Surveillance and Social Justice – May 2017

Section 3. Aims

3.1 Many of us are, often unwittingly, surveillance agents (towards our family, friends, colleagues, parishioners, students, patients, or strangers). It is hoped that the report will encourage Christians to engage in re-considering surveillance in everyday contexts.

3.2 In this report, we seek to expand the Church's understanding of surveillance as an approach to perceived danger and its appreciation of how surveillance shapes those being watched, and those doing the watching. Appeals in society are regularly, and often rightly, made to the right to privacy (Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights) and we contribute insights from within this paradigm. Data Protection Legislation also exists to protect people's privacy and we seek to broaden the discussion into how 'cultures of surveillance' can intensify discriminatory relationships.[1] Theological reflection on contemporary surveillance is a new field of study, so this report contributes to a national and international debate that is likely to grow.

3.3 It is our intention that this report and its outcomes will contribute to the Church and individual members being able to offer biblical and theological affirmation and challenge of everyday surveillance culture and, in some cases, of expert knowledge systems. The report comprises three major sections.

- '**Surveillance from the Data-centre**' examines what we mean when we talk about surveillance, who it affects and in what way. It explores contemporary understandings of surveillance.
- '**Surveillance from the Cross**' opens up theological perspectives that re-orientate surveillance in terms of the Cross, God's relational way of knowing, privacy as a gift for dignity and flourishing. It draws on Biblical examples of how people manage their visibility, as a way of connecting with contemporary cultures of surveillance.

'Bio-data, Borders and Benefits' articulates a dialogue between 'Surveillance from the Data-centre' and 'Surveillance from the Cross.'

See the full report

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[1] Torin Monahan, 'Surveillance as Cultural Practice,' *Sociological Quarterly* 52 (2011), 495-508. See also David Lyon, 'The Emerging Surveillance Culture,' in André Jansson and Miyase Christensen (eds), *Media, Surveillance and Identity: Social Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 71-88.