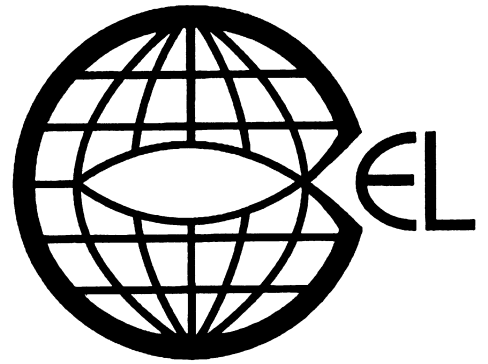


PLEASE DISPLAY IN YOUR CHURCH

CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

CHURCHLINK



2002, No.2.



ChurchLink is CEL's FREE Newsletter for churches. Please display at least this side in your church.

See overleaf for a Christmas reflection from Archbishop Rowan Williams; a church magazine article on post-Christmas waste; a prayer from CEL's monthly Prayer Diary; and news of a special issue of CEL's magazine *Green Christians*.

Dreaming of a green Christmas?

Will your Christmas dinner follow CEL's **LOAF** principles? Will the food be **L**ocally produced, **O**rganically grown, **A**nimal friendly and **F**airly traded? Is your home lit by energy efficient light bulbs? Are you signed up to a green energy tariff? Contact CEL for information on green energy.

Sample from CEL Prayer Guide

In Ecuador, where mangroves have been destroyed to make way for intensive shrimp farms, the algae are also destroyed which are the shrimps' natural food, so slaughterhouse waste has to be imported as a substitute. Now farmers are replanting mangroves, the algae return and so do the shrimps. Parasitic flowering plants among the mangroves provide a rich source of nectar for local bees, so that farmers are now getting 75 kg. of honey per beehive compared with 7.5 to 10 kg. previously. Pray for all who are spreading awareness of the resources available from natural ecosystems.

CEL's monthly Prayer Guide has daily prayers on environmental issues. It costs £6 p.a. (cheques payable to Philip Clarkson-Webb) and is available from 15 Valley View, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0SY.

Visit CEL's website (www.christian-ecology.org.uk) and click on 'Ecological Notes for the Common Lectionary' for Revd Keith Innes' green pointers for preachers on the Bible readings used each Sunday by many UK churches.

Don't let the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) pass your church by!

The current issue of CEL's magazine *Green Christians* is a special 50th issue with a range of articles written by representatives of Christian organisations who attended the Summit. Their contributions will contain theological reflection, political critique and important information affecting our future.

Order copies from CEL, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER, £3.00 incl. p&p.

The days after Christmas: new life from old.

On Twelfth Night figures from Christmas cribs are carefully laid in their box; Christmas trees go out to be replanted in the garden, or transformed by shredding into mulch; paper chains are folded and packed away for re-use another year; and Christmas cards are gathered up to become next year's cards, or cut into labels, or taken to a special recycling point. Vegetable peelings and tangerine skins will be decomposing with some of the cardboard wrappings on the compost heap, to gradually change into friable garden soil as temperatures rise in spring. Cans, bottles and papers are sorted for local recycling schemes.

Is that how the Christmas season ended in most homes? Probably not. With our throw away society, and artificial materials, we create the 'problem' of waste disposal. In the natural world there is no need for landfill sites or incinerators. Waste from one species becomes food for another. Some human communities are now trying to copy nature and aim for a 'Zero Waste Plan' where all waste is seen as a potential resource for something else.

How can we get everyone on board the Zero Waste train? We all need to look urgently at our purchasing habits and at how much we re-use, repair, and then recycle. If our government doesn't water it down, EU law may soon insist that companies are responsible for the whole life-cycle of their products. They will have to manufacture their products so that they can be easily recycled. Copying Ireland's example of putting a 9p tax on plastic carrier bags would reduce the 10 billion plastic bags currently given away each year by UK supermarkets.

Why should we care about what impact our wasteful lifestyle has on the environment? Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus — the Lord of Creation, become part of the material world. Matter matters to God. We should both love and serve God and the material world which God saw to be very good.

(Please reproduce this article by Barbara Echlin, CEL's Secretary, in January's church magazines.)

Part of the Christmas Message for 2000 from the Most Rev Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Wales, now Archbishop of Canterbury.

The heart of the Christmas message is that God takes our material world completely seriously. He doesn't just send a message, he comes to live in the physical world in the flesh and blood of a real person, Jesus. He uses physical things to communicate with us (this is what Christians mean by 'sacraments', especially the meal of bread and wine that is Holy Communion).

If we believe that God takes the environment seriously, that he can speak through the physical things of the world, we are horribly wrong if we think we can ignore these environmental matters. The good news God sends at Christmas has to be good news for the whole world. If we start thinking about protecting our environment properly, we shall be reflecting the way God himself looks at the world into which he came at Christmas.

Christian Ecology Link (CEL)

CEL is an ecumenical Christian organisation.

Founded in 1981, our aims are to:

1) spread ecological insights among Christian peoples and churches, 2) spread Christian insights into the Green movement.

We seek to stimulate awareness, interest and discussion on environmental issues from a Christian perspective, and promote practical action.

Christian Ecology Link works through individuals and local congregations, providing them with resources to spread the Christian ecological message and promote practical action.

Resources include:

- a regular Journal and news Bulletin, a monthly Prayer Guide for the Care of Creation and this twice yearly *ChurchLink* newsletter.
- topic leaflets, ecological audits and worship material.
- web site: www.christian-ecology.org.uk
- occasional meetings and conferences.
- information and advice.

Information & Enquiries: 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER.

01524 33858 email: info@christian-ecology.org.uk

ChurchLink is free. All we ask is that you:-

- Display *ChurchLink* in Church. Copy it freely. Publicise any events.
- Use articles for your own Church magazine.
- Bring ChurchLink to the attention of anyone who may have a special interest in the environment.

To register with the **FREE** ChurchLink scheme please send the name of your church, its denomination and a name and address for correspondence to the FREEPOST address below. If you are already a member of CEL you will receive *ChurchLink* newsletters automatically.

CEL MEMBERSHIP. If your church, or individuals within your church, would like to become **members of CEL** the standard annual subscription is:- Individuals—£18 (low income £10); Joint/Family—£28; Local Church—please send a donation (recommended amount £25).

INDIVIDUAL/CHURCH MEMBERSHIP (Delete one)
I/We enclose cheque for £..... payable to Christian Ecology Link.
Please enrol me/us.

Name.....

Address.....

Please send to:- CEL ChurchLink & Membership,
FREEPOST SE 8672, 9 Nuthatch Drive, Earley,
Reading, Berks RG6 5ZZ.