

the Government to ensure that the Environment Agency police the EU Waste Electric & Electronic Equipment Directive. It warns that cowboy traders are abusing re-use and recycling initiatives and manufacturers are failing to take responsibility for their equipment after it is disposed of. It suggests that, if firms taking in the equipment were effectively policed, the computers they ship abroad for re-use could be given an official stamp that can then be checked at the ports. "Producers should be made to accept the *producer pays* principle on a global scale."

Friday 31st October

The UK charity Healthy Planet is urging gift shoppers to adopt the new concept of 'personal social responsibility' or PSR, where people look at the environmental and social impact of their purchasing and hold themselves accountable for their actions. It allows people to 'adopt' a plot of land for themselves or as a gift to one of the 77,000 conservation parks in the scheme, including rainforests, mountain peaks and nature reserves. The sponsors, known as *Land Guardians* can have their say on how the money is spent by taking part in online forums. The charity, which works in association with UNEP, said that more than 90% of the money spent goes straight to the parks, with the rest covering administration costs. The charity made a conscious decision to steer clear of current offsetting schemes because of uncertainties surrounding the voluntary offsetting industry.

Sources:

Positive News

www.foe.org.uk

www.wwf.org.uk

www.edie.net

www.christian-ecology.org.uk

www.amberlinks.org

The November Edition of the Prayer diary will be put online at the end of October 2008.

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by email (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk and request this. Photo on front cover: Fungus foray - by J.Allinson

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CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

Oct 2008

Prayer-Guide

for

The Care of Creation



“Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.
Do not fret when men succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it only leads to evil.
For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the
land.”

(Psalm 37.7-9)

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your
Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret,
will reward you.

(Matthew 6.6)

“Nearly all the ills of life spring from this simple source, that we are not able
to sit still in a room.”

(Blaise Pascal)

Wednesday 1st October

The Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act 2000 committed the Government to eradicate all fuel poverty in England by 2016 and for vulnerable groups by 2010. Yet fuel poverty, in the sense of needing to spend more than 10% of household income on energy, is increasing. Over 20,000 deaths are recorded each winter due to the cold and many families with young children have to choose between heating their homes and cooking a hot meal. The average household faces energy bills 30% higher than a year ago.

Thursday 2nd October

Government proposals under a new £910 million Home Energy Saving Programme will, if agreed, subsidise improvements in home insulation and increase Cold Weather Payments to poorer households. But the proposals will be largely funded by energy generators and energy suppliers, which are already committed to investing in new power stations to guarantee future electricity supplies. Proposals for a windfall tax have been shelved and energy companies have already profited by more than £9 billion from the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. There is a difficult balance to be reached between the need to secure future electricity supplies and the immediate need to end fuel poverty.

comments: “It has been over 40 years since TBT’s negative impacts were first identified and 7 years since legislation to ban TBT was agreed, yet we have only now achieved a global ban. All this time, TBT has been polluting our seas, contaminating our wildlife and entering our food chain. It is ludicrous that it has taken so long to protect our seas from these gender-bending chemicals.” Question: Should the chemical industry now be doing some deep soul-searching?

Tuesday 28th October

The most complicated piece of legislation ever to come out of Brussels – and the longest in the making – are the REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) regulations, which are supposed to provide a balance between commercial interests and protection of the public. NGOs and public interest bodies have published a list of 270 chemicals of very high concern – and nobody disputes their toxicity. So far the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has put forward just 16 candidates for the official list of chemicals to be banned – and four of these have yet to receive unanimous approval. ECHA’s director explained that the list was short because the legislation was new and those dealing with it were still coming to terms with the administrative burden. He gave assurances that the list would be added to ‘over time’ and would be reviewed at least once a year. It appears that public health does not trouble too much the heads of the bureaucrats who run ECHA.

Wednesday 29th October

Residents of Goteborg in Sweden will no longer be woken up early by noisy rubbish collection vehicles when the new Volvo hybrid vehicle is brought into service. It uses an electric engine at low speeds: the diesel engine kicks in when the speed reaches about 12 mph. Volvo is also developing other large vehicles where an electric motor and diesel engine work in parallel, so reducing fuel consumption and improving driving characteristics. It uses many standard components in its range of heavy vehicles, so reducing production costs and times. Its new hybrid bus, the Volvo 7700 Hybrid, can provide fuel savings of up to 30%. Field trials will be carried out in London and full production will start next year.

Thursday 30th October

According to Computer Aid International, more than 500,000 second-hand computers arrive in the Nigerian port of Lagos each month, but only one in four works, the rest are dumped. CAI is launching a petition calling for

of recyclables from residual waste as a step towards minimising climate impacts and maximising resource efficiency.

Friday 24th October

Liz Parkes, head of waste at the Environment Agency, told the RWM conference at Birmingham that 91% of the country’s rubbish is not municipal waste, so the big challenge is to look at consumer behaviour and get the public more involved. “The quality of materials being sent for recycling will be key to maintaining the confidence of the public and the customers for the materials. More work must be done to look at waste higher up the supply chain and we are working with WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme) and SEEDA (the South East England Development Agency) on a pilot scheme to tackle supply-chain waste.” Question: When will the supermarkets clamp down on the overpackaging scandal?

Saturday 25th October

Today at St. George the Martyr Church, Borough High Street, London SE1, the Southwark Diocesan Environment Conference meets from 10.30 to 4.30. The keynote speaker is Michael Northcott, author of “A Moral Climate”. There will be a range of workshops and discussion groups. Registration and refreshments at 9.30. To book a place, ring 020 7939 7412 or email: caroline.gibson@southwark.anglican.org

Sunday 26th October

Protect us, O Lord, from thoughts without action,
Guard us, O Lord, from words without feelings,
Defend us, O Lord, from ideas without results,
And surround us with your Presence. Amen. (David Adam)

Monday 27th October

The International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships has finally banned the use of Tributyltin (TBT) anti-fouling paint – more than 10 years after WWF and other organisations began lobbying against its use. TBT, one of the most toxic chemicals ever released into our seas, has been used for half a century to prevent marine organisms sticking to the hulls of ships. It has been shown to change the sex of dogwhelks through endocrine disruption. It caused oyster crop failures in France and closed shellfish farms. Its negative impacts contaminated wildlife in the open ocean as well as in coastal waters. Dr. Simon Walmsley of WWF

Friday 3rd October

A price guide published by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors finds that insulating walls is the most cost-effective way to reduce our carbon footprint at home – especially with terraced houses where the smaller heating bill would save as much as £145 a year from the 3rd year after installation. Fitting a new boiler, however, might take up to 18 years to pay for itself – longer than the average life of a boiler – while photovoltaic panels, which generate electricity, are all but dismissed as high installation costs and small savings result in a payback period of over 200 years. Joe Martin, the lead author, said that we all have a role to play in reducing our carbon footprint, be it through changes in behaviour or by choosing greener alternatives. “But the reality is that most people struggle with the cost, time and effort it takes to make these changes.” The guide makes no reference to likely reductions in cost as more people take up greener options, nor to the fact that many people, and not only Christians, make lifestyle decisions not primarily to save money, but because it is the right thing to do.

Saturday 4th October

Today the Leeds Schumacher Lectures take place at Leeds Metropolitan University from 10 till 5 addressing issues of economic justice and ecological sustainability posed by the increasing dominance of global corporations. Speakers: Susan George, Ann Pettifor and Andrew Simms. For more information go to: www.schumacher-north.co.uk/lectures

Also today, a conference at Sheffield Cathedral on Creation Care and the Church will explore issues of creation care and spirituality. Keynote speaker: Dave Bookless, director of A Rocha UK and author of “Planetwise”. Twenty workshops will cover issues ranging from theology and worship to what we can do as individuals and congregations. For further info. contact Mike Gilbert on 0114 2787020.

Also today, the John Ray Institute is hosting a conference at Trinity College, Bristol, entitled “Conservation: What, Why and for Whom?” with a range of speakers including Margot Hodson, chaplain of Jesus College Oxford and joint author of “Cherishing the Earth”. For enquiries, please ring Mary on 0117 968 2803.

Sunday 5th October

Lord Jesus, you have called us to be your witnesses on earth. Help us to proclaim, by word and action, the message of your love to all humankind, and to declare your lordship over all creation and our responsibility for it as your stewards. Amen.

Monday 6th October

The City Council of London, Ontario, has passed a resolution banning the sale of bottled water and promoting the use of tap water in all municipal buildings and facilities. It is one of a host of authorities in Ontario limiting the use of bottled water. The president of the Ontario Municipal Water Association said that concern over bottled water had been growing as a result of its cost, the poor recycling rate for plastic bottles and the greenhouse gas emissions associated with manufacturing and transporting the bottles. "Municipal drinking water has to meet a much higher safety standard than bottled water and is delivered at a fraction of the cost."

Tuesday 7th October

The Mayor of London has inaugurated the "London On Tap" campaign inviting designers to create a cafe promoting tap water which will be used in all the restaurants, pub and cafes supporting the campaign. He said " This will empower customers in bars and restaurants across the capital to ask for tap water rather than feeling compelled to ask for expensive bottled brands. The designs are testament to talented designers in London and I look forward to announcing the winners in December."

Wednesday 8th October

Many of Westminster's public buildings including the City Hall, schools and libraries have been equipped with infrared sensors on sinks and urinals, restricted-flow showers and water-saving toilets. The improvements, to be completed by 2009, are expected to save up to £400,000 over the next five years. ADSM (Advanced Demand Site Management), the operating company, will only be paid if it succeeds in reducing the council's water bill. If it does, it will be paid 50% of the savings, while part of the remainder will be donated to WaterAid.

Thursday 9th October

The London Churches Environmental Network will be hosting the 2008 St. Francis of Assisi lecture today which will be delivered at St. Mary le Bow, Cheapside, London EC2V 6AV at 7 pm this evening by The Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool and author of "Jesus and the Earth", following evening prayer at 5.45, Eucharist at 6.05 and light refreshments from 6.30. For more information, email: barry-goodwin@southwark.anglican.org or ring 020 8256 9637.

Tuesday 21st October

While China's economic miracle has blackened its huge cities, poisoned its water resources and ravaged its countryside, the country has become the world's 2nd biggest investor (after Germany) in green energy. It is the world's largest manufacturer of solar panels and has pioneered a new solar water-heating system. Urumqi-based Goldwind, the world's largest wind-turbine maker, has doubled its output in each of the last 8 years. The target for installed wind power has been raised to 10 GW. by 2010 after the 5 GW. target was reached 3 years early. The Government's solution to rising levels of pollution is a combination of strict environmental laws, severe punishment for provincial governors who fail to clean up the mess and reliance on a thriving market for renewable technology. It has pledged that 15% of its energy will come from renewable sources by 2020 and has threatened dire punishment for insufficiently-motivated bureaucrats.

Wednesday 22nd October

The Government has approved plans for a 100 MW. Combined Heat & Power (CHP) station at the industrial port of Runcorn, Cheshire, which will take waste that currently goes to landfill from Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, Warrington and Halton. The heat and electricity produced will be used at the INEOS Runcorn site, a major chemicals manufacturing complex and one of Britain's biggest energy users. The Energy Minister, Malcolm Wicks, said: "The proposed plant will make use of local waste for the production of energy rather than contributing to the landfill problem. The key concern about public health will be addressed through planning conditions at the construction stage." According to the EU's waste hierarchy, energy-from-waste counts as a disposal option ranking slightly above landfill but below recycling.

Thursday 23rd October

A new briefing to local councils from Friends of the Earth on the waste left over after re-use, recycling and composting, recommends promoting Freecycle and social re-use of furniture, improved facilities for recycling DIY waste and tightening the law on recycling of packaging. Michael Warhurst of FoE said: "Councils can save money by creative effective recycling and re-use of furniture and DIY waste, while the Government must get plastic packaging out of the bin by increasing the legal recycling target for the packaging industry." The briefing gives practical advice to councils on the best methods for ensuring the maximum extraction

Saturday 18th October

Somerset County Council became Britain's first Transition Local Authority when it unanimously endorsed a resolution which fully supported the aims of the Transition Town Movement to reduce dependence on fuel oil and to create more sustainable communities. The resolution requires all SCC directorates to engage with and provide support for Transition Initiatives and to undertake a review of budgets and services to achieve a reduction in dependence on fuel oil and to produce an energy descent plan that is in line with the principles of the Transition Initiative. The focus now shifts to district and town councils in Somerset to carry things forward at a local level. Alex Malcolm of Transition Frome said: "We also need to raise awareness within the general public, build their enthusiasm for the transition ethos and create a groundswell of support to implement projects in earnest."

Sunday 19th October

Still the busy-ness of our minds and hands, dear Lord, that in the silence of prayer we may receive your word and, amid the day's busy round, dispense the light of your love to all with whom we have to do. Amen.

Monday 20th October

According to a report from the think-tank Policy Exchange called "The Root of the Matter: Carbon Sequestration in Forests and Peatlands", developing countries may simply not accept the burden of over-priced environmental solutions when their economy is slowing and food prices are rising. Yet the cost of preventing peatland destruction can be as little as 10 cents per tonne of carbon saved compared to \$146 per tonne of CO₂ saved through the use of nuclear energy and up to \$292 per tonne for UK biofuel subsidies under the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation. The cost of avoided deforestation is put at between \$3 and \$30 per tonne of carbon saved. Destruction of forests and peatlands accounts for 20% of all global emissions – more than the world's entire transport emissions – yet avoiding deforestation and peatland destruction is surprisingly cheap and can be implemented without huge investment in new technology. It has numerous other local environmental benefits and would provide developing nations with a valuable source of income.

"Any intelligent fool can make things bigger, more complex and more violent. It takes a touch of genius – and a lot of courage – to move in the opposite direction."
(Albert Einstein)

Friday 10th October

Proposals for nine eco-smallholdings, a community centre and a public minibus service near Glandwr in Pembrokeshire have for the second time been turned down by the county council.

The Lammas network, which supports low-impact development throughout the UK, had its proposals praised as "inspirational" by the Design Commission for Wales. Project Co-ordinator Paul Wimbush said that council planners had failed to take account of its *Low Impact Development* policy which allows new smallholdings in open country if they make a positive environmental, social and economic contribution. "The whole point of the policy is about creating a lifestyle from the land rather than focussing only on profit. This difference between permaculture and agriculture is crucial." Lammas is taking its plans to the Welsh Assembly where it is hoped the appeal will be heard next spring and people could be living on the site by the summer.

Saturday 11th October

Today the Bristol Schumacher conference meets at the Council House, College Green, on the theme: "Less is More: Can we really live better by consuming less?". The conference will be chaired by Jonathon Porritt and the main presentation will be made by Bill McKibben followed by a number of speakers including Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition Town movement, Ann Pettifor of Advocacy International and Andrew Simms of the New Economics Foundation. "Growing numbers of people recognise that far more radical change is urgently needed – so come and spend a day with the movers and shakers, the doers and the transformers, in what surely represents the most hopeful and dynamic social movement in the UK today." For information ring 0117 903 1081 or email: admin@schumacher.org.uk

Also today, the Edinburgh Churches Climate Change Conference takes place 9.30-4.45 at Stewart Melville College, Edinburgh, on "How should Christians respond to Climate Change?" Speakers include Chris Rapley, Director of the Science Museum, Elaine Storkey, President of Tearfund, Michael Northcott, Professor of Ethics at Edinburgh University, and John Ferguson of the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, with 20 workshops on Communications, Community Action, Home & Church Buildings, Travel, Consumer Goods & Services and Looking to God. Delegate fee: £29 – Concessions £19. Deadline for booking: 30th September. Email: conference@edinburghclimate.net or ring Julie on 07952 987 427.

Sunday 12th October

Loving God, our Creator, in whom we live and move and have our being, open our eyes that we may behold your presence ever about us. Teach us to be anxious for nothing, and when we have done all that you have given us to do, to leave the issue to your loving wisdom. Amen.

Monday 13th October

It is not widely known that 2008 is the UN International Year of the Potato. The RHS Grow Your Own Survey has revealed that, besides lettuce, the easiest vegetables to grow are beans and potatoes since both can be grown in tubs or barrels with excellent results. The RHS, with sponsors National Savings & Investments, has calculated that if one person grows enough vegetables – such as lettuce and tomatoes – to provide for their lunch each day, they would save about £38,000 over their working life. Richard Hunt of the RHS said: “We’re able to show that even a space as small as a hanging basket or window box can reap rewards in terms of fresh tomatoes or lettuce, which will save you money in the shops. But it’s about much more than growing vegetables. It’s about healthy lifestyle, having fun and saving money at the same time.”

Tuesday 14th October

During World War II Britain needed to feed itself, and so the Government promoted shared allotments that provided million of tonnes of food. Afterwards, many allotments fell into disuse and were taken over by housing developments. Now, with rocketing food prices, there is an increased demand for growing wholesome food. While rent is payable on each allotment plus the cost of basic tools and seeds, homegrown still remains cheaper, healthier and tastier. Patrick Holden of the Soil Association adds: “We have much work to do in rebuilding local food systems to survive the imminent challenges (of oil prices and climate change).”
www.soilassociation.org

Wednesday 15th October

According to the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners, in the North West of England alone, about 8,000 people are currently waiting for an allotment. MPs, debating the issue in July, concluded that allotments could provide positive benefits in healthy living, active ageing, community cohesion, combatting climate change and enhancing community empowerment. The Minister, Ben Chapman, said that any six registered

council taxpayers can petition the local authority on the need for allotments, and it must take their representations into account. Ian Wright MP added that a council could only dispose of an allotment in exceptional circumstances. Footnote: The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 provides a powerful tool for ensuring that local interests, whatever the issue, are properly looked after – provided that the local council opts into the Act.

Thursday 16th October

By 1972 the Brazilian city of Curitiba had become, like many other cities, a huge, clogged network, designed before the age of mass motoring and now jammed with vehicles, their emissions and their noise. Planners would normally have advised investment in infrastructure to create wider streets, overpasses, underpasses or even an underground subway system. But Mayor Jaime Lerner decided that people should come before cars.

Overnight he closed the busiest shopping street to traffic. Shopkeepers found they were getting more business and so petitioned for an extension of the closures. Of the city’s three parallel main roads, the centre road was dedicated to public transport, while the other two became one-way only. 25 metre long bi-articulated buses were introduced carrying 270 passengers each. Before embarking, passengers pay the city, not the bus company, a fare which covers a journey anywhere in the city. Already cheaper than car travel, public transport became even more efficient, reliable and easier. At peak times, there is a bus every 50 seconds.

Friday 17th October

As Curitiba’s population expanded and created pressure on the housing market, schools and health centres were built in outlying villages and farmers were guaranteed a market for surplus crops in exchange for recycled materials collected by the urban poor. The city’s poor receive food and the region’s farmers make a living.

A further idea, which won civil engineer Nicolau Kuppel a UN award, was to get shanty-dwellers to collect waste in exchange for bus passes. This was possible because bus operators were paid per bus-kilometre rather than per passenger carried. Soon a waste recycling centre was established with the aim of keeping the city clean, reducing landfill and generating income. Within three months, 70% of Curitiba homes were separating their rubbish for recycling. The resulting documentary film – ‘A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil’ is obtainable via the website:
www.mariavazphoto.com/curitiba