

# Praxis



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

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### Newsletter 35 May 2011

#### Join us in celebrating the World Week for Peace in Palestine - Israel, 2011

Time: Thursday 2 June, 4-5pm

Venue: The Garden, Friends' House, 175 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

#### A time of silence, readings and prayers to mark this international day for a just peace, called by the World Council of Churches

Organised by

Baptist Union of Great Britain,

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and

Israel, Pax Christi and United Reformed Church - Commitment for Life.



#### Take action for Justice for All

Justice for All campaigners will be taking action for free legal advice on the Day of Action, 3 June. Cuts to legal aid and advice risk cutting off the most vulnerable and those living in poverty from the help they need with everyday problems, from CAB, Law Centres and other community advice agencies. Please join us to take action for justice!  
<http://www.justice-for-all.org.uk/>

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## Methodist Conference 2011 and Beckley Lecture

This year's Methodist Conference takes place in Southport, from Saturday 2 - Thursday 7 July. It includes debates on poverty and inequality, and on the Big Society. For more information visit the website: [www.methodistconference.org.uk](http://www.methodistconference.org.uk)

One highlight of the Conference for those who take an interest in the relationship between faith and politics is the annual Beckley Lecture. This year's speaker is Nick Spencer, Research Director of the public theology thinktank, Theos, and the title is **"What has the Bible ever done for us? History, Politics and the English Bible"**. 2011 is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King James Bible. This timely lecture will look at how the Bible has historically influenced, and continues to influence, political life in our country. It will be chaired by Revd Alison Tomlin, President of the Methodist Conference in 2010-11.

The lecture will be held on Monday 4 July at 7.30pm. Please see <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/methodistconference/>

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## Operation Noah Annual Supporters Meeting and Seminar - MONDAY JUNE 6th 2011

### 4pm: ANNUAL SUPPORTERS MEETING

### 6pm: SPECIAL SEMINAR - The Climate Crisis: *Why is nothing happening?*

A social, political and moral perspective on obstacles to action  
Seminar led by Professor Lynn McDonald [www.justearth.net](http://www.justearth.net)

Venue: Friends House  
173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ

For further details & to confirm attendance contact Natalie Hall: Operation Noah administrator  
t: 07804 059 426 e: [admin@operationnoah.org](mailto:admin@operationnoah.org) w: [www.operationnoah.org](http://www.operationnoah.org)

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## Tea Time For Change on Thursday 9 June in Westminster Central Hall.

News from Tearfund -

"Hundreds of people are meeting their MPs for a chat over a cup of tea to tell them that tackling international development is still popular even in hard times. The three messages we're asking on the day are:

- Keep up the good work on quantity and quality of aid.
- Stop tax dodging and shine a light on the payments companies make to governments.
- Champion innovative, effective and fair financing for development.

We want to see the UK government championing a Financial Transaction Tax (Robin Hood Tax) at the G20."

Visit [www.teatimeforchange.org.uk](http://www.teatimeforchange.org.uk) for further details. You can also sign up via one of the organisers - [www.tearfund.org/teatime](http://www.tearfund.org/teatime) or CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Action Aid or Save the Children.

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## **Anti Vulture Funds Legislation is now Permanent**

On 17 May, The British Government implemented new legislation to make The Debt Relief (Developing Countries) Act 2010 permanent. Methodist, United Reformed and Baptist Churches have participated actively in the campaign for an end to 'vulture funds', through which some companies have bought debts cheaply and then use UK courts to extract much higher payments.

There had been concerns that the 'sunset clause' in the original Act, which meant it might have expired on 7 June 2011, would have allowed the continuing exploitation of some of the world's poorest countries through vulture funds.

Following this result in the UK, Churches continue to support calls for this ban to be implemented in other jurisdictions.

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## **Westminster Rough Sleeping Ban shelved**

After an extensive consultation, Westminster Council has decided not to go ahead with its ban on rough sleeping in part of Victoria. A related proposal to ban soup runs in the vicinity of the Westminster Cathedral Piazza has been put on hold, while the Council attempts to work with soup runs to find a non-legislative solution.

When these proposals were unveiled in February 2011, they proved controversial. Revd Alison Tomlin, President of the Methodist Conference, said "This by-law punishes people solely for their misfortune and belongs in a Victorian statute book, not in the laws of a decent 21st century community".

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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](mailto:wendy.cooper@urc.org.uk) Telephone - 020 7916 8632 Address - 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

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