

Statement from Church leaders: vote next week, vote positively

“We call on UK Christians to give voice to their values by voting at next week’s European Parliamentary Elections on June 4. In a world grappling with global financial meltdown, climate change and poverty it is more important than ever that UK citizens choose their representatives carefully.

“Voting is a right, but it’s also the right thing to do. It is a chance to make our voices heard in the midst of the current political turmoil. Many feel disillusioned with mainstream political parties, and the scandal over MPs’ expenses has emphasized the need for our politicians to be held accountable.

“But we must hold our representatives accountable for more than just their expenses. They are accountable for enacting policies that promote justice and seek the common good. Extremist parties promoting values and policies which are incompatible with Christian beliefs need to be faced down with a high voter turnout.

“We implore all Christians around the UK to vote next week and to use their vote positively for the values and interests they believe in. This week the Church will be celebrating Pentecost, when God’s Holy Spirit was poured out on God’s people. In the coming days we hope that people across the European Union will discern the Spirit’s leading, and after prayerful consideration will use their vote to support peace, justice and the integrity of creation.”

Revd Jonathan Edwards
General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain

Revd Stephen Poxon
President of the Methodist Conference

Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe
Co-Moderator Elect of the United Reformed Church General Assembly

European Parliament and English County Council elections are being held on Thursday 4 June. The Joint Public Issues Team have produced an [election briefing](http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/jpit_electionbriefing_0409.pdf) (http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/jpit_electionbriefing_0409.pdf)

Hope In God’s Future

A major new report prepared by the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches exploring theology and climate change, [Hope in God’s Future](http://methodistconference.org.uk/downloads/10-hope-in-gods-future-210509.pdf) (<http://methodistconference.org.uk/downloads/10-hope-in-gods-future-210509.pdf>), is to be debated at next month’s Methodist Conference. A study guide will be available in the summer.

Churches speak together on International Development

The economic crisis may well reverse some of the development progress achieved in the past few years. Four churches responded to the Department for International Development White Paper consultation ‘Eliminating World Poverty’ encouraging the government to recognise the role of the church in sustaining and building communities world wide.

The response from the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, Quaker Peace & Social Witness and the United Reformed Church is [available here](http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/pi_dfidwhitepaper_0509.pdf). (http://www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/pi_dfidwhitepaper_0509.pdf)

World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel – 4-10 June 2009

A reminder that the World Council of Churches week for peace in Palestine and Israel is almost with us, and it is an opportunity to pray, take action and tell others about the situation in the Holy Land.

Visit the [website](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/events-sections/wwppi.html) (<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/events-sections/wwppi.html>) for further details.

Supporting refugees and people seeking sanctuary

The **Churches Refugee Network** (<http://www.ctbi.org.uk/CHBC/99>) Annual Conference, 'From Asylum....to Sanctuary' will be held on Saturday 6 June at Holy Apostles Hall, Cumberland Street, Pimlico SW1V 4LY.

Cost is £15 / £10 concessions, and free to refugees and asylum seekers. Lunch included.

For further details see www.ctbi.org.uk/CHBC/99

Refugee Week (www.refugeeweek.org.uk) (15-21 June) is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK. It aims to create a better understanding between communities by promoting positive representations of refugees.

This year, Refugee Week has launched the Simple Acts campaign. This involves 20 easy actions that you can do to show your support. One of the 20 Simple Acts is '**Say a Little Prayer**' (<http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/Say-a-prayer.htm>) which encourages people to offer a prayer for refugees.

Refugee Sunday is 21 June. Why not take part in the Simple Acts campaign by praying for refugees. If you would like some worship ideas, please visit the **Refugee Sunday page of the Methodist Church website**. (<http://www.methodist.org.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=opentogod.content&cmid=870>)

For more information on 'Say a Little Prayer' and the Simple Acts campaign please visit www.simpleacts.org.uk

Bite the Bullet – 4 July 2009

Fear about knife and gun crime is growing. The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ascension Trust are organising a Bite the Bullet event where young people and adults can explore the causes of gun and knife crime and reflect on its possible solutions.

Bite the Bullet is particularly aimed at equipping young people, parents and church leaders. The event will be led by young people and will include vibrant worship and seminars.

Bite the Bullet will take place from 10.30am on Saturday 4 July 2009 at Westbury Avenue Baptist Church, Wood Green, London, N22 6SA

A free Caribbean meal will be served, and the day will finish with a concert led by young people in the evening. For more information see the **website** (http://www.baptist.org.uk/training_events/bitethebullet_09.html)

Get Fair Constituency Lobby Weekend – 26/27 June

Get Fair aims to unite people and organisations at both a national and a local level to eradicate poverty. Local campaign groups can come together to raise issues of poverty and deprivation in a local context to MPs in their constituencies. At a national level, Get Fair is calling on MPs and party leaders to sign a Poverty Pledge, committing to meet poverty targets and include concrete measures in their party manifestos before a general election.

You can now view a current list of events and search for organisers on the **Get Fair website** (<http://www.getfair.org.uk/lobby/events>). You can also view a list of all areas where the lobby is currently being organised and get in touch with them directly!

If you have not yet heard about the Constituency Lobby, or would like to be involved, you can download a Constituency organisers pack or a Lobby information pack **here** (<http://www.getfair.org.uk/lobby>). We can also send out a copy on request, just **email Get Fair** (info@getfair.org.uk) or call 0161 236 9321.

Contact

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