

## The Inaugural Posbury St. Francis Annual Lecture

# A Spoke in the Wheel of Injustice: The Violence of Poverty and the Calling of the Church in an Age of Austerity

**Dr. Chris Shannahan**

The 'Age of Austerity' has ruptured the social fabric of contemporary Britain. Over the last decade, as austerity policies have damaged more and more individuals, families and communities, the Church has become an increasingly key player in the struggle to defeat contemporary poverty because of its deep roots in local neighbourhoods. In this lecture, Dr Chris Shannahan will draw on interviews and case studies from his recent 'Life on the Breadline' project to explore the violence of multidimensional poverty and the responses of Churches and Christian-NGOs across the UK. The lecture will reflect on the implications of the Church's commitment to 'transforming structural injustice' for Christian social action and argue that only a rooting of the foundational themes of liberation theology in breadline Britain can provide the tools needed to embody God's Preferential Option for the Poor in 2023. The Church stands at a Kairos moment – Are we ready to ram a “spoke into the wheel of injustice”?



Chris Shannahan is an Associate Professor in Political Theology at the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, and theme lead for research and teaching on Faith and Peaceful Relations.

His research, which is informed by many years as an inner city Church minister and community organiser, focuses on the intersection between theology, poverty, racism, inequality and Christian social action. Chris has written *Voices from the Borderland* (2010) and *A Theology of Community Organizing* (2014). He is currently working on his third monograph – *Life on the Breadline: Towards a Theology of Liberation for an Age of Austerity*.

**Monday 9th October, 2023** 7pm – 9pm

Peter Chalk Building: Newman Red Lecture Theatre.  
University of Exeter, Streatham Campus [[map](#)]



Posbury St  
Francis  
Trust



**University of Exeter**

Exeter Centre for Ethics and Practical Theology (EXCEPT)

