

Four churches reiterate their dismay at the lies George...

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I reproduce this press release, just published, in full since I share its sentiments:

Four major British Churches have described Chancellor George Osborne's defence of the Government's benefit cuts as 'deeply disappointing,' following his speech earlier today.

"We are deeply disappointed that Mr Osborne is continuing to use the misguided rhetoric of people on benefits versus 'hardworking taxpayers'. The Government's own figures show that most people on benefits not only want to work, but many of them are already in work and paying high rates of tax," said Paul Morrison, Public Issues Policy Adviser, speaking on behalf of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Methodist Church, United Reformed Church and Church of Scotland.

"We desperately want people to achieve their God-given potential, but that can't happen when the most vulnerable are being made even poorer. The churches are serving their local communities day in and day out. They reflect the breadth of society and are in touch with the needs of the people they serve. We hope to reflect those concerns, and we look forward to the day when myths about poverty are no longer acceptable in public life.

"While nine out of ten working households will benefit from an increased tax allowance, the poorest working households will benefit the least and will be affected most by the benefit cuts introduced this month. It is absolutely clear that the net result of these changes will not be nine out of ten working households better off, as has been widely reported."

The Churches' report, [The lies we tell ourselves](#), says that statistics have been manipulated and misused by politicians across the spectrum, as well as by the media, to support the belief that the poor deserve their poverty, and therefore deserve the cuts.

The Chancellor has been sent a copy of the report.

"This is not a party political issue - sidelining and misrepresenting the poor is unacceptable whoever you are," added Mr Morrison. "Lies about poverty are the responsibility of us all, whether we tell, share or just tolerate them. It is everyone's duty to ensure that the poor are not misrepresented and that policy matches up to hard facts.

"We invite Mr Osborne to read the report and consider how he might challenge myths about poverty as he seeks to balance Britain's books."

I hope he does.