Issue 117 (Spring 2020) of Green American is titled Consume Less, Live More. Great info. Visit on line at [greenamerica.org](http://greenamerica.org) or call 202 872 5307. Membership for Individuals is \$20 a year, with groups/businesses on a sliding scale.

A free blog by former Alternatives coordinator **Jerry Iversen** at <https://simplelivingworks.wordpress.com> Written from a Christian perspective, it advocates simple and earth-caring Living, You can also subscribe to brief nudges toward Simpler Living by writing to [SimpleLivingWorks@yahoo.com](mailto:SimpleLivingWorks@yahoo.com) with the world NUDGE in the topic line.





In the West Bank, many talented Palestinian women artisans are unable to benefit from their sewing, embroidery, and design skills. Dr. Janette Habashi, Associate Professor in educational psychology at the University of Oklahoma, is determined to change that. She created the [Child's Cup Full](#) artisan center in Zababdeh, a village in the northern West Bank, with a mission to create lasting economic opportunity for the most marginalized population in the West Bank: refugee and impoverished women. Over the past four years, this small nonprofit has created products especially for the US market:: [Child's Cup Full](#) children's toys, .

The business, started with six women, was growing toward self-sufficiency with the goal of expanding to include more women, by marketing to child care centers, schools, and families with young children. Recently their market collapsed due to school closures and budget constraints. West Bank is also experiencing government orders to stay home and avoid travel.



Odeh Olivewood Workshop was established in 1983 by Ibrahim and Helen Odeh, two Palestinian Christian artists, for the purpose of preserving the spiritual and artistic heritage of the past. The Odehs are proudly following a centuries-old tradition where children learn from their parents, sharing the skills learned from their parents who received them from past generations over at least ten centuries.. Still, in following tradition, each generation had added new designs seeking to expose anew the natural beauty of the unique wood of the olive tree. Odeh Factory started with a one room humble workshop, and has flourished today into a shop employing 10 professional olive wood craftsmen.

The Odeh's now have shared the situation inside the ancient City of Bethlehem:

*"Situations here are very difficult . I'm writing my message from home. We closed the workshop and have been at home for 40 days. Really the situation here is very, very bad . Everything is closed, more and more people have been affected by the corona virus. Thank God, we and our families are healthy. Best greetings from us to you. We are asking God that you and your families will stay healthy . We are asking God that everything will stop and all people remain healthy and good . We will inform you when we are able to go back to work".*

**We have a supply of the Olive Wood Carvings, which, when sold, will provide funds for us to send to assist the business reopen.**

Following is a personal recollection: *"The olive tree is an evergreen tree that gives shade when farmers till the land. It lives longer than the other trees in the area. You can hear old men saying, "this olive tree is rominyeh," meaning it was planted during the Roman occupation. Ramallah, my second home from 1949-1967, was surrounded with terraced hills full of fig trees, olive trees and grape vines. Most Palestinian families eat olives three times a day. There is always a plate full of different kinds of pickled olives, green, black, brown, unpitted, whole or crushed, big, medium or small depending on the areas and the soil. It is home-pickled with water and salt or olive oil. The main breakfast is tea drunk with a bread dipped first in olive oil then in a mixture of thyme and spices with sesame (Za'atar). Our soap was also made from olive oil, a craft I remember learning in my home economics classes. After the oil is pressed, the pulp that remains is used as animal feed. A bread winner and a mother at home would feel secure when they had their annual supply of olive oil (zeit), olives (zatoun) and thyme (zatar)". Nahil Aweidah is Palestinian woman three times displaced (Jerusalem, Ramallah, Beirut). She now lives in Canada.*

Action Corps (visit ActionNetwork.org) is an offshoot of Oxfam which aims to advocate for the poor. Currently they are opposing cutting of aid to Yemen, just as Corvid 19 arrived there. Check #AgitateAndAdvocate Suggested donation is \$25 a year (\$5 for students and unemployed).

## The Innocent Among Us...



While our work usually tries to assist the needy thru marketing, often refugees are not able to do business. Recently, as regional wars have erupted around the world, the number of refugees has skyrocketed to a record 70 million globally. Refugees are found in 30 countries. Some of the most well-known are fleeing wars in Syria, Somalia and Myanmar. In Burkina Faso, Africa, 800,000 people have fled attacks in the last two months. Today, the global pandemic can be death sentence for many living in dangerous conditions.

The closely pitched tents in refugee camps make it impossible to practice social distancing. In addition there is little or no health care, and even water for washing is limited. There is little or no Personal Protective Equipment. In Burkina Faso there are only 60 intensive care beds and a handful of ventilators for a national population of 20 million.

Today, several countries (including the United States) have closed borders to all new immigrants. Some leaders have worried that refugees will spread disease. Budgets of government and international aid agencies have been cut and many religious groups and charities are extremely short of funds. Beyond prayer, there are some actions we can each take. One choice is to donate basic supplies such as soap, towels or other personal items. A list of supplies we are collecting is available on our website

[www.friendsofthethirdworld.org](http://www.friendsofthethirdworld.org) or by calling 260 422 6821.

A GoFundMe Fundraiser has been started to pay for Personal Protective Supplies for Refugees:

<https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/soap-for-hope-project>

## Friends Appreciates Useable Goods

If you have it and think we can use it, please call 260-422-6821 or email us.

- Printing equipment or supplies
- Used or new postage stamps,
- Office supplies,
- Cotton rags/Cotton sheets
- Household supplies
- Camcorder
- Garden produce
- Tools, especially Solar Collectors

## Digital vs. Print

In previous newsletters, we discussed pros and cons of sending information via print or digitally.

We continue to use print as well as email to share information about our work.

*We invite you to share your current email at:*

[info@friendsofthethirdworld.org](mailto:info@friendsofthethirdworld.org)

*or on our site at*

[www.friendsofthethirdworld.org](http://www.friendsofthethirdworld.org)

*Also, please link up with our sites on*



## Procott - A Decision Making Process -

The purpose behind organizing a Procott Action Group is to make great choices for products or services:

1. Define the need or topic
2. Gather an interest group of two to ten
3. Meet in person, via phone, or computer conference and brainstorm possible solutions (take notes)
4. Assign each member of the group to investigate one or two of the solutions—pro & con
5. Share results with the group and narrow possible choices to 2 or 3—explore those more deeply
6. Those who chose can act on a choice.
7. After an agreed period of time meet and evaluate. If positive, write up summary to share; If negative, discuss other possible actions
8. Socialize/Celebrate
9. Repeat on another topic



*Good decisions are not only practical, but are based on ethical choices. Define ethics in your first meeting. For example, if you follow fair trade principles to source products, look at purchases using those principles. (See [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)). Other possible principles would be definition of a cooperative, community-based/local sourcing, bartering, etc.*

**Typical Procott Topics could include: Food, Clothing, Housing, Transportation, Health Care, Employment, Education, Financial Services, Business ++ Subcategories can be defined for each broad topic**

If your group wishes, you may formalize and form a chapter (ask for info). If your group becomes too large, or there is a split because interest is in two different topics, encourage a new, separate group.

Friends of the Third World is starting a blog to share ideas. To register your Procott Action Group, please go to: [www.friendsofthethirdworld.org](http://www.friendsofthethirdworld.org) A donation would help us grow the movement.



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- Horse Crocheted Toy Bangladesh 10.00
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- Popup Bunny Guatemala 16.00
- Wooden Top India 7.00
- Duck Pencil Sharpener India 3.50
- Sparkly Pen India 4.00 (Not Pictured)
- Felt Zebra Finger Puppet Nepal 9.35
- Hacky Sack Guatemala 4.50
- Wood Puzzle Box Elephant India 18.00
- Painted Wobbly Bobbly Critter 3.00
- Wooden Musical Croaking Frog Indonesia 10.00

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