

BIRDSONG & COFFEE:

A Wake Up Call

Discussion/Study Guide

1. What was your overall response to this video? What struck you most? Who impressed you most?
2. Russ Greenberg, Director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, says, *“There are fewer and fewer birds . . . I think what we’ll see is extinctions from our life in the sense that it will be much harder to see a lot of these birds . . .”*
 - How do you feel about his statement? Do you care?
3. According to statistics gathered by the Rainforest Action Network, 78 million acres of rainforest (an area larger than Poland) are being cut down each year.
 - How does this fact make you feel?
 - What can be done to stop this deforestation?
 - What can we do?
 - What can you do?
4. Global Exchange’s Kevin Danaher says, *“There are many farmers who are selling maybe 20, 30, 40 percent of their beans at the fair trade price and the rest—because we in the consuming countries haven’t pushed that market enough—the rest gets sold at the world market price.”*
 - What are some of the things we coffee drinkers can do to enlarge the fair trade market?
5. In the beginning of Part Two, Chris Bacon says that our “helping” is really the repayment of a debt, because we in the rich countries have systematically underpaid coffee farmers for 150 years.
 - Does this understanding affect how you feel about helping? Why? Why not?
6. UCSC student Nick Babin says, *“I’ve always been an activist for the things I’m passionate about and the things that move me, but on transferring here I really wanted to get involved with the global justice movement in one way or another.”*
 - What do you think of this statement?
 - Why do some people feel this passion for justice while others seem unconcerned?
 - What would have to happen to have more people feel passionate about global justice?
7. According to UNICEF, 30,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they *“die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.”* That means about 210,000 children each week, or slightly less than 11 million children under five years of age each year . . .
 - Why does the world community allow this to continue?
 - Is there any hope of changing the system that causes this huge inequality?
 - What would have to happen? What can we do about it?
 - What can you do?

8. Seth Petchers of OXFAM says, “If you go into a supermarket and don’t see the Fair Trade label, ask to speak to the manager . . . When they hear from consumers that consumers will buy Fair Trade coffee if it’s on the shelves, and if it’s not, they’ll buy the coffee somewhere else, they’ll respond to that.”

- Would you feel comfortable asking the manager of your supermarket to carry Fair Trade coffee and telling him/her that you will shop elsewhere if they don’t carry it?
- If you would not feel comfortable doing that, is there another way for you to achieve the same goal?
- Do you think you could get all the coffee shops and supermarkets in your community to carry Fair Trade coffee? How would you go about it?

9. Did this film make you feel hopeful? Why? Why not?

10. Did this film change your overall understanding of how we ourselves are connected to the people and the natural environment elsewhere in the world? Is there anything you might choose to do differently in your own life because of that?

11. Is there anything else you would like to say in response to this film?

Learn More and Take Action:

Ordering coffee: There are dozens of websites that direct you to vendors of *Certified Fair Trade*, *Fair Trade-Direct*, *Fair Trade Organic*, and *Bird-Friendly* coffees. Here are some suggestions:

- *Certified Fair Trade*: <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/memcof.html>
- *Fair Trade-Direct*: CAN Coffee (as seen in our *Birdsong & Coffee* documentary): <http://www.communityagroecology.net>. Other 100% Fair Trade companies: <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/coffee/retailers.html>
- *Fair Trade Organic*: <http://www.groundsforchange.com/shop/category-origin.php?>
- *Bird-Friendly*: The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center: http://nationalzoo.si.edu/ConservationAndScience/MigratoryBirds/Coffee/Bird_Friendly/default.cfm. The Rainforest Alliance: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org/programs/agriculture/shop/coffee-online.html>

Ordering other products (coffee, tea, chocolate, or fruit): For a general listing of Fair Trade vendors, see <http://www.transfairusa.org/do/whereToBuy>. **If you are not buying on-line**, be sure to look for *Certified Fair Trade*, *Certified Organic*, and/or *Certified Shade-Grown* or *Bird-Friendly* labels in your supermarket or specialty shop.

How you can become involved in the Fair Trade movement: <http://www.transfairusa.org/>.

Ten things you can do to help Fair Trade farmers:

<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/coffee/actionKit.html>

Consider starting a Fair Trade zone in you own community!