

The Bulletin

Social Responsibility in the London District

Spring 2015

Voting Responsibly

Will you be voting this year?

Special points of interest:

- **#Rethink Sanctions**
Over 100 people with mental health issues sanctioned every day.
- **Tax Dodging Bill Campaign**
We all pay our taxes, but why don't businesses pay their fair share?

In this issue of the Bulletin we highlight some of the important issues and campaigns happening in the run up to the General Elections.

Voting and politics can be a very diverse and personal issue, but in the following

pages you'll find information on some of the social action campaigns taking place to help you think about different policies and their implications to social action in the UK.

Don't forget to vote:
7th May 2015.

Does Religion Count?

Voting and Values in Britain—a Theos Think-Tank report

Ben Clements and Nick Spencer of the Christian Think-Tank, Theos, have written a report analysing the history and current situation of religious voters in Britain.

The report looks at the different voting tendencies of people based on their reli-

gious denomination, alongside other potential influences on voting including issues, intentions, affiliation and attendance. For more information, and to read the report in full, please visit www.theosthinktank.co.uk

Inside this issue:

- Voting Responsibly 1
- Does Religion Count? 1
- The Tax Dodging Bill 2
- #Rethink Sanctions 3
- Resources 4

Theos 

**LET'S
MAKE
TAX
FAIR**

The Tax Dodging Bill Campaign

Let's make tax fair

We all pay our taxes, but large companies such as Amazon, Google and Starbucks seem to get away without paying their fair share.

Developing countries across the world lose out of an estimated \$160 billion a year as a result of corporate tax dodging.

However, all hope is not lost. There is something we can do about it.

Actionaid, Christian Aid, Oxfam and numerous other social action charities are all calling for the next government to tackle corporate tax dodging, and to make tax fair for everyone. It proposes the introduction of a **Tax Dodging Bill** specifically aimed at preventing big corporations from tax dodging, and making UK tax a fairer system.

Were a Tax Dodging Bill to be put in place, it could potentially generate billions of pounds for developing countries and a level playing field for the responsible companies already paying their fair share of taxes.

The Bill proposes that the law be changed to:

1. Make it harder for big companies to dodge UK taxes, ensuring that they're not getting unfair tax breaks.
2. Ensure UK tax rules don't encourage big companies to avoid paying the correct

amount of taxes in developing countries.

3. Make the UK tax regime more transparent and tougher on tax dodging.

If you would like to support this cause, you can do so simply by signing up to the on-line Tax Dodging Bill petition or by writing to your local MP.

For up-to-date information on the issue, why not search Twitter for:

For more information, visit:

www.taxdodgingbill.org.uk

Dr Rowan Williams says:

"The campaign for tax justice has a moral foundation. When some multinational companies find ways to manipulate their profits to avoid paying tax where it is owed, this has a real and direct impact on others, particularly the poorest in our world, because it takes away a major resource for building up a stable and serviceable infrastructure in society..."

#RethinkSanctions

Joint Churches look into the harmful role of Benefit Sanctions in the UK

In 2014, over one million benefit sanctions were imposed on people in the UK.

A sanction means that benefits are stopped for a period of time between one month and three years. The most common reason for being sanctioned is being late to a meeting or not turning up for an appointment.

A report undertaken by Church Action on Poverty, the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist

Church, the Church of Scotland and the Church in Wales has made many shocking discoveries on the issue, including:

- Over 100 people assessed as unfit for work due to mental health problems are being sanctioned each day.
- Approximately 100,00 children were affected by sanctions in 2013/14.
- Almost 7 million weeks of sanctions were imposed in 2013/14, compared to around 1.5 million in the previous year (an increase of almost 500%).

The report concludes that they believe there is an urgent need to re-think sanctions and recommend:

A full review of the impact and efficacy of the sanctions and conditionality regime;

- A revision of the hardship payments system to avoid the deliberate imposition of hunger;
- For sanctions to be suspended for people with children and for those experiencing mental ill health;
- Most importantly there

Tweets

"Nearly 7 million weeks of sanctions handed out to benefit claimants in 2013/14" -

@PublicIssues

"Nearly 100,000 of Britain's poorest children go hungry after parents' benefits are cut"

- @MethodistMedia

"22.3% JSA claimants sanctioned in the last 5 years"

- @Unite_Community

needs to be a change of culture, from one of enforcement and punishment to one of assistance and support.

For more information, why not read the report:

www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/resources/rethinksanctions

Joint Public Issues Team—
#RethinkSanctions



BBC Radio 4 on the death of 49 Britons following welfare cuts

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0540bv5>

Social Responsibility Commission

London District of the Methodist Church

District Resource Centre
1 Central Buildings,
Westminster, London
SW1H 9NH

Phone: 020 7654 3850

E-mail: [communications@
methodistlondon.org.uk](mailto:communications@methodistlondon.org.uk)

Our vision:

*“Sharing the good
news of Jesus Christ
throughout Greater
London and the
surrounding areas*

*and improving the
well-being of people
and their
communities*

*by engaging
pastorally and
prophetically with
the communities in
which our churches
are located and with
the wider region.”*

Resources

Websites @:

[London District Twitter](#)—For the latest news and events from across the District

[JPIT Twitter](#)—Baptist, Methodist, United Reformed Churches and the Church of Scotland working together to live out the gospel of Christ in church and society

[The Methodist Church Twitter](#)—The official Twitter stream for the Methodist Church in Britain

[IDEA](#)—An Evangelical Alliance special all on the religious aspects of voting

[London Churches](#)—For a list of useful Election resources

Campaigns:

[Tax Dodging Bill](#)—ActionAid, Christian Aid, Oxfam and other UK charities call for big businesses to pay their share of tax

[#RethinkSanctions](#)—For tweets and updates on Sanctions

[BBC Radio 4 on Benefit Sanctions](#)—Detailing the investigation into the deaths of 49 Britons following their welfare cuts

[Time to rethink Benefit Sanctions](#)—A report from the Joint Public Issues Team on Benefit Sanctions

[Love Your Neighbour](#)—A DVD resource on how being a Christian should effect our behavior at election time.

Inter-Faith Dialogue

At the April 25th Synod 2015, Revd David Musgrave will be considered for the appointment of District Inter-Faith Coordinator.

David would welcome any useful information you might have about inter-faith engagement or projects across the District.

Please contact him on: davidmusgrave@hotmail.co.uk



Twitter is here
@LondonMethodist 