



NEWS FROM ECCR

October 2017

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

We invite you to forward this e-Newsletter to your friends.
They can also subscribe direct by going to the ECCR website: www.eccr.org.uk

ACTION POINT

This month we invite you to focus, pray and even write to your MP about the Climate Change talks, COP 23, taking place in Bonn, Germany, November 6 – 17.

At COP21, held in Paris in November-December 2015, the parties negotiated what is known as the Paris Agreement, which established specific actions and targets for reducing greenhouse gases emissions, mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, and financing mitigation and adaptation efforts in developing countries. The agreement took effect nearly a year later. Signatory countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius and to make strong efforts to keep the rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Paris Agreement is especially significant because it is a legally binding agreement. There is currently a huge gap between the Paris Agreement targets on one hand, and national carbon-reduction pledges and company business plans on the other. This gap must be closed. An electorate aware of the urgency and seriousness of the situation must call for the Paris Agreement to be turned into action.

Find out more about COP 23: <https://cop23.com.fj/about-cop-23/about-cop23/>

Get regular Updates: <https://act.350.org/signup/cop23-global/>

Follow the progress since Paris: <http://operationnoah.org/news-events/cop23-and-the-paris-agreement-where-are-we-now/>

Prayer

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/339234/fiji-leader-calls-for-prayer-ahead-of-cop23>

God of wisdom, we pray for justice to roll down like waters and righteousness to flow like an everlasting stream through all that is decided at the Climate Change talks this month. We pray for your Kingdom to come on earth as in heaven. Amen. (*Christian Aid*)

Other Prayer Resources can be found at
<http://www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/>

Lobbying

Share your concerns with your MP: <http://www.hfff.org.uk/>

NEWS FROM ECCR

If you're on Twitter, follow us on @eccr1

Recruitment

ECCR is continuing to recruit for the part-time role of Ethical Money Churches Development Manager in the West Midlands. Details are on the website: <http://www.eccr.org.uk/work-for-us/>. The closing date for applications is Monday November 20th.

Website

We're sorry that after a cyber-attack affecting a number of NGOs, our website is in process of being improved and updated. We hope to be back to normal soon.

Inter-Generational Justice

ECCR and JustShare co-sponsored a debate this month at St-Mary-le-Bow in London on "Intergenerational Justice: responsibility and blame from baby-boomers to millennials in ethical business practice". The speakers were Angus Hanton (Intergenerational Foundation) and Edward Smythe (Positive Money) and the chair was taken by Chair of ECCR, Christopher Stockwell. Christopher's paper, "ECCR and Intergenerational Justice – is the system fair to all?" will soon be available on our website.

Good Money Week

In Good Money Week ECCR partnered with the Church of Scotland and others to organise a conference in Edinburgh on "**What have faith and money got to do with climate change?**". It explored the key issues around how we can invest our money ethically in order to have a positive impact on the climate. ECCR Executive Director led a workshop on how congregations can get involved and gave an overview of our Ethical Money Churches project.

[http://www.srtp.org.uk/srtp/view_article/what_have_faith_and_finance_got_to_do_wit
h_climate_change](http://www.srtp.org.uk/srtp/view_article/what_have_faith_and_finance_got_to_do_with_climate_change)

Sainsburys and Fair Trade

Following the supermarket's decision to drop Fairtrade certification for its own brand teas and replace it with their own Fairly Traded accreditation (*see our Action Point for July*) a group of charities including CAFOD, Christian Aid, Traidcraft Exchange, the Women's Institute, Tearfund and Global Justice have launched their own campaign to stop Sainsbury's ditching Fairtrade. They are continuing to ask supporters to campaign locally and have lots of ideas and resources available: See dontditchfairtrade.com

Mining

ECCR is developing with member USPG and supported by ARSP, a project which is focusing on Mining and solidarity with churches in countries where human rights and environmental safety is threatened by global mining companies, beginning with the Philippines. As part of the project, ECCR Exec Director and Kamila Skupien, the ARSP volunteer, attended an UKSIF seminar hosted and moderated by Hermes Investment Management on community and indigenous rights. Speakers discussed the financial materiality of community consent and how investors can consider community engagement and action as an ESG issue.

Anglo-American

Having failed to receive a response to our letter earlier this year, ECCR has again written to the Chair of Anglo-American about the Minas-Rio iron ore project in Brazil and in support of the lobbying from the Latin American Churches and Mining Network.

<https://londonminingnetwork.org/2017/04/brazilians-challenge-anglo-american/#>

OTHER NEWS

Agriculture

Promoting responsible agricultural investments was the theme of a session organised by the World Council of Churches at the Civil Society Policy Forum of the World Bank Group-International Monetary Fund Annual Meetings held in Washington DC from 9-13 October.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/responsible-agriculture-investments-theme-of-wcc-session>

Budget 2017

Fifteen charities, including Church Action on Poverty, have worked together to propose three policies for the budget on November 22, to help provide greater financial security for all. They include making work pay, fixing Universal Credit delays, and helping income to rise in line with living costs.

<https://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/2017/10/05/budget-2017-3-policies-that-would-help-those-most-in-need/>

Banking

In a speech by Financial Inclusion Minister Guy Opperman he mentioned that he is the only MP to have set up a community bank, launched with the Church of England, making low cost loans to constituents.

<https://www.corporate-adviser.com/opperman-says-house-ifa-part-hr-offering/>

Church Investment

The Church Commissioners have been jointly awarded the Overall Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Framework award at this year's BVCA Awards. The judges commended the Commissioners for their detailed methodology when considering ESG issues in their decision making.

<https://www.bvca.co.uk/media-and-publications/news/bvca-press-releases/details/BVCA-announces-winners-of-Responsible-Investment-Awards-2017-and-launches-new-online-guide>

In a feature on shareholder activism, Pension Expert News included the Church Commissioners and their role in the historic vote earlier this year on climate change by shareholders in ExxonMobil, the world's largest listed oil and gas group.

<http://www.pensions-expert.com/Law-Regulation/Should-schemes-engage-in-more-shareholder-activism?ct=true>

A news feature in The Times (behind the paywall) included Methodist communities who are investing in outreach work and social enterprises.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/methodists-return-to-their-radical-roots-ffnphr30j>

The Church of England Research and Statistics Department has published the latest report on parish income and expenditure. Between 2006 and 2015 the total income reported increased by 24% (from £827 million to £1026 million) and total expenditure increased by 23% (£792 million to £972 million).

https://www.churchofengland.org/media/4037778/2015_ropfreport.pdf

Climate Change

Operation Noah is promoting COP23, taking place next month, with a vision to advance the Paris Agreement and accelerate climate action before 2020. They have looked at recent developments in science, business and politics to assess whether they support this aim, and suggest some ideas for what can be done to influence the outcome of the talks.

<http://operationnoah.org/news-events/cop23-and-the-paris-agreement-where-are-we-now/>

Chris Walker, Sustainability and Peace Programme Manager for the Society of Friends, has reviewed the Government's long-awaited Clean Growth Strategy which attempts to answer the question of how the UK will fulfil its commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions under international climate agreements and UK climate law.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/the-clean-growth-strategy>

Christian Aid says that the UK's Clean Growth Strategy charts an exciting low-carbon vision but in order to deliver it the Government faces 'make or break' choices.

<https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/uks-clean-growth-strategy-charts-an-exciting-low-carbon-vision-but-the-government-must-deliver-says-christian-aid/>

Five Anglican archbishops have joined other Christian leaders in calling for governments to implement the promises they made at the Paris Climate Change talks. The Christian leaders are urging them to "keep the promises they made in the Paris Agreement, to restore the natural balance."

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2017/10/anglicans-and-other-christian-leaders-demand-action-on-climate-change.aspx>

New research by the Transition Pathway Initiative – part-founded by the Church of England National Investing Bodies - on the cement and steel sectors shows that few of the largest companies in these sectors are well prepared for the transition to a low-carbon economy. This echoes previous research by the TPI on the coal-mining, electricity, and oil and gas sectors. Most companies now publicly acknowledge climate change as a significant business issue, but only a minority have integrated it into operational decision-making.

<https://churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/09/steel-and-cement-companies-falling-short-in-transition-to-a-low-carbon-economy.aspx>

In the Journal of the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers, a feature on Fit for the Future, a UK-based network of individuals and organisations who share ideas on best ways to cut energy use and reduce their impact on the environment, includes Lambeth Palace as a case study.

<https://www.cibsejournal.com/general/how-a-national-trust-blog-inspired-a-low-carbon-network-and-1-2m-of-energy-savings/>

Announcing the winners of the Church Times Green Church Awards at a ceremony at Lambeth Palace, Nicholas Holtam, Bishop of Salisbury, described climate change as an ‘issue of inter-generational justice’.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/09/2017/10/winners-of-church-times-green-awards-announced.aspx>

Christian campaigners are calling on the Church of England to disinvest from US oil giant ExxonMobil, on the basis of new evidence that the company intentionally misled the public on climate change. A recent peer-reviewed study published by Harvard academics shows that ExxonMobil knew about climate change in the 1970s, yet its public communications intentionally cast doubt over whether climate change was real and caused by human activity. The company is currently under investigation by the Attorneys General of New York and Massachusetts, as well as the FBI, over whether it misled the public about the risks of climate change.

<http://operationnoah.org/news-events/pressure-mounts-on-church-of-england-to-divest-from-exxon/>

A panel discussion in Geneva, organised by the World Council of Churches and Franciscans International, offered compelling examples of how climate change and unethical practices in the extractive industry are robbing people of both their human rights and their human dignity.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/in-face-of-climate-change-and-unfair-mining-practices-where-is-human-dignity>

Digital

The Church of England's #JoyToTheWorld Christmas campaign won gold award for the best use of digital by a charity, NGO, or Not for Profit enterprise in the Digital Impact Awards 2017.

<http://www.communicatemagazine.com/news/2017/digital-impact-awards-2017-winners-announced/>

Employment

The Bishop of Blackburn, Julian Henderson, and the Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, issued a statement following the announcement of plans to cut 2,000 jobs at BAE Systems. A total of 750 posts will go at the Warton and Samlesbury plants in Lancashire where parts for the Eurofighter Typhoon are manufactured.

<http://www.itv.com/news/granada/update/2017-10-10/church-of-england-bishops-react-to-bae-systems-job-losses-in-lancashire/>

A church-backed commercial cleaning company, Clean for Good, has been launched. It is committed to providing paid leave, guaranteed working hours and training as well as the London living wage for its staff.

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/oct/06/new-cleaning-firm-to-give-staff-london-living-wage-and-guaranteed-hours?CMP=share_btn_tw

Economics

With the aim of building competency in economics within churches, the second Ecumenical School on Governance, Economics and Management for an Economy of Life (GEM School) was held this summer in Lusaka, Zambia. The GEM School is a joint initiative of the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches as part of the Ecumenical Action Plan for a New International Financial and Economic Architecture

<http://wcr.ch/news/gem-school-integrates-theology-and-economics>

The Revd Giles Fraser took the disappearance of the old £1 coins as a way of talking about theology and money on Radio Four's "Thought for the Day" (at 1' 50")

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b098bsr3>

Fossil Fuel Investment

Forty Catholic institutions have announced their divestment from fossil fuels. Co-ordinated by the Global Catholic Climate Movement, this is the largest joint Catholic divestment announcement to date. The divestment commitments come from organisations around the world, including a Catholic bishops' conference and a Catholic bank as well as religious orders and lay organisations.

<http://www.thecatholicuniverse.com/forty-catholic-institutions-plan-divest-fossil-fuels-14373>

Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who is Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, has joined other academics in renewing pressure on the University to abandon its investment in fossil fuels. The £6.3 billion endowment fund is the largest in the world outside the US.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8eeca3ec-aaab-11e7-93c5-648314d2c72c>

The BrightNow campaign is calling on local churches and religious communities across the UK to join in an Advent Declaration by making a commitment to divest from fossil fuels.

<http://brightnow.org.uk/news/divest-your-church-join-the-advent-declaration/>

Good Money Week

A YouGov poll produced for Good Money Week showed a strong public demand (63%) for a financial 'kitemark' to boost sustainable finance. It also reported that 60% of the UK believes that the financial sector can make high returns while investing ethically and responsibly.

<http://goodmoneyweek.com/media/press-releases/new-good-money-weekyougov-poll-results-announced>

UKSIF also produced this 'Pound with Principles' video for Good Money Week. It was sponsored by CCLA and the Church of England

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdvHkPZNwu0>

The Church of Scotland was applauded in the Scottish Parliament for its work promoting responsible finance during Good Money Week.

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2017/msps_applaud_church_partners_work_on_good_money_week

Housing & Homelessness

The Bishop of Leeds has asked the Government what assessment they have made of the impact of large housing developments with insufficient infrastructure and amenities on community cohesion, social capital, and social inclusion.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/10/16/bishop-of-leeds-asks-government-about-economy-infrastructure-and-devolution-in-the-north-and-yorkshire/>

The Bishop of Rochester has asked what proportion of the private rented sector is affordable to those on Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, and what assessment they have made of the impact of the freeze on Local Housing Allowance on levels of homelessness in England.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/10/18/bishop-of-rochester-asks-government-about-housing-affordability-and-homelessness/>

Human Rights

The US-based InterFaith Center for Corporate Responsibility has launched a new initiative, the Investor Alliance for Human Rights, established to provide a collective action platform to facilitate investor advocacy on a full spectrum of human rights and labour rights issues. This new Alliance, the first of its kind, builds on longstanding ICCR member advocacy to amplify the global investor voice on critical human rights challenges and to promote corporate accountability on human rights.

<http://www.iccr.org/investor-alliance-human-rights>

Inequality

Following the Government's publication of audited information about the different experiences of people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, the Lead Bishop for Racial Justice for the Catholic Church in England and Wales said that it is unacceptable that in 2017 minority groups are confronted by systemic racism, discrimination and inequality.

<http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/Ethnicity-Facts-and-Figures>

Modern Slavery

At the end of the first full year of reporting under the UK Modern Slavery Act and as part of its ongoing work addressing modern slavery and human trafficking in supply chains, Rathbone Greenbank Investments, ECCR corporate member, hosted an evening of insight and discussion. Partnering with Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, which presented findings from its most recent analysis, and Marks & Spencer, it examined whether there has been an improvement in company reporting over the past year, and the experience of companies reporting on these issues. In addition, it looked at the role that the investment community and private sector can play in driving positive corporate action to eliminate modern slavery from supply chains.

<https://www.rathbonegreenbank.com/about-us/events/ftse-100-and-uk-modern-slavery-act>

The Church Investors Group has reported on the programme they began last year aimed at tackling modern slavery within the supply chains of listed companies. 265 of the UK's largest companies were contacted regarding the requirements placed upon them by the Modern Slavery Act. The engagement encourages companies to develop mechanisms to better understand and identify the risk of modern slavery occurring within their supply chain and develop policies and processes to address it.

<https://churchinvestorsgroup.org.uk/modern-slavery-engagement/>

A report on The Independent website on modern slavery in London's highlighted hand car washes. It included expert comment by former Metropolitan Police Commissioner Bernard Hogan Howe, who referred to work by the Catholic Church and the Church of England to help support victims.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/slaves-on-our-streets-hand-car-wash-exploitation-london-undocumented-workers-a7994151.html>

The Prime Minister and the Archbishop of Canterbury have given their backing to the launch of a project aimed at mobilising the Church of England's 12,000 parishes in the battle to eradicate modern slavery.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2017/09/2017/10/prime-minister-backs-church-of-england-drive-to-eradicate-modern-slavery.aspx>

A year after the Nottinghamshire police chief committed to making the county and the city of Nottingham free from slavery, a group of the region's businesses, churches and charities have pledged to help make this a reality

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/how-the-home-of-robin-hood-is-trying-to-free-itself-of-modern-slavery-a8011481.html>

Pensions

Pension Quality Mark has announced the shortlist for its new Distinction Award. It includes the C of E Church Administrators Pension Fund for its communications distinction award.

<http://www.pensionqualitymark.org.uk/newsitem/pqm-announces-distinction-award-shortlist>

Politics

The Joint Public Issues Team (Baptist, Methodist, Church of Scotland, and United Reformed Church) has reported on the visits by Church Leaders to this year's Party Conferences. The last one in England was to the Conservative Party where the issues included BREXIT, the implementation of Universal Credit and the need to defend international aid.

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/conversation-and-conservatives/>

Church of Scotland representatives spent two days meeting cross-party politicians at Westminster to discuss ways of improving life for people on the margins. They presented a strong core of issues concerned with community spirit and cohesion on the one hand, as well as the more practical aspects of community, such as housing, social security, gender justice, homelessness and the justice system on the other.

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2017/vision_for_a_better_society_shared_with_mps

Rural Affairs

The Bishop of Leeds has asked the Government what steps they are taking, in addition to their devolution programme for cities, to promote the rural economy.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/10/16/bishop-of-leeds-asks-government-about-economy-infrastructure-and-devolution-in-the-north-and-yorkshire/>

Tax

The former UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights wrote in the Guardian that tax avoidance by corporations is out of control. The rules that govern cross border profits enable systemic tax avoidance, because they allow profits to be shifted away from where they are generated to another country with a lower (or zero) tax rate – all as a matter of accounting rather than real economic activities. These rules frequently serve the economic interests of the largest multinational corporations.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/30/tax-avoidance-corporations-impacts-the-poor-united-nations-step-in?CMP=share_btn_tw

Universal Credit

The Joint Public Issues Team produced a briefing ahead of this month's Universal Credit debate, saying "As Churches we are concerned that the design of Universal Credit does not sufficiently take into account the lives, skills and resources of the least well off, and as a result will lead to greater debt, poverty and exclusion. We believe it should be paused until these design and implementation flaws are rectified".

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Universal-Credit-Briefing.docx.pdf>

In a Sunday Times article, the Archbishop of York called on ministers to cut the "grotesquely ignorant" six week waiting time for Universal Credit payments.

<http://www.archbishopofyork.org/articles.php/3708/universal-credit>

and the Bishop of Manchester said on the BBC that "Jesus has some very stern words for those who withhold payment from the poor and I think as Christians we are bound to echo those concerns."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b099v2ck>

Church Action on Poverty tells the story of how for one Universal Credit recipient the new system led to homelessness.

<https://blog.church-poverty.org.uk/2017/10/05/universal-credit-i-became-homeless-and-depressed/#more-4237>

EVENTS

Faith in Politics; a testimony to equality

November 3rd – 5th.

Woodbrooke College, Selly Oak, Birmingham

A weekend to explore the issues raised in the Quakers' 2017 Swarthmore Lecture with Catherine West and Maud Grainger, Woodbrooke's Faith in Action Tutor - a chance to gain knowledge and skills for tackling inequality in our own communities.

All welcome. Cost £166.00 – £238.00

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/item/faith-in-politics-a-testimony-to-equality/>

Voices from the Margins

Church Action on Poverty Annual Conference
Saturday November 18th
Sheffield
<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/conference>

Engaging a Politics of Hope - Economics, Belief and the Environment

The William Temple Foundation Annual Lecture
Jonathan Bartley
Wednesday November 22nd at 7pm, Wellcome Collection, Euston Rd, London.
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/william-temple-foundation-annual-lecture-tickets-37882431372>

Violence against women and girls: Reason to hope?

Wednesday 22nd November 2017 at 6pm
St James's Church, Piccadilly, London
A JustShare panel debate: What hope is there for ending violence against women in the City, nationally and around the world
<http://www.justshare.org.uk/home/4577665002>

Church Action on Poverty Sunday

February 11th 2018
"Voices from the Margins"
www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

A Brave New World?

JPIT Conference 2018
March 17th at Manchester Central Hall
What does it mean to be a Christian in the midst of our changing world? How do we live prophetically in a time of political turbulence, social upheaval and climate change?
<http://dmtrk.net/1MV9-578J1-7D97YUVN09/cr.aspx>

VACANCIES

ECCR is advertising for the post of Ethical Money Churches Development Manager for the West Midlands, see above and at <http://www.eccr.org.uk/work-for-us/>

Church Action on Poverty is looking for a Churches Engagement & Supporter Marketing Officer – south of England. 14 hours per week. Closing date for applications: November 6th.

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

RESOURCES

The Art of the Possible is a resource produced by the Joint Public Issues Team of the Church of Scotland, Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church to help people to explore the relationship between faith and politics. It was initially released in 2013, but here has been updated and renewed for 2017:

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Art-of-the-possible.pdf>

Griffith University in Australia has an on-line course on whether the next generation be better or worse off than their parents, looking at both sides of the debate.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/exploring-economics-next-generation>

“That they all may be one: Insights into English ecumenism”.

To mark 500 years since the Reformation, the THEOS think tank has launched a report on the current state of Christian unity in the UK, using Churches Together in England as a case study. (ECCR is a Body in Association of CTE)

<http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2017/10/03/that-they-all-may-be-one-insights-into-english-ecumenism>

AND FINALLY....

Or perhaps “Strictly speaking...” Voted off this month from the BBC dance show, the Revd Richard Coles has returned to the day job. “As a rural parish priest, I’ve found that housing is a continuing problem. In my work for a housing association, I deal with those who have been hit by changes in welfare and are vulnerable to an economic system that doesn’t always work to their benefit”

<http://www.countryliving.co.uk/news/a260/reverend-richard-coles/>

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Charity Registration Number: 1139618

ECCR, c/o USPG, Harling House, 47-51 Great Suffolk Street, London SE1 0BS

www.eCCR.org.uk