



NEWS FROM ECCR

January 2017

A monthly round-up of news from the Churches and other sources in the areas of economic justice, human rights and environmental sustainability.

NEW !!!

ACTION POINT

The first of our suggested ACTION POINTS, where every month we invite ECCR supporters to do something, read something, or pray about something, so that together we are making an impact and making a difference.

This month, with Lent approaching, we invite you to consider reading the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2017 Lent Book:

Dethroning Mammon

Making Money Serve Grace

Designed for study in the weeks of Lent leading up to Easter, Dethroning Mammon reflects on the impact of our own attitudes, and of the pressures that surround us; on how we handle the power of money, called Mammon in this book. Who will be on the throne of our lives? Who will direct our actions and attitudes? Is it Jesus Christ, who brings truth, hope and freedom? Or is it Mammon, so attractive, so clear, but leading us into paths that tangle, trip and deceive?

The book explores the tensions that arise in a society dominated by Mammon's modern aliases, economics and finance, and by the pressures of our culture to conform to Mammon's expectations. Following the Gospels towards Easter, this book asks the reader what it means to dethrone Mammon in the values and priorities of our civilisation and in our own existence.

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5827/dethroning-mammon-the-archbishops-2017-lent-book>

Bloomsbury Continuum

£9.99

ISBN 9781472929778

Or £8.99 on line from the publishers:

<http://bloomsbury.com/uk/dethroning-mammon-making-money-serve-grace-9781472929778/>

NEWS FROM ECCR

Two New Posts

Following the grant from the Friends Provident Foundation, to assist our core activities over a 36 month period, the ECCR Board agreed the new strategy. Two new part-time posts are being created, one in Communications and the other in Funding & Membership Development.

Details are on the website: <http://www.eccr.org.uk/work-for-us/>.

The closing date for applications is Monday February 13th.

South Africa

ECCR was approached by friends in the South African and German churches to support a campaign to get better compensation for those bereaved and injured by the massacre at the Marikana platinum mine in 2012, and to improve conditions there now. On January 26th ECCR supporters and other members of the London Mining Network joined the former Bishop of Pretoria, Jo Seoka, at a picket outside the London AGM of Lonmin. This company describes Marikana as its flagship operation, and their main German client, BASF, is also being urged to step up.

<http://londonminingnetwork.org/2017/01/protest-lonmin-agm-2017/>

Nigeria

ECCR continues to support the Stakeholders Alliance for Corporate Accountability (SACA). As this Newsletter was being finalised the news came in that the High Court in London has ruled that tens of thousands of Nigerians affected by oil pollution cannot proceed with a legal challenge in the UK against Shell and its Nigerian subsidiary. We await comment on this from our Nigerian partners.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jan/26/nigerian-oil-pollution-shell-uk-corporations>

Mining Advocacy

ECCR is working with corporate member USPG to appoint an Intern through “Action Reconciliation Service for Peace in the UK”. The work would focus on Mining and solidarity with churches in countries where human rights and environmental safety is threatened by global mining companies, beginning with the Philippines.

Publish What You Pay

ECCR joined other UK members of PWYP in urging Theresa May on her visit to the United States to defend oil transparency anti-corruption law. Our letter urges the Prime Minister and her officials to persuade their US counterparts and American legislators to ensure that the Cardin-Lugar anti-corruption rule (Dodd-Frank Section 1504) remains intact.

<http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/25012017-Rt-Hon-Theresa-May-MP-from-Publish-What-You-Pay-UK-1.pdf>

ECCR and Individual Supporters

In addition to the invaluable financial assistance from its corporate members, ECCR depends on our Individual Supporters. We are grateful to those of you who make a regular financial contribution to our work, and even more when it can be Gift-aided.

As the beginning of a new year, we ask all our individual supporters to consider increasing their gifts, and if possible putting them on a regular basis like a monthly Direct Debit. It is now possible to donate through the website <http://www.eccr.org.uk/support/donate/>

There will be a national meeting for all individual supporters in October, probably in Birmingham. More details soon.

Future Action

From this month onwards, through the website and this e-Newsletter, ECCR will be offering supporters a monthly ACTION POINT through which we can together impact a particular aspect within our three priority areas of economic justice, human rights and environmental sustainability. If you have any suggestions for this, do please e-mail us on www.eccr.org.uk

OTHER NEWS

2016

Looking back, a blog on the Joint Public Issues Team website (Baptist Union of Great Britain, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church and Church of Scotland) tried to look on the bright side of the year that's passed <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/10reasonstoccelebrate2016/>

At the end of the year, ECCR's sister organisation in the United States, the InterFaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, has highlighted its current campaigns on Access to Medicine, Climate Change, Human Rights & Forced Labour, and Foot Justice. <http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=c77e1a70c4bc563a6cb1d9426&id=da5cbc2eb9&e=e64edf7d7e>

The Guardian summarised how the world of work changed in 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/2016/dec/28/how-the-world-of-work-changed-in-2016>

BANKING

Following their 'banking day' last October, looking at global economic crises, inequality and ethical finance, London Quakers are considering their next steps. <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/break-up-the-banks>

BENEFITS

Following the National Audit Office's highly critical report of the benefit sanctions system, the Joint Public Issues Team has renewed its call for a full independent review of the benefit sanctions regime, and is urging supporters to write to their MP's. Church Action on Poverty has provided a useful facility to do this:

<https://churchpoverty.e-activist.com/page/4335/action/1>

BREXIT

The Joint Public Issues Team is launching a new resource that will invite church groups to sit down and have healthy, balanced conversations about our shared society. "Conversation Welcome" will explore how we can build God's Kingdom together in the run-up to the invocation of Article 50 and the resulting departure from the European Union. It will be available at the end of January.

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/eu-referendum/conversationwelcome/>

The Archbishop of York has said that the uncertainty and turmoil caused by Brexit could prove worthwhile if it acts as a catalyst in the redistribution of power and wealth to the North, and politicians use it as a fresh opportunity to boost prosperity in the region and to avoid deepening division across the country. His intervention comes amid growing concerns about the impact of Brexit on the North's economy, following reports that the region is twice as dependant on EU trade as other parts of the UK.

<http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/brexit-upheaval-may-be-worth-it-for-the-north-claims-archbishop-1-8332045>

Christian Today recorded the response of Christian MPs to the Supreme Court's decision that triggering Article 50 must first go to Parliament.

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/respect.the.people.christian.mps.give.verdict.on.supreme.courts.brexit.ruling/104126.htm>

CHARITY

A Christian MP has suggested charities and churches could have less money because of Jeremy Corbyn's maximum wage proposal. Rob Ffello (Stoke on Trent South) hinted the move could punish high-earning Christians who give significant amounts of their income to Christian and non-Christian charities.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christian-charities-could-lose-out-over-Jeremy-Corbyn-s-maximum-wage-idea>

CLIMATE CHANGE

Thirteen leading international asset owners and five asset managers with over £2 trillion under management have launched the Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI) to better understand how the transition to a low-carbon economy affects their investments. The TPI will assess how individual companies are positioning

themselves for the transition to a low-carbon economy through a public, transparent online tool. The Initiative has been led by the Church of England's National Investing Bodies and the Environment Agency Pension Fund in partnership with the Grantham Research Institute at the London School of Economics.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/2017/01/thirteen-leading-international-asset-owners-launch-major-initiative-to-embed-climate-concerns-in-investment-decisions.aspx>

The Church of England has published a Briefing Paper on Shale Gas and Fracking. It assesses shale gas and fracking as they relate to local communities, the environment, UK energy policy and the UK's commitment to carbon reduction targets under the COP21 agreement.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/2017/01/new-shale-gas-and-fracking-briefing-paper-released.aspx>

Christian Aid responded to the Briefing Paper (above) by saying "Getting energy from gas is certainly better than coal, but to keep to climate targets and protect the world's vulnerable people from threat of climate change, we need much quicker progress than switching between different fossil fuels."

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/18/church-england-groups-praise-fracking-way-cut-carbon-emissions>

The diocese of Vermont in the US-based Episcopal Church has acquired a \$1 million solar array farm at its headquarters in Rock Point, Burlington. The Bishop of Vermont, Thomas C Ely, said "Care for the environment is an important aspect of our message in the Jesus Movement. The Episcopal Church in Vermont remains committed to environmental stewardship not only in Rock Point but also throughout the wider community"

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/01/us-diocese-acquires-solar-energy-farm.aspx#>

CORRUPTION

The former Anglican Primate of Kenya, Bishop Eliud Wabukala, has been sworn in as the new chair of the country's Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission. The EACC exists to "combat and prevent corruption and economic crime in Kenya through law enforcement, preventive measures, public education and promotion of standards and practices of integrity, ethics and anti-corruption."

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/01/former-archbishop-sworn-in-as-head-of-ethics-body.aspx>

DEBT

Last year the St Andrew's Community Network helped 758 people with debt problems through their debt advice service. A 'satellite' programme run by the charity has also supported volunteers in seven churches in Merseyside to set up debt

advice services, as part of the Community Money Advice Network. The chief executive, Kevin Peacock, speaks here:

<http://bit.ly/2jXEU7C>

DEVELOPMENT

Addressing the Rome Roundtable of the Global Foundation this month, Pope Francis reiterated his opposition to a global economic system that tends to degrade the human person.

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/01/14/pope_franzis_put_the_human_person_at_centre_of_economy/1285629

FARMING

In a Farming Today feature on the work of Agriculture Chaplains and the Farming Community Network, the Revd Janet Nicholls, an agricultural chaplain for the Diocese of Chelmsford says “Coming from a farming family myself, I am very aware of the pressures families are under. When you live, work and socialise together, big issues in any one of these areas can quickly affect all three. With fewer people working on farms, isolation is an increasing issue, so being able to talk to someone is becoming much more relevant.”

<http://www.fwi.co.uk/farm-life/how-church-support-for-farmers-goes-well-beyond-religion.htm>

FREE TRADE

In the House of Lords, when Viscount Ridley asked “what plans they have to celebrate the bicentenary of David Ricardo’s principle of comparative advantage, and the case for free trade”, the Archbishop of York asked the follow up question. “Does the Minister agree that the principle of comparative advantage works only if trade is not only free but also fair?”

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/01/17/archbishop-of-york-free-trade-must-also-be-fair-trade/>

Phil Bloomer, Executive Director of Ethical Corporation, asks how the business and human rights movement can help make globalisation work for everyone. Powerful governments are leading the charge to move markets away from an international, rules-based system of "win-win" cooperation, which includes the UN Guiding Principles, and global conventions. Instead, they will make markets work more exclusively for national purposes, often linked to particular business interests, and with the rising threat of "win-lose" trade wars.

<http://www.ethicalcorp.com/content/its-our-hands-fight-rise-blame-and-bigotry>

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

A Guardian article on the multimillion-pound budget cuts being made in support for homeless people instances Sunderland, where the housing support budget is being cut by 100%, and the Salvation Army says that having closed libraries and children's centres the local authority is now having to look at cutting support to the most vulnerable people.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jan/21/uk-council-cuts-more-people-sleeping-rough-charities-warn>

The Church of England is being urged to release some of its unused land to allow developers and housing associations build new homes. The Christian charity Housing Justice says the Church has thousands of acres of land which could be used. It says it could also allow unused places of worship to be converted into housing.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Christian-charity-calls-on-Church-release-land-for-new-homes>

ISRAEL / PALESTINE

In a new statement the Iona Community has backed the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, so as to pressurise Israel to end their occupation of the West Bank and all discrimination against Palestinians

<https://iona.org.uk/2017/01/10/newthe-iona-community-israelpalestine-position-statement/>

NORTH OF ENGLAND

In a House of Lords debate on the Institute for Public Policy Research's annual State of the North report, and the case for equality of opportunity and sustainable productivity, the Archbishop of York called for greater investment in and devolution to the north to create a more diverse economy that draws on the skills of northern people.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/01/12/archbishop-of-york-calls-for-investment-and-devolution-for-the-north-of-england/>

POVERTY

The Bishop of Durham spoke in a House of Lords debate on the Report from the Social Mobility Committee – “Overlooked and left behind: improving the transition from school to work for the majority of young people” - welcoming the report and highlighting the continued importance of a focus on child poverty.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2016/12/20/bishop-of-durham-highlights-need-for-continued-focus-on-tackling-child-poverty/>

Ekklesia continues to report and comment on issues of poverty (<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/taxonomy/term/657>) and, in particular, benefit sanctions. (<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/taxonomy/term/10317>).

Church action on Poverty reports the success of its campaign, started three years ago, which has helped hundreds of people escape unfair energy charges. <https://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/2017/01/20/campaign-success-hundreds-of-people-escape-unfair-energy-charges/>

REMUNERATION

Quakers in Britain have become the first major religious body to be awarded the Pay Compare Mark. The mark is awarded to employers who disclose the gap between their highest and lower paid workers on the Pay Compare website. The Quakers report a maximum of 1:4 ratio between the highest and lowest paid member of staff. <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/quakers-awarded-for-pay-transparency>

RETAIL

The Archbishop of York has appealed for a "Let's return to a 'buy British' mind-set" in the January edition of the British Farmer and Grower - North East <http://www.archbishopofyork.org/articles.php/3569/lets-return-to-a-buy-british-mindset>

A report in The Times (behind the pay wall) claimed that the Church Commissioners were part of a High Court action against TESCO, claiming that they have suffered losses after the company's accounting scandal in 2014. The report has not been confirmed. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tesco-sued-over-263m-black-hole-vs6xp5ccx>

TAXATION

Christian Aid fears that Ministers may be losing their nerve in the battle against dangerous secrecy in UK tax havens, in a shift that calls into question their seriousness about tackling tax dodging. The Government has disagreed with MPs on the International Development Committee, who had urged the government to 'use the full weight of its influence to lobby the UK's Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies to increase transparency by creating public beneficial ownership registers'. http://www.christianaid.org.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/584_January_2017/ministers-back-down-in-secrecy-fight-with-uk-tax-havens.aspx

UNITED STATES

Amid calls from some lawmakers and the new President for an immediate repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), a coalition of 119 faith- and values-based investors and public health groups, led by the InterFaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, has strongly defended the gains made under the law and urged restraint.

<http://www.iccr.org/investors-and-public-health-groups-voice-support-affordable-care-act>

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (Davos, Switzerland)

The Archbishop of Canterbury joined business leaders at the Forum in Davos, as they focused on pressing issues such as tackling inequality, reforming capitalism and promoting 'responsible leadership'. The British delegation included Chancellor Philip Hammond, Bank of England governor Mark Carney and the former Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/markets/article-4125534/The-FTSE-bosses-heading-Davos-tackle-poverty.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

World Council of Churches general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit urged the world's leaders to be accountable to humanity for the sake of justice and peace for all. "New expressions of polarizing populism are leading to greater division in our world and in our societies. We see more tribalism, nationalism, racism, and violence. The root causes of these trends can often be found in the negative effects of economic globalization – or of its radical opposite, economic protectionism, inequality and exclusion – with more and more people marginalized and left behind, creating ever greater gaps between the rich and the poor."

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/tveit-addresses-accountability-in-global-leadership-at-world-economic-forum>

FORUM ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

VACANCIES

ECCR is advertising two new part-time posts – see above, and at

<http://www.eccr.org.uk/work-for-us/>

RESOURCES

Church Action on Poverty

Resources for poverty-focused Sunday worship on 26 February 2017 are at

<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday>

The CAP blog provides useful suggestions on how churches can and do actively include, as well as caring for, people who are poor.

<https://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/>

'Doing Good'

"Doing Good: A Future for Christianity in the 21st Century" is a Theos report by Nick Spencer reflecting on the 10 years since the think tank was launched. The Foreword by the Archbishops of Westminster and Canterbury welcome its view that service is central, but it is service-as-witness, service that is firmly rooted in, shaped by and unashamed of its faith in Jesus Christ.

<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2016/12/14/doing-good-a-future-for-christianity-in-the-21st-century>

Liturgy for Lent

The liturgy published last year by the Joint Public Issues Team is still available on their website. Originating from their West Midlands Group, it views social and community issues against the background of Jesus' life and ministry and the season of Lent.

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/liturgy-for-lent-2016/>

Living Out Our Values

In a blog on their website CAFOD's Theological Adviser writes about supporters can live out their values, including the insights of Catholic social teaching

<https://blog.cafod.org.uk/2017/01/24/living-out-our-values/>



2017

The Joint Public Issues Team has produced its Public Issues Calendar for the coming year.

https://www.urch.org.uk/images/mission/church_and_society/Resources/Calendar_dates_2017_updated_17.11.16.pdf

Eco Church 'Green Communion'

Sunday 5th February

A Rocha UK's Eco Church award scheme will celebrate its first birthday in January and to mark the occasion they're inviting churches across England and Wales to hold a 'Green Communion' as part of their worship services

<http://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/introducing-green-communion/>

"Quakernomics: Lessons for today"

Tuesday 21st February

Northumbria University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

An evening exploring lessons to be drawn from the Quaker tradition in business.

Details from n.burton@northumbria.ac.uk

Church Action on Poverty Sunday

Sunday 26th February

<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday>

Big Pancake Party
Tuesday 28th February
Raising awareness and funding around Food Poverty
Church Urban Fund
<https://www.cuf.org.uk/the-big-pancake-party-2017>

'What hope for us? Recovering confidence in the North'
Saturday March 4th
Leeds Civic Hall.
Day Conference organised by JPIT Yorkshire, with Ed Cox (Director, IPPR North); Prof Caroline Hughes (Head of Peace Studies, Programme for a Peaceful City, Bradford University); Ryan Powell (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield); and a response from Rachel Lampard (Vice-President of the Methodist Church).
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/what-hope-for-us-recovering-confidence-in-the-north-tickets-31185415417>

"Journeys of Witness"
Quaker Peace & Social Witness Spring Conference
March 24th – 26th
Swanwick, Derbyshire
<https://www.quaker.org.uk/events/2017-qpsw-annual-spring-conference>

Global Investment Mobilisation
May 5th – 13th
Operation Noah is partnering with 350.org and others on events which will be themed around climate impacts and emphasising the moral dimension of fossil fuel divestment.
<http://operationnoah.org/>

AND FINALLY....

Has Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, found God?
<http://thenewnigeria.com.ng/2016/12/now-i-believe-god-exists-mark-zuckerberg/>

This monthly e-Newsletter is produced by ECCR to share information amongst its corporate members and individual supporters. Inclusion in the Newsletter does not imply ECCR's approval or otherwise of the information given. Nothing in this Newsletter constitutes financial or ethical advice – potential investors are strongly advised to consult a qualified financial advisor, and one who can understand their ethical position.

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