

compensating capital account, so reducing international capital movements.

Whatever the merits of these proposals, it is an urgent necessity to look at the balloon-like growth of international trade at the expense of the earth's natural support system.

#### Sunday 28th December

"A wind has blown across the world, and tremors shake its frame.

New things are struggling to their birth and naught shall be the same.

The earth is weary of its past, of folly, hate and fear;

Beyond a dark and stormy sky, the dawn of God is near." (F.C. Happold)

#### Monday 29th December

Why, asks David Nicholson Lord in a Resurgence magazine article called "The Silence of the Greens", do environmentalists choose to ignore the undeniable connections between the food crisis and over-population of the human species? A driving force behind the environmentalism of the 1970s was an urgent sense of planetary limits, but in today's orthodoxy it has been largely supplanted by a faith in technology or lifestyle changes. From this comes the belief that human numbers don't really matter: it's how those human numbers live and consume that counts. Yet history suggests that population growth has repeatedly shoved humanity into a corner and is doing so again – forcing us towards genetic modification, soilless hydroponics, the ploughing-up of set-aside and all the paraphernalia of high-tech denatured intensive farming systems. "Our own actions are coming back to haunt us. It's time we managed things better."

#### Tuesday 30th December

The UK's projected population increase of 10.5 million by 2074 means that everyone of us will have to reduce our per capita carbon emissions on average by 15% in order for the UK as a whole to 'stand still' in emission terms, i.e. to keep its overall emissions level. By 2005, the UK managed to reduce its CO2 emissions by 5% thanks to the 'dash for gas', but a year later the Government admitted it would fail to meet its pledge to reduce them by 20% from 1990 levels by 2010. Now plans for new coal-fired power stations without carbon capture and storage are putting at risk any possibility of a 20% reduction by 2020.

#### Wednesday 31st December

Loving Father, bless us in the year to come. Satisfy the world with your goodness. Replenish our hearts with your blessings and with the rich gifts of your hands. Protect and guard us throughout the coming year from all manner of evil. Uplift our hearts with trust in your promise to redeem all your creation through the power dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sources: The Green Bible (Collins); Resurgence; [www.edie.net](http://www.edie.net); [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org); [www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk](http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk); [www.wwf.org.uk](http://www.wwf.org.uk); [www.foodethicscouncil.org](http://www.foodethicscouncil.org)

The January edition of the Prayer diary will be put online at the end of December 2008.

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by [email](mailto:prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk) (free), please email [prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk](mailto:prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk). For further information and requests for prayer, please write or email:

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## Prayer guide for the care of creation



# December 2008

"I tell you the truth; unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." (John 12.24)

"In a dark time, the eye begins to see." (Theodore Roethke)

"A future without oil could be better than the present if we use our imagination and think creatively." (Rob Hopkins)

#### Monday 1st December

WWF's latest Living Planet Report, produced with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and the Global Footprint Network, contains some startling figures:

The UK's ecological impact or footprint on the planet is equal to that of 33 African countries. Each of us has an impact three and a half times that of the average African.

More than 75% of the world's people are living in nations where national consumption has outstripped their country's natural resources and its ability to absorb carbon emissions.

US citizens require on average 9.4 hectares to support their lifestyles, British citizens require

5.3 has. and Chinese citizens 2.1 has. The Congolese have an average footprint of 0.5 has., but face a future of declining natural resources from deforestation and increased demands from a rising population and export pressures.

Everyone consumes on average 1.24 million litres of water a year, but this varies from 2.48 million litres in the US to just 619,000 in the Yemen. Around 50 countries are facing moderate or severe water stress and climate change is expected to increase that number.



ChristianEcologyLink

Commented ZSL: "We are acting ecologically in the same way as financial institutions have been behaving economically – seeking immediate gratification without due regard for the consequences. The consequences of a global ecological crisis are even graver than the economic meltdown."

#### Tuesday 2nd December

God's blessing "Be fruitful and multiply" is spoken to fishes and birds on the 5th day of creation, according to Genesis 1, - before humans had even appeared and received the very same blessing. "It is a sad irony that fishes and birds, those creatures whose fertility was first blessed by God, are now among the most endangered species on the planet." (Ellen F. Davis in "The Green Bible") The 2008 Living Planet Index shows a nearly 30% decline since 1970 in nearly 5,000 measured populations of 1,868 species. These dramatic losses are driven by deforestation in the tropics, the impact of dams, diversions and climate change on freshwater species, and pollution, over-fishing and destructive fishing in marine environments.

#### Wednesday 3rd December

The Living Planet Report identifies key policies which, if combined, could stabilise and reverse the worsening slide into ecological debt and lasting damage to global support systems. To meet the challenge of climate change, the report shows that a range of efficiency, renewable and low emissions "wedges" could meet energy demands to 2050, with a 60-80% reduction in carbon emissions. Said David Norman of WWF: "We humans have been good at creating problems – but we can be equally good at solving them. A sustainable world is not an unachievable goal. As the world looks to restore its economies, we must build in long-term environmental and economic sustainability.

#### Thursday 4th December

The new International Energy Agency report predicts that, if governments fail to adopt the right policies, global coal use will grow by at least 2% a year until 2030 – much more than other conventional fuels. This would make it very difficult to make the emissions cuts necessary to avoid dangerous climate change. The IEA estimates that it would cost \$9 trillion more than 'business as usual' to keep atmospheric CO2 concentrations below the dangerous level of 450 ppm. (they are now over 380 ppm and rising at a rate of about 3% a year), but that this would yield an enormous pay-back in terms of saved energy costs. WWF believes that this scenario still under-estimates what is required, namely a robust target of a 25-40% reduction in CO2 emissions from developed nations by 2020.

#### Friday 5th December

The IEA report estimates that, in order to sustain demand for oil at projected consumption levels, up to 64 million extra barrels a day need to come on stream by 2030. This is equivalent to nearly six times the current output of Saudi Arabia (the world's biggest oil producer). The IEA's detailed analysis of 800 oil fields owned by 54 "super-giants" shows that declines in production are likely to accelerate as oilfields become depleted.

The clear impossibility of this should be enough to focus the minds of governments everywhere on the urgent need to provide policies for adaptation to a world where oil is increasingly scarce and expensive. So far, the growing Transition Town Movement appears to be the only organisation sounding the alarm.

#### Saturday 6th December

Today a Climate Change Service organised by CEL will take place at 11.30 at Hinde Street Methodist Church, London W1U 2QJ, where Mark

destroying the ozone layer which protects us from solar radiation. . . We do not separate costs from benefits in our accounts. Instead we lump them together as 'activity' in our calculation of GDP."

#### Tuesday 23rd December

He defines an SSE as an economy with a constant population and constant stock of capital, maintained by a low rate of throughput that is within the regenerative and assimilative capacity of the ecosystem. This means low birth equal to low death rates, and low production equal to low depreciation rates. How can we limit these things? He proposes raising resource prices at the input end (the mine-mouth or the well-head) by a cap-and-trade auction of permits which would increase government revenue for distribution at the poorer end of society. In an SSE we no longer need to spend billions on advertising; instead, it would be taxed heavily as a public nuisance. "If economists really believe that the consumer is sovereign, then she should be obeyed rather than manipulated, cajoled, badgered and lied to."

#### Wednesday 24th December Christmas Eve

Lord God, we turn from a world distraught by confusion and tumult to worship at the cradle of a little Child whose power can yet bring peace to the earth and goodwill to all people. May our worship renew our courage, strengthen our determination and guard our inward peace, that we may move among our fellow-humans as those whose values are firmly based on your love for mankind and on the sure foundation of your throne.

#### Thursday 25th December Christmas Day.

Loving Father, as we ponder the coming of the Child of Bethlehem, we rejoice that you, the Almighty, the Creator, the Infinite, whose being is utterly beyond our loftiest thought and most daring

imagination, can speak to us in a little human Child. Save us from being impressed too much by the impressive. Help us to see you in simple things: a child's love, birdsong, the quiet loveliness of dawn, human friendship and the peace of our homes. We bow in worship before the majesty of heaven revealed in a human life. Accept our worship and make us more like your dear Son, who gave of himself, not counting the cost. Amen. (Leslie Weatherhead)

#### Friday 26th December

Lord God, as we settle again to the normal routine of our lives, may we realise that we are all instruments in your hand to do your will. May we become willing agents to carry out your purposes. So may true joy fill our lives – joy undimmed by transient sorrow – joy which knows the love that will win all hearts at last. Amen.

#### Saturday 27th December

Herman Daly suggests that the mobility of capital between countries allows corporations to escape national regulation by playing one nation off against another. The nearest thing we have to a global government (the IMF/World Bank/WTO) has shown no interest in regulating transnational capital for the common good. Their goal is to help corporations to grow, because growth is presumed to be good for all. Instead, he suggests:

They could promote minimum residence times for foreign investors, so as to limit capital flight and speculation;

They could propose a small tax on foreign exchange transactions (the Tobin tax);

They could revive Keynes's proposal for an international multilateral clearing union that would penalise persistent imbalances in current account and thereby indirectly promote a balance in the

## Friday 19th December

The new IEA World Energy Outlook report declares that efforts to ensure a secure energy supply and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must not be derailed by the darkening economic forecasts. "We cannot let the financial and economic crisis delay the action that is urgently needed to ensure secure energy supplies and curtail rising emissions of greenhouse gases" said Nobuo Tanaka, the IEA director. "We must usher in a global energy revolution by improving energy efficiency and increasing the deployment of low-carbon energy." "Current trends in energy supply and consumption are patently unsustainable – environmentally, economically and socially. They can and must be altered." "Rising imports of oil and gas into OECD regions and developing Asia, together with the growing concentration of production in a small number of countries, will increase our susceptibility to supply disruptions and sharp price hikes. At the same time, greenhouse gas emissions would be inexorably driven up, putting the world on track for an eventual global increase of up to 60 C."

"One thing is certain", he said. "While market imbalances will feed volatility, the era of cheap oil is over."

## Saturday 20th December

A 2-year study by the Food Ethics Council on "Food distribution – an ethical agenda" finds that policies to improve food distribution are failing twice over by

Their inability to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and

Their refusal to recognise that public concern is as much about diverse local high streets, transparency, health and animal welfare as it is about climate change.

Government and industry need to rethink two of their most sacred assumptions:

that the economy must grow in order to thrive, and that consumers are king. Yet businesses influence what we buy all the time and need to take their responsibility seriously.

The report calls for far-reaching changes to government policy, spanning climate change, transport, planning and school food. It argues that businesses are under growing public pressure to prove that they can be trusted 'choice editors', so taking some of the responsibility for consuming ethically off their customers' shoulders.

## Sunday 21st December

Father God, whose Son Jesus was himself homeless and a refugee, we pray for the world's displaced persons who now number more than 27.4 million. We pray for all who are working to alleviate the root causes of displacement – poverty, racial violence, social and environmental disorder. Be close to all who have given up the comforts of an affluent society to minister to their needs and help us all to support them according to our means.

## Monday 22nd December

Former World Bank economist, Herman Daly, in an address to the UK Sustainable Development Commission, has tried to define a Steady State Economy (SSE), as opposed to the Growth Economy, which recent events have shown to be unsustainable. "Economists have focused too much on the economy's circulatory system and have neglected to study its digestive tract. Throughput growth means pushing more of the same food through an ever larger digestive tract; development means eating better food and digesting it more thoroughly. Measurements of GDP conflate these two very different things. . . For example, CFCs gave us the benefit of a non-toxic propellant and refrigerant, but at the cost of

Dowd of Operation Noah will speak and Rev Paul Trathen will lead a time of reflection and prayer. After the Service, we will join the National Climate Change March leaving Speakers' Corner at 1 pm. Speakers at the rally include George Monbiot, Caroline Lucas (leader of the Green Party) and Michael Meacher (former Environment Minister). Anyone wishing help organise or support the service should email Ruth on [ruth@jarman11.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:ruth@jarman11.wanadoo.co.uk) or ring 01252 849904 or 07970 907784.

The Global Day of Action is timed to coincide with the UN Climate Talks taking place in Poznan, Poland.

## Sunday 7th December

Loving Father, you sent your Son to be a light to those who walk in darkness. Help us - who have brought your creation, the waters, the lands and creatures of all kinds, to the edge of darkness – to see the new path that we must follow if we are to fulfil your purposes for us. Help us to seek your kingdom above all else – above money, above power and above any selfish considerations. Help us to repent and turn to you, who alone can restore us to the place in your family that was granted to us through your dear Son, Jesus Christ.

## Monday 8th December

At the conference of the English Farming and Food Partnerships attended by 300 food and farm leaders, Sion Roberts, Chief Executive of EFFF warned that, despite the recent fall in the rate of food inflation, high and volatile food prices are here to stay both globally and in the UK. Market fundamentals point to a doubling of food prices by 2050. "The net result will be that the balance between supply and demand is set to stay tight over the longer term. . . The advantage that has shifted to farm businesses over the past two years is not an increase in farm prices but a realisation by customers that there is significant value and

security to be gained by forming new relationships with raw material suppliers." If this means that supermarkets will cease to put downward pressure on farm gate prices, it is indeed progress. "I truly believe", said Mr Roberts, "that there is a real opportunity to change the relationship between agriculture and the food industry to the benefit of all."

## Tuesday 9th December

Tesco has recently approached all their suppliers and demanded extended credit terms, reduced prices and additional special offers. Tesco's corporate & legal affairs director said: "When commodity prices rose, we increased prices to suppliers. Now that prices have fallen, we are working with suppliers to ensure that this is reflected in what we pay them so that reductions can be passed back to customers." Yet even major suppliers such as Reckitt Benkiser (the world's largest manufacturer of household cleaning products and remedies such as Lemsip and Gaviscon) are among the suppliers who have complained through The Grocer magazine about the aggressive tactics of Tesco, Asda and Marks & Spencer. It is now the supermarkets, not the suppliers, who decide how much our food costs and what goes into it. Tescopoly ([www.tescopoly.org.uk](http://www.tescopoly.org.uk)) is an alliance giving advice to campaigners against local supermarkets, but the problem is nationwide. The more farmers that are forced out of business by the strong-arm tactics of supermarkets, the less effective will be our capacity to survive the looming oil crisis.

## Wednesday 10th December

"Meeting global challenges: the role of first movers and new coalitions" is the title of a debate co-hosted by WWF and RSA today beginning a 6 pm at 8 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6EZ. A panel which includes Jules Peck, Director of the Quality of Life Challenge group, the Rt Rev James

Jones, Bishop of Liverpool, and Timothy Jackson, Professor of Sustainable Development at Surrey University, will discuss the pros and cons of being first and how we can pave the way for others. Questions for discussion can be posted on the RSA website ([www.thersa.org](http://www.thersa.org)). Tickets are free but should be reserved in advance on the website.

#### Thursday 11th December

A new report from the Industry Task Force on Peak Oil & Energy Security (an alliance of Arup, Foster & Partners, Scottish & Southern Energy, Solar Century, Stagecoach, Virgin and Yahoo) confirms that Peak Oil will hit the UK within 5 years.

A report from Shell says that Peak Gas will hit Europe at the same time. The IEA has confirmed that both gas and oil production is dropping faster than anticipated. Meanwhile a report by Dr Euan Mearns to the Royal Society of Chemists clearly shows the connection between depleting oil supplies, the sudden rise in oil prices and the collapse of the world economy. For details see: [www.peakoil.net](http://www.peakoil.net) and [www.theoil drum.com](http://www.theoil drum.com)

#### Friday 12th December

In response to the credit crunch and the wider energy and food crisis, an alliance of organisations headed by the New Economics Foundation has produced a "Green New Deal" to tackle the 'triple crunch' of credit, oil price and climate change. The report (accessible at [www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)) calls for comprehensive joined-up action from politicians, and in particular for:

Massive investment in renewable energy and wider environmental transformation, leading to:

Creation of thousands of new green collar jobs;

Reining in reckless aspects of the finance sector, but making low-cost capital available to fund a green economic shift;

Building a new alliance between environmentalists, industry, agriculture and unions to put the interests of the real economy ahead of those of foot-loose finance.

It also calls for the UK Government to take international action to restore economic stability and nurture environmental sustainability, including:

Allowing every nation autonomy over monetary policy (interest rates and money supply) and fiscal policy (spending and taxation);

Setting an international target for greenhouse gas concentrations that keeps future temperature rises below 20 C.

Giving poorer countries the opportunity to escape poverty by massive investment in climate-change adaptation and renewable energy.

#### Saturday 13th December

A new report from the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee claims that the Government has "directly contributed to the negative perception of its sustainable development policies" in its funding of overseas projects. The Government's Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) comes in for particular criticism for its opaque processes. "No offer of (financial) support should be made until the ECGD's Business Principles Unit has completed its assessment and its recommendations have been carried out", says the report. WWF comments: "As the EAC has recognised in its report, a more transparent approach would help to lessen ECGD's unfortunate reputation as the private piggy bank of some of Britain's dirtiest sectors."

#### Sunday 14th December

Father, we pray for the millions who lack the essentials for life – clean water, food, fuel and shelter. Help us to respond effectively to their

plight, by prayer and action. Give us the wisdom and the inspiration to be channels of your grace to the poor, the refugees, the handicapped and the helpless.

#### Monday 15th December

A WaterAid paper delivered to the UN Urban Forum last month says that currently over a billion people live in urban slums and the figure is rising by 25 million a year. The report "Turning slums around: The case for water and sanitation" says that, although putting in water and sewage infrastructure comes with a price tag, it is a case of pay now or pay more later. Although sanitation and water are integral to urban development, there is no coherent commitment by governments and donors to address this crisis. "Without the aid system responding to the challenges of rapid urbanisation, the struggle against poverty is not going to be well-targeted."

#### Tuesday 16th December

Georgina Downs has won a seven-year battle in the High Court for a declaration that the Government had contravened a European directive to protect people from the harmful effects of exposure to toxic chemicals. She had produced a catalogue of evidence of ailments suffered by people exposed to the chemicals. The judge ruled that particularly vulnerable people such as asthmatics, the elderly, children and pregnant women must be protected. He said there was "a very strong case for a buffer zone" between spraying and human habitation. The Government now has to decide whether to appeal.

#### Wednesday 17th December

Since London's terrorist bombings, waste bins in public places have been as scarce as flying pigs. Now however the City of London Corporation has

signed a deal for the installation of bomb-proof bins – the first being due to be installed next month. The manufacturers claim that the bins can absorb even the strongest blasts. Each comes equipped with a video screen which will display a 'financial news channel' to include messages from the corporate partners who are paying the installers, Media Metrica, who will also clean, maintain, insure and repair the bins.

Media Metrica claim solutions to two problems:

London alone produces enough litter to fill an Olympic-sized pool every 4 hours. Britain faces fines of £500,000 a day if EU rules on landfill sites are not met;

The bins provide publicity to environmentally-aware brands to help finance urban regeneration, while offering local authorities a solution to the challenge of on-street litter recovery and recycling free of charge.

Some might claim that an even cheaper solution would be to train our children in litter awareness.

#### Thursday 18th December

20 UK scientists from the National Centre for Atmospheric Science are among a team of scientists from 10 countries who are in South America to investigate the huge clouds which form over the Pacific and are thought to affect our climate. They reflect sunlight back into space, reducing the amount of energy reaching the earth's surface and keeping the ocean cool. Said lead scientist, Professor High Coe: "These are some of the largest cloud systems in the world and play a significant part in climate change, but we know that current climate models do not represent them well." It is hoped that the measurements will determine how the clouds form, how reflective they are, what determines their lifetime and how they are affected by pollution from the extensive mining in Chile and Peru.