



## Just Church....

### Welcome to the Poverty Action Sunday 2007 resources

This year Poverty Action Sunday resources focus on the theme of **Just Church** – a new programme of study, reflection and action for local churches being developed by Church Action on Poverty in partnership with the Baptist Union, Church Urban Fund, Church of Scotland, Faithworks, Housing Justice, the Iona Community, Methodist Church, National Justice and Peace Network, Scottish Episcopal Church and United Reformed Church.

Concern for tackling poverty and social justice is at the heart of the Gospel. There is a rich biblical tradition from the Old Testament prophets through the Gospels and New Testament. A commitment to social justice involves seeking out causes and lasting solutions to the underlying problems of poverty and inequality. As Jim Wallis has said: *‘the church is good at pulling people out of the river, but our task is also to go up stream and ask who is throwing them in.’*

How can we celebrate and embed this concern in our everyday lives, our worship, mission and service as churches? We hope that this year’s Poverty Action Sunday resources will help you in this journey!

### Resources in this pack

- **Just Jesus:** a reflection on Jesus’ attitude to poverty and injustice – suitable for use in preparing a talk, sermon or homily – or as a discussion starter with a group.
- **Just Worship:** resources, prayers, readings and other ideas for use in common worship.
- **Just Gospel:** ten reasons why justice is essential to the Gospel – suitable for a sermon, talk, or as a church newsletter article.
- **Just Stories:** real life stories of what it is like to live in poverty in the UK – for use as readings or the basis for reflection during worship.
- **Just Children:** ideas for use with Sunday School/ Junior church groups.
- **Just Act:** three ways you can begin to lead more just lives, in the midst of an unjust world...
- **Just Church quiz:** a lighthearted way to spark discussion about how just your church is!
- **Just Church response form:** for you to register your interest in receiving more information about the Just Church programme – and to join Church Action on Poverty.
- **Just Church prayer card:** A sample prayer card – bulk copies can be ordered from Church Action on Poverty.

## About Church Action on Poverty

Church Action on Poverty (CAP) has been working for more than twenty years to help churches 'go upstream', by working to make a real and long-term difference to the lives of people in poverty in this country.

CAP's Debt on our Doorstep campaign, has secured national media coverage, raised the profile of debt, and helped to make a significant change in Government policy to put an end to extortionate lending.

Through its work across the country, Church Action on Poverty has enabled people with firsthand experience of poverty to develop the skills and confidence to speak out and help make lasting changes in their own communities and at a national level.

Over the past year, Church Action on Poverty has responded to the growing numbers of asylum seekers who are being made destitute by launching the Living Ghosts campaign. The campaign is working with churches and refugee organisations to change the government policies that are making those who seek asylum destitute.

**Please consider becoming a member of Church Action on Poverty, or signing up as a committed giver to support our work via a regular annual or monthly standing order.**

Being 'Just Church' is about embedding a passion for social justice in our everyday lives and witness as individual Christians and local churches, not just on Poverty Action Sunday but every day of the year.

## Holy Poverty

Once I heard someone speak of holy poverty.  
I thought it sounded good.  
I longed for holiness.  
But now I know real poverty,  
and it isn't good  
or holy.  
It's dirty, cold and raw.  
It crawls over me like the lice in my mattress,  
it gnaws at me like the rats in my basement.  
It is pitiless and cruel,  
it saps all my energy  
and drains me of feeling.  
I don't long for holiness any more,  
only ache for bread in my belly  
because I am poor.

Anthea Dove



## Just Jesus

American activist Jim Wallis tells a story about a study group in the US, where one of the students thought that he'd take a pair of scissors to an old Bible and cut out every reference there was to the poor.

Into the New Testament, he cut out Mary's song in Luke's Gospel – which speaks of lifting up the lowly, filling the hungry and sending away the rich empty. He cut out John the Baptist's teaching that those who have two cloaks should give away one. He tore into Jesus' teaching – his first public sermon on 'good news to the poor', the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the parable of the Good Samaritan.

And you can imagine what he did to the story of the sheep and goats where Jesus spoke of caring for the 'least of these'. He cut out Paul urging his readers to continue to remember the poor, and all of James' teaching about the orphans and widows disappeared. So did John's teaching about helping those in material need and his condemnation of economic injustice in Revelation.

All of it was cut right out of the Bible. And when it was finished that old Bible hung in threads. It wouldn't hold together, it fell apart in his hands. And that student used to take that holey old Bible

along with him to preach – and he used to hold it high above his head and shout 'Brothers, this is the American Bible – full of holes from where we have cut out the poor'.

Is this our Bible too? Have we cut the poor out? Have we ignored God's concern for the poor?

### **The Kingdom of God Jesus' Manifesto: Luke 4: 18-19**

At the heart of Jesus' ministry is the concept of 'the Kingdom of God'. If want to take the Bible seriously we can't ignore the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven as it is called in Matthew's Gospel. It's worth noting that in the Gospels, Jesus performs 23 different healing miracles and tells 40 different parables. But he talks about the Kingdom of God on 76 occasions.

What do we see in the passage? Let's run down it: good news preached to the poor, freedom to the prisoners, sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, comfort to those who mourn, a crown of beauty instead of ashes, gladness instead of mourning, praise instead of despair, a rebuilding of communities, instead of disgrace, everlasting joy.

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An upside down kingdom because it turns things upside down.

This passage speaks of people's lives and circumstances being turned upside down: a complete transformation – a whole life change. And this is so much wider than just personal change – whole communities are transformed in their relationships with each other and before God.

What Jesus is saying, when he said 'in your hearing this scripture is fulfilled' is that through him, God's Kingdom was among them. Jesus' whole life was an announcement that God's Kingdom had arrived, that through him, the future age of God's Kingdom had broken into history. And this is what Jesus' ministry was all about - announcing the kingdom of God through exorcisms, healings and through his preaching. Words, deeds and signs all declaring the Gospel, the 'good news' that the Kingdom had begun and that God was acting to renew the whole world.

Is this the Gospel we preach and live out? I think too often we give the impression that Christianity is all about going to heaven when we die. That it's about qualification for a heavenly future with God. But is this really what Jesus' life, death and resurrection are about?

Jesus invites us to join him in his mission 'to make disciples of all nations' to be agents of hope,

## JUSTCHURCH : POVERTY ACTIONS SUNDAY 2007

activists for the Kingdom of God that is transforming the world. Through our lives he wants us to bear witness to this, the future age of justice and joy, when God will make all things new. How do we do this?

In Micah 6:8 it tells us: 'What does the Lord require? To act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God'. Justice, mercy and humility – this is what God requires. This is why God has given us His Holy Spirit to empower us, to inspire us and to guide us in this task.

### Discussion starters:

- Luke 4:16-18 is often called Jesus' 'Nazareth manifesto'. How does what Jesus said relate to poverty and injustice in the world today?
- How does this challenge the way we do things in church and our mission?
- What words, images or ideas come to mind when you think about Jesus?
- What words, images or ideas come to mind when you think about our church?

*Jon Kuhrt is Director of Development and Regeneration at Shaftesbury Society. For more information on Micah Challenge visit: [www.micahchallenge.org.uk](http://www.micahchallenge.org.uk)*



# Just Worship

## Hymns

(Tune Noel Nouvelet)

Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;  
No one is his neighbour all alone he eats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.  
Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.

Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets,  
Where injustice spirals, and real hope retreats,  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.  
In the kingdom's causes let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;  
Curing those who suffer, touching those he greets.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.  
Let my care be active, healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,  
Where each sign of hatred he, with love, defeats.  
Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.  
On suspicion's graveyard let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,  
"Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet."  
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.  
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

## Make me a channel of your peace

1. Make me a channel of Your peace:  
Where there is hatred, let me bring Your love;  
Where there is injury, Your healing pow'r,  
And where there's doubt, true faith in You.

2. Make me a channel of Your peace:  
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope;  
Where there is darkness, - only light,  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

3. O Spirit, grant that I may never seek.  
So much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

4. Make me a channel of Your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
In giving to all that we receive,  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

## Prayers

Where you need a voice to comfort and console

**May we speak out**

Where you need a voice to challenge and question

**May we speak out**

Where you need hands to touch and heal

**May we reach out**

Where you need a witness to the Truth

**May we stand out**

Where you see pain, loneliness and isolation  
**May we follow your gaze.**

Cease to do evil,  
Learn to do good,  
Search for justice,  
help the oppressed, the poor,  
the starving, the elderly,  
the lonely, the imprisoned.

Be just to the orphan  
the unmarried mother, the  
mentally and physically disabled,  
plead for the widow, the refugee,  
and the immigrant.

Go in peace and serve the Lord.  
**In the name of Christ, Amen**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
take us where you are,  
alongside the poor and afflicted.  
Give us your love  
so that we may share their trouble,  
take their hand  
and bring them where faith has bought us,  
alongside you  
in your triumph over evil and death.

Bring us where you are:  
in the glory of the eternal Father,  
so that we may bless God incessantly,  
praise him eternally,  
seeing your triumph complete  
in the end of all affliction  
and the fulfillment of all good. **Amen**

### **Final blessing**

May God bless us with strength and to seek justice.  
May God bless us with wisdom to carry out the  
mission entrusted to us.  
May God bless us with love to bring forth new life.  
**Amen**

### **Closing prayer**

Giver of life, we wait with you to bear your hope to  
our own and earth's darkest places.  
Where love is denied: **Let love break through.**  
Where justice is destroyed: **Let righteousness  
rule.**  
Where hope is crucified: **Let faith persist.**  
Where peace is no more: **Let yearning live on.**  
Where truth is denied: **Let the struggle continue.**



## Just Gospel

### 10 Reasons Why Justice Is Essential To The Gospels

Someone asked me recently why justice-seeking figured so strongly in my approach to mission. I think they meant “as distinct from evangelism”. We were talking about asylum seekers. I said something about the integration of the word (evangelism) and deed (loving our neighbour). I quoted Matthew 25, saying that for me one of the best ways to love God is to defend the voiceless. I left the conversation stunned that a Christian should wonder why I keep talking about justice. But then I realized that ever since the time of the prophets we’ve needed to spell out for each generation the call to justice. So, here are my ten top overlapping reasons for being passionate about a gospel where justice is close to the centre. I reckon I could double the list without trying.

#### **The Bible’s full of it.**

If we were to take to a Bible with scissors and cut out the thousands of verses about justice and the poor, we’d have a mangled mess of holes. In the Bible, our relationship to God is always tied to our relationships to each other.

#### **We’re all equal before God.**

From Genesis 1 to Galatians 3, the story is the same. Humans are made in God’s image and stand equally before God in our great variety. This Biblical truth is one of the pillars of the human rights movement. Staying with asylum seekers for the moment, to those who are “nobodies” because they are stateless and homeless, this is Good News.

#### **It’s part of shalom.**

When Jeremiah urged the Israelites in exile to seek the welfare of the city they found themselves in, he was using the term “shalom”. The Hebrew vision of shalom in relationship with God includes peace, well-being and justice, and is the same peace that Jesus promises us (John 14:27). Christian mission is living for shalom.

#### **God is a God of justice.**

In the Hebrew Bible, God is always acting in history to set relationships right, defend the poor, the weak and the oppressed. In fact, God is the very manifestation of justice and mercy.

#### **It’s part of God’s Commonwealth.**

Jesus’ favourite topic was the Commonwealth of God (or the Kingdom of God), the new, upside-down order in which human relationships are upturned by God’s radically inclusive values. The social reversals that happen in his parables are amazing. A kingdom-centred mission will always

point at the socio-political implications of conversion.

**It's part of the Good News.**

Jesus' manifesto in Luke 4 suggests that the Good News is especially for the poor, the blind and the captive. His life and teaching backs this up repeatedly. It seems that what is good news to the poor seems like bad news to the rich, unless they see it is really good news for all.

**Righteousness flows into justice.**

A missionary to a Spanish-speaking country discovered to his amazement that the Bible is full of talk about justitia. The English word "justice" doesn't occur in the King James Version of the Bible; the Greek word for justice and righteousness is always translated as "righteousness". I guess the translators knew they were being paid by a king! Better to talk about being righteous than seeking justice. But the two can't be separated.

**Evangelism flows into social action.**

Billy Graham was asked once why he preached only personal salvation and not peace and justice. He said that as people become converted, they would be peacemakers and justice-seekers. He was pressed further. How come he'd been converted, and wasn't more upfront about these things, then? From that day, to his credit, Graham included more of the dimensions of the Good News in his preaching.

Following Jesus, we're called to make visible the Good News, and that means both putting it into words and showing by the way we live our lives what it means in terms of justice and love.

**Justice is structural love.**

Justice is fairness embedded in the structures of society. Biblical justice goes further than strict justice, and is imbued with grace, mercy and forgiveness. It is structural love.

**No peace without justice.**

The Good News is all about reconciliation, the setting right of all relationships. But there is no peace without justice, as is clear in international relations.

In the cloth of the gospel, God's justice and forgiveness are seamlessly interwoven. True, we have spoken up often, but for many churches, the order of priority seems to be: inward-and-upward-looking worship, education and groups for members, some care for others, and then, just occasionally, a tentative foray into the world of policies, rights, war and government directions.

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## Just Stories

To be poor in a rich country like the UK is not the same as being poor in Africa. Poverty may be much less 'in your face', but let no one deceive you into believing that it is not therefore any less 'real'. The words below are as true today as when they were spoken at the first National Poverty Hearing, ten years ago in 1996:

*"What is poverty? Poverty is a battle of invisibility, a lack of resources, exclusion, powerlessness... being blamed for society's problems"*

### Robin

*Robin is a single male in his 30s. Bullying at school and then at work seemed to have contributed to his ongoing mental ill-health which has been difficult to overcome and Robin has not worked for the last 10 years. During one of his breakdowns Robin ran up debts for sheltered accommodation. The first he knew of this was when he was sent a note of arrears from the Mental Health Trust. He felt 'crucified' by the debt which he eventually managed to pay off. Unable to work he volunteers time regularly to various local organisations. He also receives a lot of moral support from his family and wider community. He would rather have this than their financial support he says.*

### Sophia

'Sophia' has lived with her family in the UK for more than twenty years. With a disabled husband, her own mother and four children to look after (the eldest now at university), Sophia has three jobs. She works in a school as a cleaner and kitchen assistant between 5am and 7am and 11am and 2pm. She then works from 3.30pm to 5.30pm cleaning at a nursery, and from 5.35pm to 7.30pm cleaning at a community centre. As she herself said, "You do not get paid during school holidays, and you do not get paid if you are ill... If the government gave me a break, an opportunity to study or learn new skills, this might help me get a better paid job." Her gross income, even when supplemented with child and working tax credit is just £200.75 a week – and less in school holidays. Her weekly outgoings are £263.75, including just £130 a week for food, toiletries, travel and clothing (£18.57 a week each). The family has not been able to visit the rest of the family abroad for eight years. Holidays and outings to the cinema or a restaurant are out of the question. They cannot afford to buy new furniture or a computer. Sophia does not buy clothes for herself. "I have never bought a new coat, because if I buy something there will not be enough for the children and home."

**Laura**

Laura is a single mother from Newcastle aged 34. She has one daughter aged 15, but no longer has any contact with her daughter's father.

*I work part-time in a newsagent for £5.35 an hour, but I'm paying £200 a month rent, so that uses up most of it. And all my gas and electric comes from the meters, which cost three times the usual rate, so by the end of the month I've got nothing left. I also get £17.45 a week child support, £43 a week child tax credit and £46 a week working tax credit. I know it sounds like a lot, but it isn't by the time everything has been paid for. Being paid monthly is also a problem – it would be easier to manage my money if I was paid weekly because I'm taxed weekly. I don't get any money from my daughter's father and I wouldn't want it anyway. I also volunteer here at the Cedarwood Project (a drop-in centre in North Shields) when I can, chatting to people, helping in the office – I've been doing it for years.*

**Maria**

Maria is 54 and was a financial advisor in Bolivia, but came to the UK four years ago to improve her qualifications and her English. She works in London as a cleaner.

*When I arrived from Bolivia four years ago, I had some savings but the exchange rate was very bad and after a month they were all gone. I started working as a cleaner in the morning and studying in the afternoon, but this wasn't enough to live on, so I also started a job caring for the elderly in the evenings. At one stage I had to go to three jobs every day. Before 1 October 2006 (when the minimum wage was set at £5.35) I was on £5.05 an hour. I am now on £5.35 an hour, but I have never had a pay rise or been promoted in four years. I get up at 4am every day and will get maybe one afternoon off a week. Our employers say we are not entitled to holidays because we are part-time workers. I do not get paid on bank holidays or if I am ill. Sometimes I am very miserable, I have no social life and it can be very lonely. But I know the money I send home to my daughter is so important, and I hope that by the end of this year I will have enough money to start a part-time economics course.*

### Fiona

Fiona, a single mother, was working full-time when she met her first partner. After 5 years together Fiona got pregnant but her partner wasn't interested in the baby. She got severe post-natal depression and had to go off sick from work. Her partner also started drinking more and became abusive. Two years later she left him. Initially her ex-partner paid maintenance but after a while he gave up his job to avoid having to pay. After living in a relative's house for a while Fiona moved into a council house of her own. Although still depressed she juggled three low paid jobs while bringing up her daughter. She also started to get into debt. After 9 years the depression got really bad again leading to another period off work. On returning to work she found what she thought would be a more stable job.

Meanwhile she met her second partner and became pregnant. Five months into the pregnancy she was unexpectedly made redundant receiving no payment as she was classed as a temporary employee. Her partner also moved out 'frightened by the responsibility' of fatherhood. Being pregnant her attempts to find another job failed. She went onto Income Support for the first time in her life – a situation she finds humiliating. Now the baby is one she keeps her depression at bay by volunteering – a way of getting herself out of the house. She is keen to find work, but doesn't want to rush into a low paid job which may make the situation worse.

### Simon

Simon, now in his late 30s, has worked hard since leaving school at the age of 16. He got married just over 10 years ago and after having two children he and his wife decided to buy the council house they were living in.

Within a few months, however, Simon was unexpectedly made redundant and was unable to find another job. He suffered depression and his wife also began to feel unwell. The situation was made worse by the increasing debt that Simon and his wife incurred in an attempt to maintain previous income levels. In turn, this caused arguments putting strain on the relationship.

The two children also have poor health placing extra demands on the family. Although things are still a struggle Simon now feels the household has turned a corner. Social services provided advice on debt and they are now 'taking stock' financially. Socially, they have found themselves relying on family, friends and church in various ways. Sure Start courses have also helped them to deal with the children's learning disability.

### Harris

Cheek by jowl with the City of London lives Harris, a university educated Geography teacher. He is highly articulate, speaks excellent English and is caring and generous. Yet he has no home and no money, and sleeps on the floor of a kind woman in a tower block in East London, and spends his days doing nothing. Harris is one of the Britain's new poor, a new underclass living absolutely destitute, for whom the welfare state offers nothing. Harris' crime? He is also a 'failed' asylum seeker. A Zimbabwean, he fled imprisonment and torture in his home country. He would love to go home to help build a new Zimbabwe, but to do so at present would be to risk beatings and death. He can't even get to meetings of exiles and supporters to discuss the political future of Zimbabwe, because he doesn't have the money for bus fare. As one London MP said when she met Harris, "He can come to work in a school in my borough tomorrow. We are crying out for good teachers like him." Yet if he took work, he would risk immediate imprisonment – or even deportation – as he would be breaking the law.

What is true for Harris is true for many other asylum seekers - doctors, nurses, academics, journalists, engineers and electricians. They could all work; they all want to work. They could stop being a "drain on the state", they could lift themselves out of poverty. Yet it is illegal for asylum seekers to work. It doesn't make any sense.

### Jeanie

It was Jeanie Fox that changed my life,  
changed the life of all of us, she did.  
I'd given up long ago.  
I hated the estate but I saw no way out.  
I hated the graffiti and the vandalism  
and the disgusting litter,  
but most of all I hated the violence.  
I was scared to go out after dark,  
scared to open my door.  
then one day this note came through my letter box,  
I nearly threw it away, thinking it was junk.  
But something made me read it.  
It was a letter from Jeanie  
inviting anyone who was interested in the estate  
to come to a meeting.  
I wouldn't have gone, but old Nellie next-door,  
(she's in a wheelchair)  
asked me to take her.  
So I did, and that was the beginning.  
It's taken a long time, it's true,  
but we got there in the end,  
all of us who cared, together. And now, thanks to  
Jeanie,  
I feel safe at last,  
we all do.  
We like living here.



## Just Children

**A range of activities to explore ideas of poverty and injustice with children and young people.**

**For more ideas see [www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)**

### Just Bible

Read the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19: 1-9). Ask two children to role play Jesus and Zacchaeus. Ask the group to discuss how they thought Zacchaeus felt and whether he was right in how he responded to Jesus. Ask them how they think the story relates to poverty and injustice today.

### Just News

Ask the group to find and cut out examples of injustice from a selection of newspapers and magazines. Ask them in pairs to take one of the examples, discuss why it is an injustice – and write down how they define ‘justice.’ Share ideas and try to come up with a definition within the whole group.

### It’s like this...

Ask the group to get into pairs, and give each pair a copy of the statements from people directly affected by poverty (see right). Get them to choose the comments that show the worst aspects of poverty. Discuss in the whole group: Was there agreement? Which kinds of consequences were worst? Is damage to pride and dignity worse than having to do without things?

*My heart breaks because I can't see a better future for the kids.*

*I hate charity, but I depend on it and I am glad of it too.*

*My kids suffer from asthma and are always sick - the pollution in this area is to blame.*

*Many a time I would sit on my own somewhere crying my eyes out, wondering what I'd done wrong.*

*I don't read or write very well and it's very hard to cope with forms and phones.*

*I often feel a deep sense of failure as a parent. In this way poverty I feel, severely undermines family relationships.*

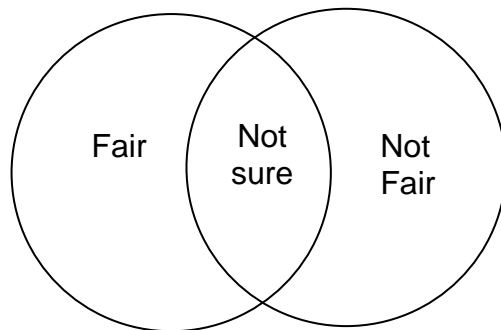
*The social security system seems designed so that once crushed, it is impossible to rise up and take control of their own life.*

*I found it hard to bother with school - nobody I know had got a job.*

*I apply for jobs using another address - I'd never even get an interview from this address.*

### For younger children

Draw a venn diagram like the one below on a large sheet of paper. Cut out the following statements, and ask the children to decide where to place the statement on the diagram. Ask the children to think of other situations to add to the list and the diagram.



Some children never have new clothes

Some children can have anything they want

Some children never have a holiday

Some children don't have anywhere they can call home

Some parents can't afford to buy healthy food

Some families live in houses with rotting walls

Some children don't get any treats.

Some children can't afford to go on school trips.

### Just choices...

Put four signs in the corners of the room – Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree. Read out the statements below and ask everyone to choose a sign to stand by. Write the majority view on a board or flipchart, then ask one person from each group to explain their reason for their answer. You should now have a list of opinions on the flipchart. Does everyone still agree with their choices? Has anyone changed their mind?

*"People in poverty could work harder to get out of it."*

*"It's better to be poor and happy than to be rich and unhappy."*

*"Government has a duty to help people in poverty."*

*"It is possible for everyone to have enough money to live comfortably."*

*"It is easy to get a good job, even if you come from a poor family."*

*"Your future is decided by how much money your parents have."*

*"We all have a responsibility for tackling poverty."*

*"Wealthy people should help those less well off."*



## Just Act

Part of the challenge of being Just Church is to find ways of *acting* more justly, both as a congregation and as individuals within it.

The Christian lifestyle movement – and the environmental movement – have both highlighted the importance of matching our words with our deeds. As long ago as 1978, Ron Sider famously challenged ‘Rich Christians in an age of hunger’ to act justly, not only as consumers and campaigners, but also in their lifestyle generally.

*If many little people  
In many little places  
Do many little deeds  
They can change the face of the Earth.*  
African Proverb.

Through our actions in a globalised world, we are inescapably connected with and responsible for the fate of countless others, whether we like it or not. Our use of money and choices as consumers say as much about us and our values as our prayer life and choice of Church. As Antonia Swinson has written, *‘money is more intimate than sex’*.

Here are just three ways you can practically begin to lead more just lives, even in the midst of an unjust world...

### Money: the root of all evil?

Your money – Your choice: When most people think of a bank, they think of the organisation that keeps their money safe and secure until they need it. When most people decide who to bank with, they consider the rate of interest they will receive, the services they will benefit from and how easy will it be to access their money. What most people *don't* think about is how that bank then invests their money when they're not using it. And if you ask the vast majority of banks what they're doing with your money they won't tell you.

Triodos Bank is different. Triodos only lends to organisations which create real social, environmental and cultural value such as charities, social businesses, community projects and environmental initiatives. Each one is a practical, well-grounded initiative dedicated to social aims which benefit the community, care for the environment, respect human freedom and develop individual talents and capacities.

Saving with Triodos Bank means that people in all parts of the UK can develop and build organisations which enrich their community and safeguard the environment – building a more sustainable future for us all.

**Triodos Bank**, 11 The Promenade, Bristol BS8 3NN [www.triodos.co.uk](http://www.triodos.co.uk) 0117 973 9339

## Fighting fuel poverty with fairness

It's hard to imagine that in the 21st Century, people in Britain are dying because they can't afford to heat their homes. But up to 3 million British households are in fuel poverty and each winter, it's responsible for up to 30,000 premature deaths, making it second only to smoking as a preventable cause of death. Paradoxically, increased competition in the gas and electricity industry has actually increased fuel poverty, by forcing those who needed to budget carefully by using a pre-payment meter to pay more.

EBICo, founded in 1998 by four Christians, aims to buck this trend. It is the only UK supplier of gas and electricity to offer an equal tariff to all customers, regardless of payment method or how much they use. But to make the scheme work, EBICo needs customers who pay in a variety of ways. This is a challenging concept, because the company's tariffs are not always the cheapest for customers who can pay by Direct Debit. According to EBICo founder, Phil Levermore "We need people who are more concerned about issues of social equity than shaving an extra few pounds off their annual gas and electricity bill. We are offering them the opportunity to be directly involved in advancing social equity and protecting those with fewer advantages in life".

**EBICo**, Freepost SCE 8994, Witney, Oxon OX29 7BR [www.ebico.co.uk](http://www.ebico.co.uk) 0845 456 0170

## Fight poverty through trade

One of the great successes of recent years has been the growth of the ethical consumer and fair trade movements, which empower individuals to act ethically in the market place. A range of magazines and websites offer practical advice on how to buy ethically an ever increasing range of goods from food and furniture to personal stereos and pensions.

Traidcraft is probably the best known Christian initiative, whose mission is explicitly to fight poverty through trade. You can order Traidcraft products on-line as well as through an increasing number of supermarkets and other Fair Traders across the UK.

**Traidcraft**, Kingsway, Gateshead NE11 0NE  
[www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk) 0191 491 0591

Ethical Consumer has a monthly magazine and website with lots of research and practical ideas.

**Ethical Consumer**, 41 Old Birley St, Manchester M15 5RF [www.ethicalconsumer.org](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org) 0161 226 2929

For more ideas you could also visit:

[www.generous.org.uk](http://www.generous.org.uk)  
[www.livesimply.org.uk](http://www.livesimply.org.uk)

*"It's amazing what a small group of committed people can accomplish to change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has."* Margaret Mead



# Just Church Quiz

How just is your church?

Tick one box in answer to each question

<b>Just faith</b>	
<b>1. In ranking your churches' overall priorities, would you say that promoting justice and tackling poverty is:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) Central to our identity as a church
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) An important part of our mission as a church
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Something we occasionally do as a church, but not a major priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Not important for the church, but seen as a 'hobby' of a few enthusiasts
<b>2. When reading/using the bible in your church, how often are biblical passages referring to poverty, injustice or wealth referred to:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) On a regular basis
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Several times a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Once or twice a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Hardly ever
<b>Just worship</b>	
<b>3. Issues of local/UK poverty are the subject of prayers in Sunday worship:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) On a regular basis
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Several times a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Once or twice a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Hardly ever

<b>4. How often do issues of poverty, personal lifestyle and economic justice feature within sermons, or talks within worship:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) On a regular basis
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Several times a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Once or twice a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Hardly ever
<b>Just poverty</b>	
<b>5. Our church is equally concerned about poverty in the developing world and on my own doorstep</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Probably
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Not sure
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Disagree
<b>6. Which of the following statements best represents the majority of your church members' views about UK poverty</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	(a) The persistence of poverty in the UK is an injustice and a matter of faith
<input type="checkbox"/>	(b) People are in need, and we should try to help them as far as we can
<input type="checkbox"/>	(c) Poverty in this country is mainly the fault of people themselves
<input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Poverty doesn't really exist in the UK

<b>Just community</b>	
Do you agree with the following statements about your local church:	
<b>7. We are aware about issues of poverty within our congregation and the wider community where we are situated:</b>	
	(a) Strongly agree
	(b) Probably
	(c) Not sure
	(d) Disagree
<b>8. We are actively trying to address poverty-related issues in our community:</b>	
	(a) Strongly agree
	(b) Probably
	(c) Not sure
	(d) Disagree
<b>9. We actively campaign on issues affecting people in poverty in the UK</b>	
	(a) Strongly agree
	(b) Probably
	(c) Not sure
	(d) Disagree

<b>Just Living</b>	
Do you agree with the following statements about your own faith stance/lifestyle:	
<b>10. Being a Christian actually affects how I live my daily life in tangible ways</b>	
	(a) Strongly agree
	(b) Probably
	(c) Not sure
	(d) Disagree
<b>11. I try to promote justice in my decisions about money, how I shop and the banks/gas/electricity companies etc I deal with</b>	
	(a) Strongly agree
	(b) Probably
	(c) Not sure
	(d) Disagree
<b>12. My knowledge about poverty in the UK is based on</b>	
	(a) Personal experience or meeting and listening to people in poverty
	(b) Active involvement in a local project or campaign group
	(c) Generally living and being involved in my local community
	(d) What I read in the papers and pick up from the TV
<b>Just Church Score</b>	
Score your answers (a) = 3 points; (b) = 2 points; (c) = 1 point; (d) = 0 points – and add up the total to get your Just Church score...	

Name	
Postal address (including postcode)	
Email address	
Phone number	
Local Church (if any)	
Denomination	

**Please complete and post to:**

Church Action on Poverty,  
Central Buildings,  
Oldham Street,  
Manchester M1 1JQ.  
Tel: 0161 236 9321  
Email: [info@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:info@church-poverty.org.uk)  
[www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)



## So how Just is your church?

Count up your Just Church Quiz scores and see how well you rate:

- 0-3 Just Church is not for your church. Whatever Bible your church is reading, it is not the same as the rest of us. Maybe it is time to consider finding a new church...
- 4-10 Justice and poverty are challenging ideas for your church – but all is not lost. Just Church should help you find some ways to start asking the right questions and help you find ways to start to think about the possibility that poverty exists in the UK.
- 11-20 Just getting started! There are people in your church who share an interest in linking faith and social action, but there is room for going further! Just Church will help your church to deepen its engagement and come up with practical ideas for how to do so.
- 21-30 Justice is close to your heart... Your church is clearly already committed. Your insights will be of great encouragement to others not so far along the way. Just Church will provide a means of reflecting on, deepening

and celebrating what you are already doing – and a way of sharing it with others.

31-36 Enter the Pearly Gates Now! You are a model Just Church which others can only aspire to follow. Although you may feel that Just Church has little to offer to you, do not hide your light under a bushel. You can be a beacon to light the way for others!

### Going further...

The aim of the Just Church quiz is to get you thinking – but hopefully also acting! Looking back through your answers, were there questions (or answers) which surprised you – or which you now think ‘that’s something we could do better on?’

Just Church provides resources to engage with different aspects of your churches’ life, from worship, prayer and reading of the bible; children and young people’s work and how you use your own resources, through to engaging with reality of poverty as it affects the lives of people within your own community, and on exploring your own ideas and beliefs about the causes of poverty, and what you can do to tackle them.

If you would like to receive more information on Just Church contact us at: Church Action on Poverty, Central Buildings, Oldham St, Manchester, M1 1JQ. Tel: 0161 236 9321. [www.church-poverty.org.uk](http://www.church-poverty.org.uk)  
[info@church-poverty.org.uk](mailto:info@church-poverty.org.uk)



**Just Church:**  
**Count me in!**

Tick the appropriate boxes and return the form to us without delay!

	I/we would like to be put on the CAP mailing list to receive further information about the Just Church programme
	I/we would be interested in the possibility of using the Just Church materials in our church
	I/we would be interested in attending a workshop to find out more about how I can become a Just Church
	I/we would be interested in someone coming to our church to talk about how we can use Just Church in our church
	I/we would like to join Church Action on Poverty - please sign me up! <i>Minimum subscription rates are £3.50 (unwaged); £18 (waged) and £36 (organisations).</i>
	I'm really impressed by your work, and enclose a <i>donation</i> .
	I want to become a regular giver to Church Action on Poverty. <i>Please send details of how I can donate by standing order.</i>
	I am a UK taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid my contribution to Church Action on Poverty.