



New Leader for Churches on Tax Justice

Church Action for Tax Justice (CATJ) is delighted to announce that its National Co-ordinator from June 1st will be Dr Justin Thacker. Dr Thacker was until Easter the Academic Director at Cliff College in Derbyshire, where he has served since early 2013. Prior to that he was Head of Theology at the Evangelical Alliance and worked with Micah's Challenge. He initially trained as a doctor at the University of Edinburgh and worked as a paediatrician in Kenya and in Northwick Park hospital, north London. He has edited and contributed to several books and in 2017 published *Global Poverty: A Theological Guide* (SCM Press).

CATJ was first launched in April last year by Most Revd Rowan Williams, Methodist President Revd Michaela Youngson and Recording Clerk of the Quakers Paul Parker. In March this year it published its manifesto 'Tax for the Common Good'. It is currently supporting the build-up to Fair Tax Week in early July, and urging local churches to mark Tax Justice Sunday on 7th July. Hymn-writer Andrew Pratt has produced a new hymn for the Sunday and Rt Revd Michael Doe has prepared a Note for Preachers on the texts for the day.

Michael Doe, who is also Vice Chair of CATJ, said, 'We are very pleased that support from a number of church agencies and the Joffe Trust has enabled us to recruit Justin. Tax is a crucial area of our public life about which many in the Churches know too little. It is a crucial element in overcoming the growing inequality in our society'.

Dr Thacker's appointment was also welcomed by Rachel Lampard, former Methodist Vice-President and team leader of the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT), which brings together the social responsibility work of the Methodist, Baptist and United Reformed Churches and the Church of Scotland. She commented, 'Justin is a great advocate for social justice both within the UK and worldwide. The challenges for us in the UK over the next decade will be environmental degradation and rising poverty. Without a more just taxation system it is very hard to see how we can meet those challenges. We look forward to working with Justin and the many church bodies represented in CATJ in bringing this about.'

Dr Thacker said, 'I am extremely excited to be taking on this new and challenging role. The church has a long history of successfully addressing poverty and inequality through campaigning and lobbying, and tax justice is the next issue on that agenda. My desire is to see this work lead to long-term, sustained change that reduces that inequality, tackles poverty and leads to a fairer and greener world'.

CATJ is working closely with Tax Justice UK, the international Tax Justice Network and the Fair Tax Mark to develop tax policies which seek to rebalance the inequalities of the global economy. It also supports the Tax Justice Pledge, which Tax Justice Europe has put to European parliamentary election candidates, and the battle to ensure the British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies create public registers of the secret accounts by which the rich seek to hide their wealth.

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