



Celebrating responsible tax planning Church campaign guide

church action for
tax justice



| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Church Action for Tax Justice | 2 |
| Fair Tax Fortnight overview | 3 |
| Key messages | 4 |
| Resouces | 5-6 |
| Campaign materials | 7-8 |
| Contacts | 9 |

CHURCH ACTION FOR TAX JUSTICE

Church Action for Tax Justice (CAT) stands for a fairer and more effective tax system, where democratic governments set taxes to reflect the Common Good, and individuals and corporations pay their share.

In the context of increasing global inequality and unprecedented environmental challenges, the tax system can play a vital role in building more just and sustainable societies and in fostering good relations between human beings. Tax can:

- ❑ allocate the resources towards ensuring quality public services and infrastructure for all;
- ❑ redistribute income and wealth, providing the basis for an effective social safety net, and is therefore key to tackling poverty and inequality;
- ❑ support a just and orderly transition to a low-carbon, sustainable economy and thereby combat climate change;
- ❑ ensure everyone pays their fair share, so we all have a stake in society.

Tax should not be seen as a burden: it's a way of showing love for our neighbour and creating the type of just society which we find in the teachings of Jesus and the Prophets.

Yet today's tax system fails to deliver, at both national and global level. Weak regulations mean it is still too easy for large companies and wealthy individuals to avoid paying their fair share. Estimates of the gap between what the UK government is owed and what it receives annually range between £34bn by and £120bn. Meanwhile developing countries are estimated to be losing between \$100bn and \$300bn every year.

Rather than being seen as a positive tool to create a more just society, business, media and political narrative seem always to treat tax with negativity, calling it a 'burden to be lifted'. This leads to a harmful 'race to the bottom' with governments competing to cut tax rates, undermining their tax base, putting further pressure on public services which all need for a healthy society and often increasing the load on those with least ability to pay.

For many people of faith this situation is untenable; representing both a cause and a symptom of unjust and broken economic relationships. The time has come to fundamentally rethink our relationship with tax and have an honest conversation about what we want our tax system to deliver.

To this end Church Action for Tax Justice (CAT) will:

- ❑ Seek to raise awareness throughout the Churches and faith communities of the fundamental relationship between taxation, equality and public services, and the urgent need for Tax Justice at national and international level
- ❑ Campaign for Transparency and an end to tax dodging by both corporations and individuals
- ❑ Stimulate a conversation about the society we want to live in and the tax system that could deliver that.
- ❑ Encourage Christian and all faith organisations to promote Tax Justice through their education and mission work, and their financial and investment policies.

Next steps

CAT aims to work in close association with Tax Justice UK, Tax Justice Europe, the global Tax Justice Network and Christian Aid; members of the interim Steering Group are Revd David Haslam (Methodist Tax Justice Network), Toby Quantrill (Christian Aid), Suzanne Ismail (Quakers in Britain), Paul Morrison (Joint Public Issues Team), Rt Revd Michael Doe (Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility), Anthony Boateng (London Methodist Social Responsibility Commission), Louise Davies (Christians on the Left) and Will Snell (TaxJustice.UK)

FAIR TAX FORTNIGHT



Fair Tax Fortnight (9–24 June) is a UK-wide celebration of the companies and organisations that are proud to pay their fair share of corporation tax, and an opportunity to explore the positive contribution this makes to society.

Why

Corporation Tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be. Not when considered against the huge array of public services it helps fund – from education, health and old-age care, through to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also plays a crucial role in holding the whole tax system together – helping to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.

Too often, tax makes the headlines for all the wrong reasons. There is an almost daily stream of stories of evasion and aggressive avoidance – which not only distort our economy but also undermine the opportunity for business to compete fairly. It has been estimated that €600bn of corporate profits are annually shifted to tax havens, with corporate tax revenue losses globally of €200bn per year – which equates to approximately £7bn of missing revenues in the UK. Polls of consumers and the public consistently reveal that one of their biggest concerns about business is the fair payment of tax.

Fair Tax Fortnight will celebrate the companies and organisations that are seeking to do the right thing and are proud to pay their fair share of corporation tax – i.e., businesses that pay the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place, and who overtly shun the artificial use of tax havens and contrived tax avoidance practices.

It will also celebrate and explore the positive contribution that Corporation Tax makes to society, and how this might be optimised.

When

The first ever **Fair Tax Fortnight** will take place **9–24 June**, with a marquee opening conference in London on 7 June.

Church Action for Tax Justice is encouraging churches to make **17 June Tax Justice Sunday**, or the nearest Sunday possible.

What

Fair Tax Fortnight is supported by a dedicated online platform that will detail Fair Tax developments and events across the UK. Businesses and supporting organisations will be encouraged to organise events during the Fortnight, which will be uploaded to and promoted at www.fairtaxmark.net/fair-tax-fortnight/.

Who

Fair Tax Fortnight has been developed by the Fair Tax Mark, with kind support from the Friends Provident Foundation and the Joffe Charitable Trust.

The Fortnight will provide a platform for the celebration of all businesses and organisations who agree that companies should pay the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place, and who overtly shun the artificial use of tax havens and contrived tax avoidance practices.

Next steps

If you would like to get involved in Fair Tax Mark Fortnight please contact:

- ❑ Sam Al-Hamdani, Marketing and Communications: sam@fairtaxmark.net
- ❑ Paul Monaghan, Chief Executive: paul@fairtaxmark.net

KEY MESSAGES

The **main messages** for the first ever Fair Tax Fortnight are:

Celebrating responsible tax planning

**Paying the right amount of tax,
in the right place,
at the right time**

Corporation Tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be. Not when considered against the huge array of public services it helps fund – from education, health and old-age care, through to flood defence, roads and policing. It also plays a crucial role in holding the whole tax system together – helping to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.

There is an almost daily stream of stories of evasion and aggressive avoidance – which not only distort our economy but also undermine the opportunity for business to compete fairly. It is estimated that €600bn of corporate profits are annually shifted to tax havens, with corporate tax revenue losses globally of €200bn per year – which equates to approximately £7bn of missing revenues in the UK.

Polls of consumers and the public consistently reveal that one of their biggest concerns about business is the fair payment of tax. But it's not just the public that are concerned about tax dodging – numerous business leaders are proud to work for companies that pay the right amount of tax in the right place at the right time, and they find it distasteful that less scrupulous competitors are trying to steal a march by not paying their due taxes.

Fair Tax Fortnight will celebrate the companies and organisations that are seeking to do the right thing and are proud to pay their fair share of corporation tax – i.e., businesses that pay the right amount of corporation tax at the right time and in the right place, and who overtly shun the artificial use of tax havens and contrived tax

avoidance practices. It will also celebrate and explore the positive contribution that Corporation Tax makes to society, and how this might be optimised.



Why get involved in Fair Tax Fortnight?

- Corporation Tax is a vital source of revenue for public services, both in the UK and developing world.
- Corporation Tax is under attack the world over, with rates plummeting over recent decades. At the forefront of this 'tax competition' is the UK.
- Numerous business leaders are proud to work for companies that take a responsible approach, and they find it distasteful that less scrupulous competitors are trying to steal a march by not paying their due taxes. Such businesses should be recognised and celebrated.

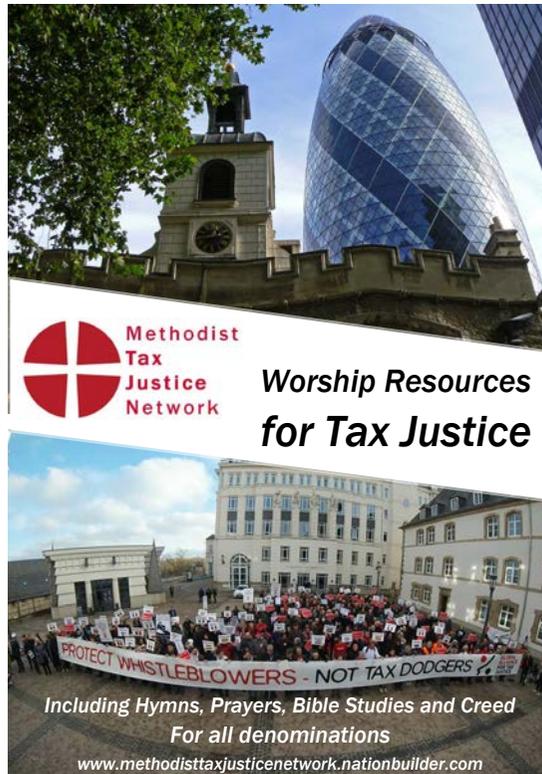
RESOURCES

Church Action for Tax Justice has provided a pack of resources for churches wishing to make June 17 Tax Justice Sunday. You can download them from:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/methodisttaxjusticenetwork/pages/20/attachments/original/1488447688/Worship_resources_Whole_Document_1.1.pdf?1488447688

It also urges churches as investors to question the tax policies of companies in which they invest.

You can also find out more in The Joy of Tax, by Quaker Richard Murphy, about how a fair tax system can create a better society: www.taxresearch.org.uk/.



Tax and Worship!

The photos on the front cover of this pack illustrate something of what we are about in our work for Tax Justice. At the top is the church – with some profile and some visibility - but rather old-fashioned and quite small over against the luminous might of 'the City'. Below is a picture of the demonstration held in front of the High Court in Luxembourg in December 2016, when the whistle-blowers of 'Lux-leaks' were going to their Appeal. Those 2014 leaks revealed how a combination of the supposedly reputable international audit company PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC), the Luxembourg Government and some 150 transnational companies were, over a period, actively cheating the rest of us out of hundreds of millions of pounds.

The two leakers, Antoine Deltour and Raphael Halet, and the journalist who relayed their information, Edouard Perrin, opened the eyes of many, but for their pains the leakers were given suspended prison sentences and hefty fines. Halet in particular was savagely treated by PwC, being tricked with his wife into a situation where they were threatened in a way that could be described as mental torture. Whether either will work again in the fields in which they worked for PwC is highly doubtful. Whether any of the three were people of faith I know not, but I wonder how many PwC staff working in their Luxembourg offices – or indeed the staff of the Finance Ministry - went to church on Sundays, despite what was going on in their institutions.

The manipulation of tax is one of the most shameful ways in which the rich get richer and the poor poorer in today's world. As well as engaging in social activism – and hopefully there is real heart for Christian engagement in this contemporary area of mission – our concerns need to enter into our worship and our house or study groups. This Pack is intended to assist this process. It is not complete – it never will be – as more hymns, prayers and statements of faith can be created, and more Bible studies produced. Hopefully users will get to the end, and encourage local churches to become 'Tax Justice Congregations'. Those first in the queue will probably be Eco and Fair Trade Congregations already but bows can always do with another string. And if any of this material inspires you to write some of your own – brilliant! Let us have it as soon as possible. Finally, although we currently have a 'Methodist' label our aim is to become increasingly ecumenical, please help us.

Revd David Haslam, Chair, Methodist Tax Justice Network

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Hymns | p2 |
| Prayers | p4 |
| Creed | p9 |
| Bible Studies | p10 |
| Why Tax Justice/Become a Tax Justice Congregation | p21 |

1

Hymns for Tax Justice



A Song for Tax Justice (sung slightly tongue-in-cheek)

Lord let me keep my money
It means so much to me
I've done so much to get it
It helps me feel so free.
I feel entitled to it,
It makes me feel secure,
Without it I'd feel empty,
With fear of being poor.

But Lord you know the taxman*,
He wants to take a share.
I think his name is Zacchaeus
His system's so unfair.
I know we need our hospitals
And roads, and schools, and more
But surely there would be enough
Without my tiny score.

There's lots of wealthy people,
Big companies and such,
And they don't pay their taxes
E'en though they have so much.
But, I remember Jesus,
so angry with the priests,
He just wants everybody
To share the global feast.

And if that's going to happen
We'll have to make a change,
So paying all our taxes
No longer seems so strange.
If we believe in justice
We have to learn to share,
To build God's new creation,
A world in all ways fair.

© David Haslam Sept. 2016
Tune: Aurelia (StF 690)

(*With apologies for gender-specific language, though at least it scans)

Unholy Selfish Actions

When unholy, selfish actions
make it hard to simply live,
when we nurture destitution
open eyes, good God forgive.
Only when our measures offer
sacrificial signs of grace
can we claim the name of Christian,
seeing Christ in every face.

Justice calls for equal sharing
of commodities and wealth,
food and water, clothing, shelter
and necessities for health;
but unequal distribution
and the curse of human greed
predicate the legislation
framed to meet each human need.

Tax can be a tool for gracing
those in poverty and fear,
and the means of our disclosing
all pretension's false veneer.
Now we followers of Jesus
vow to turn the world around;
cheats and dodgers fall from favour
risen poor share common ground.

© 2017 Stainer & Bell Ltd, London,
England. www.stainer.co.uk
Reproduced by kind permission.
Written by Andrew Pratt 14/9/2016
Tune: Abbots Leigh (StF 410), or What
a Friend (StF 531)

2

RESOURCES

Fair Tax Fortnight's suggested messages for social media are also provided:

We are proud to be a part of #FairTaxFortnight. We believe in the importance of paying the right amount of tax, in the right place, at the right time.

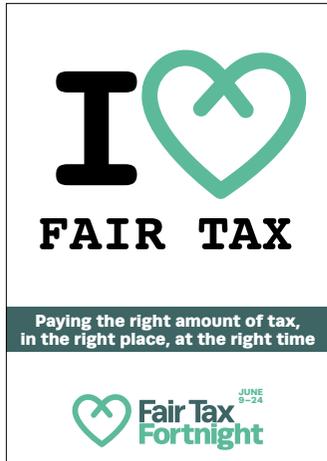
We're backing #FairTaxFortnight. Corporation Tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be. Not when considered against the huge array of public services it helps fund – including education, health and old-age care.

We're backing #FairTaxFortnight. It's estimated that €600bn of corporate profits are annually shifted to tax havens, with corporate tax revenue losses globally of €200bn per year – which equates to approximately £7bn of missing revenues in the UK.

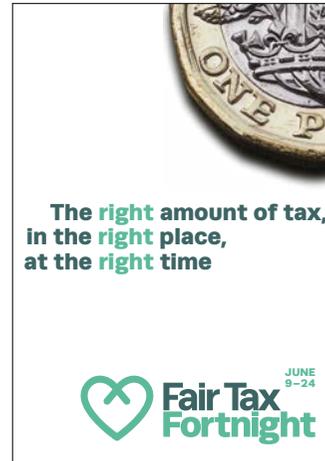
We're proud to be supporting #FairTaxFortnight. Corporation Tax is a vital source of revenue for public services, both in the UK and developing world. We applaud all those businesses who recognise this and engage in responsible tax planning. #TaxJustice

ASSETS

1-1) I ♥ posters – A3 or A4



1-2) Right posters – A3 or A4



1-3) Event posters – A3 or A4



2) Postcards – A6



To order any of the materials listed, email sam@fairtaxmark.net or call 07378 637637, listing the reference number (e.g. 1-1), the number of items required, and the name and address to send them to.

If you want to discuss other options, it's the same email address and phone number.

ASSETS

3) I ♥ leaflets – DIN portrait



4–1) I ♥ window stickers – 70mm



5–1) I ♥ shelf wobblers – 70mm



6) Enamel badges – 22mm



To order any of the materials listed, email sam@fairtaxmark.net or call 07378 637637, listing the reference number (e.g. 1–1), the number of items required, and the name and address to send them to.

If you want to discuss other options, it's the same email address and phone number.

CONTACTS



The portal for Fair Tax Fortnight is at www.fairtaxmark.net/fair-tax-fortnight.
Let us know what you are organising, and it will be promoted there.

Fair Tax Mark

Sam Al-Hamdani
Marketing and Communications
If you have any questions about Fair Tax Fortnight or the material that is available, Sam is your first port of call:
Mobile: 07378 637637
Email: sam@fairtaxmark.net

Church Action for Tax Justice

David Haslam
mail@catj.org.uk
www.catj.org.uk/

#FairTaxFortnight is supported by:



The Joffe Charitable Trust