



COMBATting THE DENIAL OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

Simon Barrow (with Paul Nicolson)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Rev Paul Nicolson, a leading figure in the advocacy group Taxpayers Against Poverty (TAP), has written to Lord Heseltine, a key coalition government ally and author of a 2012 report on devolving economic power to the regions, about his criticism of recent statements from the authors of a book focusing on poverty and inequality edited by the Anglican Archbishop of York and co-contributed by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Ekklesia is pleased to be able to respond to Paul Nicolson's request for collegiality in pressing these concerns. We reproduce below his open letter to Lord Heseltine about the reality of divided Britain, and follow that with a detailed briefing on some of the issues raised by publicity round the book, *On Rock or Sand?*, together with commentary on who is saying what in the debate, relevant research, resources, and practical values for an alternative approach.

The questions tackled include the extent of inequality in the UK, divisions within and between regions, the Christian concern with these issues, consideration of data, and the values and principles that should shape ongoing debate – not least in an election year.

18 January 2015

2. THE LETTER

To Lord Heseltine
The House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

16th January 2015

Dear Lord Heseltine,

YOUR RESPONSE TO THE ARCHBISHOPS' RECENT STATEMENTS ABOUT INEQUALITY AND POVERTY IN THE UK

We met in the 1950's when I was a member of the Bow Group. Our paths crossed again in 1990 when you were MP for Henley on Thames and I was the Vicar of nearby Turville and opposing the poll tax. I was very grateful to you for starting the processes that achieved its abolition. Since then I have been working with and for our poorest fellow citizens on low incomes in work and unemployment who have been struggling with debts to the State that are enforced ferociously.

You have said that the recent statements of the Archbishops about inequality and poverty in the UK are "factually wrong" and "out of touch". In fact they are right as far as they go, but they have soft-pedalled the plight of the unemployed. It is far worse now than it was under the poll tax. You don't have to take my word for it. Please read the following statements made by people in authority who have also studied the facts. Things started to go seriously wrong on the 1st April 2013. The 1% freeze of benefit increases, started in 2011, was already biting into food and fuel budgets. Then cuts in housing benefit took effect and a large majority of councils introduced a new poll tax for working age benefit claimants.

In his report to the Haringey Cabinet meeting of the 10th July 2012, which decided to tax benefits, Stuart Young, The Assistant Chief Executive, Haringey Council stated:

“Needless to say it is my belief that this represents one of the most appalling policies of the government and it is not insignificant that the unemployed will now be facing the prospect of having to pay 20 local taxation levels, which they last were subjected to paying under the Poll Tax. This is likely to amount to an average additional burden of £5pw, which when put alongside cuts to Working Families Tax Credit, changes to Housing Benefits, and the introduction of Universal Credit is, in my view, likely to have a disastrous impact on the levels of child poverty.”

The Supreme Court commented, when they found Haringey Council's 2012 consultation about council tax to be unlawful on the 29th October 2014. (See paras 22 and 29). [1]

"Those whom Haringey was primarily consulting were the most economically

disadvantaged of its residents. Their income was already at a basic level and the effect of Haringey's proposed scheme would be to reduce it even below that level and thus in all likelihood to cause real hardship, while sparing its more prosperous residents from making any contribution to the shortfall in government funding."

The All Party Parliamentary Group report on hunger and food poverty launched by the Archbishop of Canterbury in December 2014 stated the blindingly obvious:

"An individual is in danger of going hungry when they do not have enough money to buy enough food as their body requires. There are people in this very position right now in this country."

The Local Government Association recommended in January 2015 that the next government should:

1. Fully fund council tax support, acknowledging that the scheme to date has taken millions of pounds out of funding for council services, and has increased the cost of living for some of the poorest.
2. Analyse the combined impact of all welfare reforms, including council tax support, at a local level, publish the results of this work, and take this impact into account in any future welfare reforms, and future local government funding settlements.

Trying to extract any tax from £72.40 adult unemployment benefit was doomed to failure from the start so; it results in a cut in local authority funding because it cannot be collected. All unemployed adults receive £72.40 or less while Children's and disability benefits are added; when a disabled person fails the Work Capability Assessment their income is reduced to £72.40; there are 4.1 million benefit claimants affected. Since April 2013 many benefit claimants have had to pay rent and council tax out of that £72.40. [3]

Central Government cut the funding of council tax benefit to local authorities by 10%; 281 out of 326 councils passed the shortfall in their funding on to the income working aged benefit claimants from the 1st April 2013.

The following cases I have encountered explain why I say that the Archbishops' have soft-pedalled the plight of the unemployed.

There are single adults in Haringey receiving £72.40 a week JSA being charged £25 a week for the bedroom tax and £5 for the council tax leaving them with £42.40 a week to live on. The Joseph Rowntree minimum income standard for a healthy diet is £43.95 [2]; a summons to late and non payers adds £125 to the arrears, equivalent of about three weeks healthy food. The children's or disablement benefits then have to pay the court costs and bailiffs fees. The council sets the court costs "at the highest possible level to act as a deterrent to late and no-payers"

The Archbishops, and many politicians in and out of government, have confused two issues. First, the income of the unemployed, and second, the 'moral hazard' that it will discourage work.

The income of the unemployed has been shredded to such an extent by central government and then taxed by local government with such ferocious enforcement that very many people are not fit for work; they are both hungry and stressed.

You will know from your National Service in the Welsh Guards that the army is kept fit for when it is needed. It should be the same for the civilian workforce when it is unemployed. They should have a minimum income guaranteed by the state that will provide a home, food, utilities, clothes and transport; their unemployment benefit should not be taxed.

The moral hazards of unemployment have to be dealt with so that the threat of a fine or a threat of imprisonment will do. The current sanctions are worse punishments than those handed down by magistrates for theft. In principle a thief is left with enough money to buy food or is fed in prison. Of course unemployment should never be a way of life except for some disabled and sick people. Even us pensioners would rather be active.

One final point. The chaotic London housing market is driving a coach and horses through the viability of the living wage and worse for the national minimum wage.

With best wishes,

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[1] (R (on the application of Moseley (in substitution of. Stirling Deceased)) (AP) (Appellant) v. London Borough of Haringey) (NB. I started this case in a phone call to Ian Wise QC. With Irwin Mitchell, solicitors, we found two brave single mothers who were willing to apply for legal aid)

[2] See <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Minimum-income-standards-2014-FULL.pdf> Table 1. The healthy food budget is first put together by nutritionists, then turned in to a weekly menu, checked with users for acceptability and with focus groups for reasonableness then costed at a supermarket prices.

[3] See DWP BEN 1 Key out of work benefits. This table includes all claimants of out of work benefits excluding carers (as they are not generally subject to labour market activation policies), and people claiming Universal Credit. Universal Credit claimants will be included in this table as soon as possible. While most people claiming these benefits will be out of work a small number will be in employment. This table shows the most up to date National Statistics currently available for claimants of incapacity benefits, lone parent and "other income related"

benefits. More up to date early estimates of incapacity and lone parent benefits, which are not currently designated as National Statistics, have been published by the Department for Work and Pensions at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dwp-statistical-summaries-2014>

3. NOTES FROM EKKLESIA:

(a) Background

This letter and data crafted by the Rev Paul Nicolson refers to a public response from Lord Heseltine to a strong critique of income inequality, poverty and regional disparities in wealth and opportunity that form part of several contributions to a new book edited by Anglican Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu, with a chapter from Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, entitled *On Rock or Sand? Firm foundations for Britain's future* (SPCK, January 2015).

The book (<http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/21305>) contains contributions from other established figures in economic, political, social and religious disciplines, including Lord Adonis (peer), Sir Philip Mawer (Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards from 2002 until 2008 and former secretary general of the Church of England's General Synod), Oliver O Donovan (Oxford-based political theologian) and Andrew Sentance (a former member of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England).

Dr Sentamu commented: "This book addresses crucial questions about the moral principles that undergird the way Britain is governed. It is about building firm foundations for Britain's future and setting out the essential values we need to build a just, sustainable and compassionate society in which we can all participate and flourish.

"We need to rediscover the true meaning of the word economy – it means a household, a community whose members share responsibility for each other. [It is wrong that] some few have far too much and the many have too little." (In the *koine* Greek of the New Testament the word for economy is *oikonomia*, derived from *oikos*, meaning household.)

Ekklesia co-director Simon Barrow commented on 16 January 2015: "The significance of this important intervention from Dr Sentamu and his co-authors – which criticises inequality, poverty wages, and other aspects of dominant economic policies which effectively bail out the wealthy while imperilling millions of ordinary people – is that the message comes from contributors who can hardly be labelled radicals, but who are in fact establishment figures" (<http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/21306>).

(b) The charge – regions and cities are growing

"I think it's simply out of touch," said Lord Heseltine of the report (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30831095>) on BBC Radio 4's influential *World at One* and *Today* programmes. He denied significant regional disparities by referring to regeneration of some major cities. "I have spent some 30 or 40 years dealing with leaders in local authorities and the transformation, and they acknowledge this, is extraordinary", he added. James Ramsbotham, chief executive of the **North East Chamber of Commerce**, commented: "We have been growing faster than any other region, and our exports mean we have a positive balance of payments" (<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2912573/Fury-bishops-say-cuts-mean-poor-cast-aside-Cameron-angry-MPs-attack-church-s-two-senior-figures.html>).

(c) The evidence – local authorities facing a huge squeeze

However, those who take a variant view respond by pointing out that the widening income gap is a reality within as well as across regions, and that local authorities are currently subject to huge cuts which imperil basic services. This is the finding of newly published research by the **Centre for Local Economic Strategies** (<http://www.cles.org.uk>).

Its report, *Austerity Uncovered* (16 January 2015), indicates that:

* Changes to the government's deficit reduction programme since it was first announced in June 2010 mean that we are now only half way through a nine year programme of austerity, when we should have been three quarters of the way through a six year programme. The government's original proposals expected austerity to amount to 6.7 per cent of GDP. This is now expected to reach 10.3 per cent, increasing in cash terms from £120 billion to £210 billion.

* By 2015–16 the government will have reduced its funding to local authorities by an estimated 37 per cent. A significant funding gap is emerging within local government as a result of this. The total funding gap is forecast to increase at an average rate of £2.1 billion per year until 2019–20 when it will reach £12.4 billion.

* The total budget put aside for means-tested social care by English councils in 2014–15 stands at £13.68 billion – a real terms cut of 12 per cent since 2010, while demand has risen 14 per cent in the same period.

* Cuts have had a major impact on services. In the area of adult social care, 87 per cent of councils now only provide assistance in cases of 'substantial' or 'critical' need, compared to 47 per cent in 2005–06. There has been a 27 per cent fall in the number of older people receiving publicly funded social care since 2008–09 and a 17 per cent drop in the number of younger people with disabilities receiving social care.

* Even though children's services have been largely protected to date, there have still been funding cuts of over four per cent. Between 2010 and 2013, spending on children's centres fell by 28 per cent with 580 of the centres closing as a result of local authority cuts.

(d) Inequality within and between regions

Government MPs have focused a fair proportion of their criticism of *On Rock or Sand?*, on reported comments by the Archbishops, particularly Justin Welby, who said, citing his chapter in the book, that "entire towns and regions" have been excluded and "trapped in an apparently inescapable economic downward spiral". He continued: "Our economy appears to be, in one sense, a tale of two cities – one being a growing and constantly improving London (and the south-east generally), and the other being most, but not all, other cities, alike in that they are each trapped in apparently inevitable decline", he declares, adding that public spending cuts have helped widen that gap.

"The hard truth is that many of these cities are in what appear to be lose-lose situations. Already in decline, the road towards recovery and growth is made even more difficult. There are now fewer readily available government resources able to support economic development in these regions; and also, since the 1980s, the banking system has become more and more London concentrated and consequently out of touch with local needs."

The overall claim about a large gap between the income and resources of the most economically deprived and the more affluent is fully justified. The **Equality Trust** (<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk>), which in 2014 published *A Divided Britain – Inequality Within and Between the Regions*, does not pull its punches about the overall situation.

It says (11 August 2104): "Inequality within and between UK regions is a significant problem, and we should not trivialise just how unbalanced the UK is towards London and the South East. But it must also be noted that the most significant and troubling inequality is not between London and other UK regions, but nationwide between those at the top and the rest of us. The UK desperately needs to reduce its excessive levels of inequality. To do that it needs nationwide policies that go beyond measures to enhance regional economic growth."

Therefore, the situation is rather more complex than Archbishop Welby would appear to suggest – one of a number of weaknesses within the book, which as Paul Nicolson says, underestimates the issue of unemployment and underemployment, and which represents a well-meaning view of the problems of poverty from a comfortable, relatively establishment position – as evidenced by the lack of an adequate critique of the flaws in the austerity economics and debt / deficit assumptions (<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21247>) that all the 'major parties' seem to share to one degree or other.

John Hood of the Equality Trust goes on to comment in his introduction to the Trust's report: "Our analysis of ONS [**Office of National Statistics**] data found that there are more highly paid people in London than there are in any other region, even after adjusting for its size. It also found London has the highest median wage – so far, no great surprises. But when looking at disposal income after housing costs, London is behind not only the South East, but also the East of England and Scotland. And this is not the only surprising statistic when looking at income and wealth within and between UK regions.

"When total wealth is looked at, those at the top in London are amongst the wealthiest in the UK. But in stark contrast, the poorest quartile in London has less wealth than the poorest quartile in all other regions bar the North East. In other words, while London does have high wages and huge wealth at the top, the gap to those at the bottom is huge."

The conclusion of *A Divided Britain – Inequality Within and Between the Regions* is instructive, and is as follows:

[The] traditional view of regional inequality is no longer accurate; we do not simply see a wealthy London with everywhere else struggling to keep up. It is true that southern regions generally have higher incomes and wealth than our northern regions, but when high living costs such as housing are taken into account, many Londoners in particular appear far less well off. In addition, although London has some of the highest earning and wealthiest people in the UK, it also has some of the poorest. So while London homeowners may see their property prices rocket, and higher earners see their pay packets swell, there is a disproportionate number at the bottom struggling to get by.

It is clear therefore that we cannot neatly divide our country into problem regions and success stories. We cannot tackle inequality by simply focusing on specific, ostensibly poorer, regions as to do so would ignore the large number of poorer people in our richer regions.

The UK is an increasingly divided country, but this division is seen most obviously between the richest in society and the rest of us, not between north and south, or London and the rest. The hugely different life experiences across the country are most keenly felt between those at top and the rest. It is this inequality that drives our health and social problems and our lack of trust and social cohesion. These must be tackled through a political commitment to nationwide inequality reduction.

The NGO has also produced a very helpful guide to qualitative and quantitative analysis in this area of concern: *How to find regional inequality data* (Equality Trust, 2014).

In summary, the government and Lord Heseltine are wrong to dismiss what the Archbishops are saying. But their case is perhaps undermined by over-sweeping statements which allow 'poverty denial' and 'inequality denial' to

persist among those whose economic and political ideology does not regard these as primary problems.

The 2013 report *The lies we tell ourselves: ending comfortable myths about poverty* (Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church), also promoted and supported by Ekklesia (<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/18086>), looked in detail at misstatements and misrepresentations of these issues, both by some politicians and influential sections of the corporate media.

Nor should we allow statistically-driven debates to detract from the actual harsh reality of poverty, impacting some 13 million people in one of the richest nations on earth, and the damaging impact of inequality. This is something Taxpayers Against Poverty, Church Action on Poverty (<http://www.church-poverty.org.uk>), the Iona Community (<http://iona.org.uk>) and others are rightly keen to stress and illustrate. It is particularly well expressed in the *Food, Finance, Fuel: tackling the poverty premium* report produced in Scotland, which Ekklesia was pleased to support (<http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21129>).

In the British context, it should be noted, “poverty is measured as the proportion of people living in households with an income below 60% of the contemporary median household income” (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

(e) The protagonists

Lord Heseltine is a Conservative Peer and businessman, often characterized as a "One Nation". He held various cabinet positions under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and was Deputy Prime Minister under PM John Major from 20 July 1995 – 2 May 1997. Against others in the Cabinet he backed regeneration of the city of Liverpool in the 1980s, at a time when it was facing economic collapse as a result, many argued, of the policies of the government of which he was a member. In 1990 he stood for the leadership of the Conservative Party against Margaret Thatcher and, while he was unsuccessful, his standing triggered her eventual resignation. As of 2013 Lord Heseltine was ranked 311th in the Sunday Times newspaper's Rich List, with an estimated personal wealth of £264 million.

No stone unturned: in pursuit of growth – the Lord Heseltine review was published on 31 October 2012 and updated on 18 March 2013. It can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/no-stone-unturned-in-pursuit-of-growth> It argued for devolution of powers to “re-invigorate the big cities” in Britain. Its argument for more regional autonomy and flexibility was backed by businesses and the Trades Union Congress (<http://www.tuc.org.uk/>), but the TUC pointed out that a sea-change in government and civil service attitude would be required to achieve this, and that Lord Heseltine's report did not question the austerity-based economic policies of Chancellor George Osborne which had exacerbated both poverty and inequality across the country.

The Rev Paul Nicolson, as well as playing a key role in Taxpayers Against Poverty is also the founder of Zacchaeus 2000, working for justice for vulnerable debtors: <http://z2k.org> He is a leading anti-poverty advocate and frequently joins protest with other Christians, with people of many different backgrounds and with trade unions in opposing injustice, especially in London where he is based. He has been involved in legal cases (https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=465207323607837&id=299911526728884) involving refusal to pay the council tax in protest against the denial of rights, services and dignity.

(f) Taxpayers Against Poverty (TAP)

The campaigning and public education group was founded by the Rev Paul Nicolson through the publication of his letter in the Guardian in February 2012, in which he called for a 'A taxpayers' alliance to promote social justice'. The letter can be read in full here: <http://www.taxpayersagainstopoverty.org.uk/about-tap/>

In September 2013, Ekklesia associate **Bernadette Meaden**, who writes and researches extensively on poverty, inequality and welfare, noted that while the Taxpayers Alliance, which campaigns for low tax and is supported by wealthy interests (<http://www.taxpayersalliance.org/news/tpa-funding-were-closing-in>), gets considerable media attention. But it is Taxpayers Against Poverty that is "the true taxpayers' alliance", highlighting the needs and interests of ordinary people, and especially those on lower incomes, rather than affluent vested interests. Read her article here: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/19010>

Taxpayers Against Poverty "broadcasts accurate information about poverty in the UK and corrects misinformation. We campaign for a fair link between tax and benefits." TAP's website is at: <http://www.taxpayersagainstopoverty.org.uk/> It can also be found on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Taxpayers-Against-Poverty/>) and Twitter (@taxpayers_a_p).

(g) Continuing the debate and conversation in 2015

The practical values (owned by Christians and many other people of good faith) that Ekklesia wishes to bring into play in debates in the run-up to the 2015 election include: a commitment to favouring the poorest and most vulnerable in policy and decision-making; actively redressing social and economic injustices and inequalities; food, education, housing and sustainable income for all; moving from punitive 'welfare' to a society where all can genuinely fare well; promoting community and neighbourhood empowerment; and seeing people, their dignity and rights as the solution not the problem. All of these are relevant to the voice of churches and others in addressing the massive wealth gap that austerity economics and politics is perpetuating, and it is our belief that those at the sharp end of such policies

should be active protagonists in seeking alternatives – not ‘the done to’. As the **Poverty Truth Commission** (<http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/poverty-truth-commission/>) in Scotland and elsewhere has stressed, the watchword should be “Nothing about us, without us, is for us.” Our General Election 2015 initiative, based on principles and policies rather than party interests, will therefore be entitled *Vote for What You Believe In*.

(h) Why poverty and inequality should matter centrally to Christians

Historically the church has been found both accommodating those with enormous power and wealth (a large part of the 1,700 year history of Christendom) and also acting in solidarity with, or alongside, those at the very margins (early Christian communities, Anabaptists, Levellers and Diggers, Quakers, radical missions, liberation theologies, the ‘option for the poor’ in Catholic social teaching, post-colonial theologies, the Protestant/Anglican ‘bias to the poor’, Catholic Worker, Tolstoyan nonconformism, base communities, primitive Methodism, Christian socialism, Christian anarchism, the Iona Community, the justice and peace tradition, and more).

It is the latter traditions with which Ekklesia and its allies most closely ally – arguing that the church needs to be an exemplary and counter-cultural community that owes its dynamic and identity to Jesus’ identification with the poor and pronouncement of Beatitudes on those at the edges.

It is true that just as ‘big religion’, ‘imperial Christianity’ and ‘top-down Church’ has often spiritualized the Christian Gospel in order to escape the demands of discipleship – following Christ into places of suffering and confrontation with the religious and political status quo – so its own wealth and power has not been seen as an issue, and this lack of concern has even been turned into a recidivist religious ideology by ‘the Christian right’ and ‘prosperity gossellers’, who abandon core biblical commitments in order to provide ‘faith-based’ cover for what has been called ‘the ethics of Caesar’. By contrast, the ethics of Christ is about a feast of life for all, a kingdom which is actually a commonwealth, a ‘divine reversal’ of power and privilege (Bishop Peter Selby), the levelling traditions of Jubilee at the heart of the Lords Prayer, Mary’s Magnificat (“the might shall be brought down from their thrones, the humble and weak exalted) and the building of communities of active compassion and solidarity in which the Spirit might be discerned.

The true church, says Latin American theologian Jon Sobrino, is found among and alongside the poorest and most marginal people, because that is where the God who meets us and changes us in Jesus Christ is to be found. It is called to be there not in order to sanctify poverty, but on the contrary to advocate for an *ekklesia* of equals. Therefore the church must speak out against poverty, injustice, abuse, inequality and the degradation of life – as well as ordering its own communities to reflect what it preaches and prays.

But who are ‘the poor’? Gustavo Gutierrez, one of the founders of liberation

theology, once said that if you asked that question in a roomful of comfortable, affluent people, they would never reach a conclusion. They would tell you it was too complex and uncertain. By contrast, if you asked a group of marginal and economically deprived people who the rich were, they could point to them immediately!

In biblical terms, the poor are those who are excluded or pushed away, by whatever means, and in different ways and to different degrees in varying social and cultural situations. Nevertheless, 'the poor' as a category (not a stereotype) are central both to the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. The condemnation of reckless wealth and oppressive poverty takes up more room in the scriptures Christians and Jews read than any other single topic. So it is entirely right that archbishops, clergy, rabbis and believers (of many faiths and of none, one might add) should speak out against poverty and inequality, wherever it is found. The moral measure of any community is not how much it accumulates, but neighbor love and how what is done benefits the most vulnerable and sees them as sisters and brothers rather than as an underclass to be despised, ignored, or 'done good to'. Mere charity is not substitute for justice denied, said St Augustine.

(i) Resources, references and further reading

- *On Rock or Sand? Firm foundations for Britain's future*, edited by John Sentamu (SPCK, January 2015).
- Archbishop Sentamu's video introduction to the book (YouTube): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owif6Cp0O-M>
- 'Archbishops robustly challenge government on income inequality', Ekklesia, 16 January 2015: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21305>
- 'On Rock or Sand? A political challenge to (and from) the establishment', Simon Barrow, Ekklesia, 16 January 2015: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21306>
- 'Low earners are being left behind, say archbishops', BBC, 15 January 2015: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30831095>
- 'Bishops branded 'out of touch' for claiming the poor are being cast aside and cities are in a 'cycle of decline', *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2912573/Fury-bishops-say-cuts-mean-poor-cast-aside-Cameron-angry-MPs-attack-church-s-two-senior-figures.html>
- 'More still to do among church members to counter myths of welfare', by Bernadette Meaden, Ekklesia, 27 January 2014: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/20037>
- 'Truth and lies about poverty, benefits and welfare', Ekklesia, 1 March

2013: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/18086>

- *The lies we tell ourselves: ending comfortable myths about poverty* (Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church, February 2013)
http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/files/truth_and_lies_report_final.pdf
- *A minimum income standard for the UK in 2014*, by Abigail Davis, Donald Hirsch and Matt Padley (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2014):
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Minimum-income-standards-2014-FULL.pdf> (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document)
- *Monthly and quarterly DWP statistical summaries for 2014* (Department of Work and Pensions, 2015):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/dwp-statistical-summaries-2014> (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document)
- *A Divided Britain – Inequality Within and Between the Regions* (Equality Trust, 2014):
<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/attachments/resources/A%20Divided%20Britain.pdf> (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document)
- Equality Trust comment and summary from John Hood, Media and Communications Manager, 11 August 2014:
<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/news/divided-britain-inequality-within-and-between-uk-regions>
- [How to find regional inequality data: a briefing paper](#) (Equality Trust, 2014):
<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/Finding%20Regional%20Inequality%20Data.docx> (Word document)
- 'Income inequality', by Guy Palmer, Poverty Site (accessed 18 January 2015): <http://www.poverty.org.uk/09/index.shtml> – a very helpful overview to one of the key issues highlighted by Archbishops Sentamu and Welby.
- 'Relative and absolute poverty' (JRF data)
<http://data.jrf.org.uk/data/relative-absolute-time/> (accessed 18 January 2015).
- 'Poverty rate by region' (JRF data): <http://data.jrf.org.uk/data/poverty-rate-region/> (accessed 18 January 2015).
- 'Research reveals huge impact of cuts on local authority services', Ekklesia, 17 January 2015: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21313>

- Poverty threshold and poverty rate – some differentials, Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_threshold (accessed 18 January 2015).
- 'Compelling refutations of the austerity narrative', by Simon Barrow, Ekklesia, 2 January 2015: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21247>
- Tackling the 'poverty premium', Ekklesia, 8 December 2014: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21129>
- *Food, fuel, finance: tackling the poverty premium*, by Kenny McBride and Sarah Purcell (Church Action on Poverty, Iona Community, Faith in the Community Scotland, December 2014): http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/sites/ekklesia.co.uk/files/poverty_premium_report.pdf (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document).
- *Austerity Uncovered*, Centre for Local Economic Strategies and Trades Union Congress, 16 January 2015: http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20Final%20Report%20Dec%2714_1.pdf (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document).
- Executive summary of the CLES and TUC report, 16 January 2015: http://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/TUC%20Executive%20Summary-%20Dec%2714_1.pdf (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document).
- *Pain, No Gain: the Austerity Scam*, by Professor John Weeks (PRIME, 2014), can be downloaded here (*.PDF Adobe Acrobat document): <http://www.primeeconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/John-Weeks-Austerity-FINAL.pdf>
- *Mr Osborne's Economic Experiment: austerity 1945-51 and 2010-*, by William Keegan (Searching Finance Ltd, 31 October 2014).
- *Economy of Life: An invitation to theological reflection and action* – World Council of Churches, 2014, via Ekklesia: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/21116>
- More on 2015 General Election issues from Ekklesia: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/generalelection2015>

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Ekklesia is an independent, not-for-profit thinktank, which orients its work around the changing role of beliefs, values and faith/non-faith in public life. We advocate transformative ideas and solutions to societal challenges rooted in a strong commitment to social justice, nonviolence, environmental responsibility, nonconformist styles of Christianity, and a creative exchange

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