

Praxis

The public issues newsletter of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches



Newsletter 34 April 2011

Resources for the elections on 5 May 2011

- [political extremism](#) for churches countering extremist or racist political parties - including a prayer for the elections, theological reflection, advice and other resources. Put together by Methodists, URC, Baptists, Anglicans and Catholics.
- Scottish voters will be voting for members of the Scottish Parliament - resources [here](#).
- Welsh churches have put together a manifesto in advance of the Welsh Assembly elections available from [Cytun](#).
- Local elections in England - a briefing is available at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk
- Coming soon... 'why I'm voting in the AV referendum' at www.jointpublicissues.org.uk

Methodist Council

The Methodist Council, one of the governance bodies of the Methodist Church, met at the beginning of April and considered two significant papers from the Joint Public Issues Team. One looked at issues raised by the Government's 'Big Society', and the other examined the challenges of poverty and inequality. Both issues will be discussed at Methodist Conference in June, but you can read the Council papers [here](#).

Trident

Trident through the back door?

In October of last year David Cameron announced that a decision on the replacement of nuclear submarines will be delayed until after the next election in 2016. The Liberal Democrats hailed this triumph as a concrete example of the value of participating in coalition government.

However it has since transpired that the Ministry of Defence propose to purchase several "long-lead" items, including steel for the hull, in advance with the earliest purchases occurring in the next few weeks. This is despite the fact that Parliament has yet to make a final decision on the future of Trident.

We are concerned that such extensive - and expensive - advance spending (running into hundreds of millions of pounds) may close down options in any future debate.

[Take part in our action](#) by writing to your MP today!

BASIC Trident Commission

The British American Security Information Council (BASIC) Trident Commission was launched in Parliament in January and plans to report in early 2012 - see [blog post](#). The Joint Public Issues Team plan to submit evidence to the Commission.

International Ecumenical Peace Convocation

17-25 May 2011, Kingston, Jamaica

The Peace Convocation marks the conclusion of the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence. Extensive [web resources](#) include Bible studies, video testimonials, and study guide.

Churches worldwide are being asked to observe **Sunday 22 May** as [World Sunday for Peace](#), using the prayer written by the Caribbean hosts of the Convocation.

'On our own two feet' - Campaign success!

In the previous newsletter we asked you to support Action for Children's campaign calling for a new system of savings accounts for children in care. Over 1,200 people emailed their MPs, resulting in support from politicians of all parties and the announcement by the Chancellor ahead of the budget that the Government would invest in savings accounts for all children leaving the care system. Many thanks for your support in achieving this successful outcome. [Read more](#).

Close the Gap

The gap between rich and poor is bigger now than at any time in the past 40 years. Church Action on Poverty's new campaign is asking churches and individuals across the UK to Pledge to do what they can to help tackle inequality, to give a voice to people who are denied a full life and trapped in poverty. Find out more [here](#).

Nuclear Power and Nuclear Waste Disposal

The Cumbria Methodist District together with Churches Together in Cumbria Social Responsibility Forum are undertaking a fresh look at the issues surrounding transport and disposal of nuclear waste from power stations, as well as the possibility of storing the waste in West Cumbria. Is nuclear waste an issue in your area? Are there other districts/synods/circuits, etc. looking at these issues in the light of the Fukushima nuclear crisis? If so please email [Colin Harbach](#) of Cumbria Methodist District.

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)

EAPPI provides protection by presence, monitors human rights abuses, supports Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and advocates for an end to occupation. Volunteers are now being sought to serve as accompaniers in the West Bank and Israel in 2012: 18 vacancies for 3 months' service, 2 vacancies for 4.5 months' service. Living allowance plus benefits provided. Deadline for applications: 23 June 2011. Go to the [website](#) for further information and to download an application pack.

REMINDER - World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel: 29 May-4 June 2011
<http://www.worldweekforpeace.org>

EVENTS

The Living Wage and the Church

Church Urban Fund/Church Action on Poverty workshop for churches and groups supporting the living wage in their communities

Tuesday 24 May, 10.00 am - 2.00 pm (including lunch) at London Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU

[Register online](#) or contact [Tom Sefton](#).

Refugee Protection - Policies by number or a creative welcome?

Churches' Refugee Network Conference 2011

Saturday 4 June, 11.00 am (10.30 coffee/registration) - 4.30 pm at St James' Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL

Cost (including lunch): £15; concessions £10; free to refugees and asylum seekers.

Download a booking form, programme and publicity poster [here](#).

Housing Justice Conference - Church action on housing and homelessness: Tea and Sympathy or Radical Action?

Wednesday 15 June, 10.00 am - 3.30 pm at St Paul's, Robert Adam Street, London W1U 3HW

As homelessness and housing need increase, housing costs rise, benefits fall and social housing is under threat, where is the church? The conference will use open space format, allowing each person to bring their own unique contribution rather than relying on the expertise of a few.

Cost: £30 (bursaries available). Download a booking form and further information [here](#) or ring 020 7920 6600.

If you would like to receive the Joint Public Issues Team Newsletter, or would like to publicise an event or project, please contact Wendy Cooper, e-mail - wendy.cooper@urc.org.uk Telephone - 020 7916 8632 Address - 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT
