



NEWS FROM ECCR

December 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

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

The Trustees and Staff of ECCR send their best wishes as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

And next year will see some changes in ECCR. Our next Newsletter will be structured to more easily fit the different formats that are now required whether it be for mobiles, tablets or desktops. We are also using the opportunity to develop its content and interactivity whilst enhancing the scope and informative nature of the topics covered.

We look forward to a New Year and new opportunities to work for the Kingdom of Justice and Peace which Christ came to bring.

NEWS FROM ECCR

The Website is now up and running again: <http://www.eccr.org.uk/>

Oxford

ECCR members in Oxford continue to monitor the Campsfield House Immigration Detention and Removal Centre and to meet with MITIE, the outsourcing company which runs it. At their recent meeting with company representatives they used the new Bar Council report on "Injustice in Immigration Detention", looking at indefinite detention from the legal perspective.

Ethical Money Churches

ECCR is seeking to recruit a Development Manager for this project in the West Midlands. The closing date is 9.00am, Monday, January 22nd.
More details from <http://www.eccr.org.uk/about-us/work-for-us/>

Fossil Fuels

The Financial Times printed a letter from the ECCR Chair welcoming a letter from the Church Commissioners and other faith investors calling on companies to support decarbonisation. Christopher Stockwell's letter also drew attention to the need for bodies like ECCR "to make the ordinary men and women in the pews aware of the issues and of their ability to do something about it".

OTHER NEWS

Budgets

In the House of Lords debate on the Chancellor's 2017 Autumn Budget Statement the Bishop of Portsmouth, Rt Revd Christopher Foster, focused on the lack of news on social care, and called on the Government to take further action on Universal Credit.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/12/04/budget-bishop-of-portsmouth-points-to-great-silence-on-social-care/>

The Church of Scotland urged the Scottish Government to use this month's draft Budget to try and make the country a fairer, more equal and more just society.

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

Climate Change

Christian Aid has welcomed the conclusions of the One Planet Summit, showing that (with or without the U.S.) countries are firmly committed to the Paris Agreement of two years ago. "Where there is political will money flows and this summit has started to see that crucial green finance uncorked. The global demand for clean technology is a great investment opportunity for private investors but also for development banks and leaders that want to see their countries prosper"

<https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/one-planet-summit-a-sign-that-the-world-is-starting-to-take-its-paris-agreement-pledges-seriously-says-christian-aid/>

The Board of ExxonMobil has agreed to implement the recent shareholder resolution on climate change disclosure which was filed by the Church Commissioners for England and New York State Comptroller. It was passed in May despite Board opposition. The Board will provide information on "energy demand sensitivities, implications of two degree Celsius scenarios, and positioning for a lower-carbon future."

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/success-shareholders-exxonmobil-confirms-implementation-resolution-climate>

The Church Commissioners were among the 67-strong group who signed a statement of support for the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures' recommendations. These supply a framework for disclosing climate related risks and

opportunities by including them in the mainstream financial filings and using scenario analysis to inform business strategies.

<http://economia.icaew.com/en/news/december-2017/business-and-investors-back-climate-related-reporting-framework>

The Commissioners were also among the “Climate Action 100+” global investors who have pledged to engage with 100 companies estimated to be responsible for around 85% of total global greenhouse gas emissions.

<https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/analysis/3022839/major-investors-worth-usd236tr-launch-unprecedented-push-for-climate-action>

Gambling

The Bishop of St Albans, Dr Alan Smith, has urged members of the Church of England and other churches to add their voices to calls to limit the maximum stake on the addictive machines to £2, instead of its current level of £100.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/bishop-urges-christians-make-voices-heard-fixed-odds-betting-terminals>

Debt

The Wirral Debt Advice team has produced a podcast about how the team works alongside food banks in two churches in the Diocese of Chester, providing debt advice to the local community. The service was set up with support from the Church Credit Champions Network. It is now part of the Just Finance Foundation, which falls under the Church Urban Fund.

<https://cms.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/comment-and-features/podcast-tackling-debt-through-food-banks>

The debt charity Christians Against Poverty has quoted the Archbishop of Canterbury on the work of the charity, saying “above all, they will treat you as a human being of infinite value”

<http://metro.co.uk/2017/11/29/christians-against-poverty-what-is-cap-and-how-can-it-help-you-if-you-have-severe-money-problems-7107615/>

The Bishop of Birmingham has called for further support for the sustainable credit industry which would help credit unions in the UK which are currently underfunded.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-politics-parliaments-42400904>

The Bishop of St Albans has asked how the Government will monitor the voluntary agreement by lenders not to give automatic credit limit increases to consumers.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/12/14/bishop-of-st-albans-asks-about-automatic-credit-increases-by-lenders/>

Housing

In a debate on rural poverty the Bishop of Winchester said that housing is a key factor in evaluating poverty. He asked whether the significant new funding for new

housebuilding and new affordable homes will result in more homes for social rent in rural areas.

<https://churchinparliament.org/2017/12/05/bishop-of-winchester-raises-need-for-more-social-housing-in-rural-areas/>

At the IPE (Investment & Pensions, Europe) Awards 2017 ceremony in Prague the Church Commissioners were listed as having won a themed award for Real Estate. <https://www.ipe.com/events/ipe-awards-2017/ipe-awards-pensiondanmark-scoops-european-pension-fund-of-the-year/10021978.article>

Government

The Archbishop of York has called on the government to reach a compromise with local authorities to break a long-running stalemate over devolution in Yorkshire. He has written to the northern powerhouse minister, Jake Berry, setting out proposals for a devolution deal for the whole county to be reached in stages over two years.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/dec/13/archbishop-of-york-backs-devolution-deal-for-whole-of-yorkshire>

Human Rights

At the 6th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva, the World Council of Churches, ACT Alliance and Lutheran World Federation hosted a side event, saying “The huge impacts of businesses on the communities in which they operate often bring benefits, but companies can disregard and even harm people’s rights in pursuit of economic gain”.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/ecumenical-groups-join-in-un-forum-on-business-and-human-rights-in-geneva>

On Human Rights Day, Quakers in Britain joined more than 140 civil society groups in an open letter to the prime minister, seeking commitment to “stand firm on universal human rights standards as the foundation of a forward-looking UK”

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/standing-up-for-human-rights-1>

Inequality

In a BBC Interview the Bishop of Burnley, Philip North, discussed the resignation of the members of the Government’s Social Mobility Commission citing lack of progress by politicians in tackling social injustice.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09qzj63#play>

Pharma

Some American investors, all of them members of the InterFaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, have announced they have filed resolutions at five major

pharmaceutical companies asking for information about how well executive pay incentives mitigate long-term financial risks associated with mounting public concerns over the affordability of prescription medicines.

<http://www.iccr.org/investors-say-executive-pay-packages-pharma-may-incentivize-drug-pricing-risks-0>

Poverty

Church Action on Poverty has launched a social franchise to help people across the UK access affordable food.

www.church-poverty.org.uk/

Research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that an additional 700,000 UK children and pensioners have fallen into relative poverty - households with less than 60% the median income - over the past four years. The Bishop of Durham, Paul Butler, has said that he is deeply concerned by the findings.

<https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-of-England-deeply-concerned-over-poverty-stats>

In an interview on 'Peston on Sunday' the Archbishop of Canterbury said that the largest group of food bank users are in work. Jobs were being created but these were not lifting people out of poverty. He called for investment in areas such as skills and apprenticeships.

<https://www.metro.news/workers-use-food-banks-says-archbishop-of-canterbury/834980/>

Retail

Following the Supreme Court ruling that the introduction in Scotland of minimum unit pricing (MUP) for alcohol is legal, the Joint Public Issues Team (Baptist, Church of Scotland, Methodist, U.R.C.) has issued a briefing explaining why MUP is necessary and calling on churches to encourage England to follow suit.

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/mupscotland/>

The InterFaith Center on Corporate Responsibility reports that in light of the emerging global risk posed by antibiotic resistance, American shareholders in casual restaurant chains McDonald's and Denny's, and major chicken producer Sanderson Farms, have filed shareholder resolutions calling for policies that will curb the use of medically important antibiotics in their meat supply chains.

<http://www.iccr.org/amid-public-health-concerns-investors-seek-improved-oversight-antibiotics-use-meat-production>

The Bishop of Chelmsford, Stephen Cottrell, called for a ban on Christmas Day sales, which he said could tempt people away from celebrating the birth of Jesus with family and friends.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/12/17/christmas-eve-shopping-warning-early-closing-times-could-scupper/>

Tax Justice

Christian Aid has attacked the lack of transparency from UK Overseas Territories. It says that since 2013 the UK has repeatedly pressed the Overseas Territories to introduce transparent, publicly-accessible registers of who owns which companies registered on the islands – yet still not a single Overseas Territory has published one so far.

<https://mediacentre.christianaid.org.uk/as-eu-prepares-tax-havens-blacklist-christian-aid-slams-lack-of-action-on-transparency-from-uk-overseas-territories/>

Trade

In a House of Lords debate on Trade in Non-financial Services, the Bishop of Leeds said "The economy is not the end, it is a means to an end. If we forget this, we become utilitarian and materialistic".

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-politics-parliaments-42400904>

Work

The BBC featured "Clean For Good", a commercial cleaning company founded in the parish of St Andrew-by-the-Wardrobe, in the City of London, in response to concerns about low pay and poor working conditions for cleaners in the City. (*From 31 mins 44 sec*)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09hp29k>

EVENTS

Faith Base Entrepreneurs

January 22-23, Ecumenical Centre, Geneva

A Conference organised by Associations of Christian Entrepreneurs, Christian Workers Associations and Christian investors from all continents and backgrounds "in order to *learn* from each other, *connect* to each other and explore and plan how to *cooperate*". *Closing date: December 31st.*

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/faith-based-entrepreneurs-stronger-together>

Government, the common good and human dignity

January 30th, 3pm - 5.30 pm

A politics, religion and society seminar hosted by the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society.

The Billiard Room, St Mary's University, Twickenham TW1 4SX.

To register for a place e-mail philip.booth@stmarys.ac.uk.

Church Action on Poverty Sunday

February 11th

“Voices from the Margins”

www.church-poverty-org.uk/sunday

A Brave New World?

Joint Public Issues Team 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>

Legacy: Passing the business baton

13 - 15 April

The 2018 Faith in Business Conference at Ridley Hall, Cambridge.

<http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/news/1173-fib-2018>

RESOURCES

The latest Newsletter from “*Together for the Common Good*” offers a mass of resources including Maurice Glasman on the need for the Left to embrace a renewed understanding of belonging, place and tradition, and the new journalism platform Unherd acknowledging that extreme concentrations of wealth are unacceptable, and a more even distribution is the way forward.

<http://togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/get-involved/newsletters.html>

Church Action on Poverty’s 2017 Review can be found at

<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk/about-us/about-us/annualreviews/annualreview2017/annualreview2017pdf>

AND FINALLY....

This is indeed the end, the last e-Newsletter in its present form, but also a new beginning as our revamped Communications strategy offers new ways for more two-way inter-action between ECCR and our supporters.

HAPPY NEW YEAR !

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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The logo for ECCR, consisting of the lowercase letters 'eccr' in a bold, rounded, yellow font.

The Ecumenical Council
for Corporate Responsibility