

Sunday 31st May

Give us, dear Lord, a deeper understanding of your purposes, that we may be steadfast amid the turmoil of our times. May our faith never fail, nor our love grow cold, nor our hope become faint. So may we look up and lift our heads as we look for the promise of your Kingdom, which you pledged for us in the sacrifice of your dear Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Prayer Notes

Sources

"Time's Up" by Keith Farnish

"The Upside of Down"

by Thomas Homer-Dixon

"Ecological Debt" by Andrew Simms

"The Transition Handbook" by Rob Hopkins

www.edie.net

Picture on front cover: Lily of the Valley by J.A.

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by [email](mailto:email@christian-ecology.org.uk) (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk For further information and requests for prayer, please write or email: Philip Clarkson Webb, 15 Valley View, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells TN4 0SY Email: pcw@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

May 2009



"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created in him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
(Col. 1.15-17)

"I saw three properties in the world . The first is that God made it. The second is that God loveth it. The third is that God keepeth it. But what beheld I therein? Verily the Maker, the Keeper, the Lover."
(Julian of Norwich)

"The Bible makes clear a basic truth that we self-centred humans find difficult to accept, namely, that the universe was not created primarily for us. There is no doubt that God wants us to enjoy it and even use its resources to optimise a good life for ourselves. But the ultimate purpose of creation is worship. Nature and all living things were created to glorify God." (Tony Campolo)



Friday 1st May

The US Environmental Protection Agency has declared that carbon dioxide and five other greenhouse gases may endanger human health and well-being. The decision now goes to public consultation and marks a big change in the US Government's stance on climate change. We pray that new US leadership will lead to effective global action at the Copenhagen summit in December.

Saturday 2nd May

The EPA declaration states that the solution (a low-carbon economy) will create millions of green jobs and end America's dependence on foreign oil. All governments are focussed primarily on the economy and the jobs that go with it. Yet, according to figures from New Energy Finance, UK Government investment in renewable energy fell from £377 million in Jan-March 2008 to just £79 million in Jan-March 2009. Where are these promised green jobs?

Sunday 3rd May

Lord God, we live in a world where things have gone badly wrong because we have forgotten you and left you out of account.

We have worshipped other gods and have not hallowed your Name.

We have adopted our own way of life and have not served your kingdom.

We have chosen what pleases us and have not done your will.

Lord, forgive us our sin and folly and blindness, and turn us back to yourself, for the sake of your son, the only Saviour of mankind.
(Frank Colquhoun)

Monday 4th May

The Institute of Public Policy Research reports that a thriving offshore wind energy industry could employ 70,000 people where currently only 700 are employed. Shell and BP have already left the wind industry and Ibendrola Renewables (the world's biggest wind-farm operator) has cut its investment programme. The £3 billion London Array of 341 turbines – enough to power 750,000 homes – is awaiting backing from the European Investment Bank. The chief executive of E.ON (one of the Big Five energy suppliers) considers that Britain's target of producing 35% of its electricity from renewables by 2020 is now impossible to achieve.

Tuesday 5th May

Planning permission for 21 wind turbines at Drummuire, Caithness, was given in 2005, yet connection to the national grid is not available before 2016. This is one of many wind farm developments that are awaiting a connection. National Grid complains of delays in the planning system and proposes dividing offshore wind developments into regions so as to attract investors. Only strong leadership from Government can now cut through the bureaucracy which threatens the whole future of wind farms.

Wednesday 6th May

On April 12th Britain went into "ecological debt" in the sense that we stopped relying on our own natural resources to support ourselves and started to 'live off' the rest of the world. As our consumption grows and ecosystems become more stressed, the day when we begin consuming beyond our environmental means

Tuesday 26th May

According to Keith Farnish, there are three skills that everyone will need in order to survive future changes:

- The ability to make simple things including building basic structures
- The ability to cook good, nutritious meals from basic ingredients
- The ability to grow, and rear if necessary, ones own food.

"A diet dominated by meat or processed foods requires far more stages of production than a diet which is based around things that come straight out of the ground and into your mouth."

Wednesday 27th May

According to a new WWF report, over 38 million tonnes of fish (40% of the total global catch) are left unmanaged or unused and should be considered as bycatch. "The health of our oceans cannot be restored and fisheries sustainably managed if 40% of the global catch is wasted. A huge quantity of fish and marine animals are being thrown back to sea dead or dying. Bycatch costs fishers time and money, contributing to overfishing, jeopardising future revenue, livelihoods and long-term food security. . . We urge ministers to ensure that the upcoming reform of the Common Fisheries Policy addresses this issue as a matter of priority."

Thursday 28th May

According to Thomas Homer-Dixon in "The Upside of Down", the term "greenwash" has been applied to many so-called green products which companies market to persuade us that "we are doing our bit for the environment." Rising Tide North America has produced a regularly-updated report examining solutions to climate change that are popular with businesses and politicians, but do little for the climate and

often have devastating impacts on communities and the environment. For details, visit: www.risingtidenorthamerica.org/wordpress/false-solutions.

Friday 29th May

Rob Hopkins in his introduction to "The Transition Handbook" writes: "Rebuilding local agriculture and food production, localising energy production, rethinking healthcare, rediscovering local building materials in the context of zero-energy building, rethinking how we manage waste, all build resilience and offer the potential of an extraordinary renaissance. I am not afraid of a world with less consumerism, less 'stuff' and no economic growth. Indeed, I am far more frightened of the opposite therefore. This is not a book about how dreadful the future could be; rather it is an invitation to join the hundreds of communities around the world who are taking the steps towards making a nourishing and abundant future a reality."

Saturday 30th May

"Economic & Environmental Recovery: from Downturn to Steady State" is the theme of today's conference from 11 to 5 at Cecil Sharpe House, 2 Regents Park Road, Camden, London NW1 7AY organised by Resurgence magazine. The main speakers include Fritjof Capra, director of the Centre for Ecoliteracy in California, Ann Pettifor of Operation Noah, Satish Kumar, editor of Resurgence and the poet Deborah Harrison. For tickets @ £25 (concessions £15) email: peterlang@resurgence.org or ring 020 8809 2391. Website: www.resurgence.org

Commons Environmental Audit Committee in calling on the Government to make the installation of energy efficiency in existing buildings a priority in its £535 million green stimulus plan. 27% of UK carbon emissions come from people's homes. Virtually all Britain's 24 million buildings need attention to reduce their emissions by 4%. "To complete the task in 40 years we would need to refurbish an entire city the size of Cambridge every month. If we assume each intervention would take a team of trained workers two weeks, we would need 23,000 teams of people to work at this rate non-stop for the next 500 months."

Thursday 21st May

The Government has announced grants of up to £5000 to assist people to buy electric and hybrid cars. FoE welcomes the announcement, but points out that electric cars are only as green as the electricity they run on. "The Government must act now to boost the UK's flagging renewable energy industry. Boosting renewable energy, cutting energy waste and investing in greener transport could create tens of thousands of new jobs, reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and show genuine international leadership ahead of the crucial UN climate negotiations in Copenhagen next December."

Friday 22nd May

A report from the Institute for Public Policy Research says that Britain will fail to meet its legally-binding agreement to obtain 15% of its total energy from renewable sources by 2020 unless the Government gives greater support for wind farms. Britain has the biggest offshore wind capacity in the world, yet just 700 people are employed in the sector, and most components are made overseas. The report calls on Government to fund research and offer incentives to investors, as well as to support

companies that manufactures turbines and other parts.

Saturday 23rd May

"How can we protect our remaining social and ecological resources from the convulsions of capitalism?" is the title of a free one-day conference and workshops today at Conway Hall, London, from 10 to 6. Workshops will include topics such as energy descent, community ownership, sustainability etc. Bookings via www.radicalroutes.org.uk or ring 0113 262 4408 or email bookings@radicalroutes.org.uk

Sunday 24th May

Almighty God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant unto thy people that they may love the thing which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise, that so, amongst the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
(The Book of Common Prayer)

Monday 25th May

A Demos report entitled "Resilient Nation" calls on people to become better prepared for emergencies and less reliant on the state. Over 80% of Britons live in urban areas relying on dense networks of public and private bodies to provide food, water, electricity, communications and transport. 85% of critical infrastructure is in private hands. Britain is becoming ever more reliant on imports from less stable areas of the world. "We live in a brittle society. Our complex modern social systems, our reliance on them and our inability to protect them are a growing concern for us all. A single failure in a network can cascade across systems, causing all manner of systems to fail."

moves ever earlier in the year. In 1961 it was July 9th. By 1981, Britain's ecological debt day was May 14th. The New Economics Foundation comments: "We have become increasingly dependent on imports at precisely the time when, because of climate change, competition for energy resources and economic instability, the rest of the world's ability to provide for us is weakening." Andrew Simms in his new book "Ecological Debt" explores the connections between the economic and environmental crises and proposes a range of positive solutions.

Thursday 7th May

"As a people, we are losing basic and vital skills with frightening ease, but mainly because we have been made to believe that civilisation will look after us, provide for our every need and make such skills as growing, building, cooking and caring obsolete. We have become incapable of looking after and thinking for ourselves." (Keith Farnish in "Time's Up") Education, he believes, should take place in the homes of families and friends, in pubs and restaurants, in sports venues, at pop concerts and music festivals, in parks, woods, fields, beaches and on the street, in trains and buses, in offices, shops and factories. Person to person, unfiltered and uncensored – just information that can be discussed, added to, written down, remembered and passed on again and again.

Friday 8th May

The Government's "Every Child Matters" programme lists 25 aims to promote children's well-being including:

- Ready for employment
- Access to transport & material goods

- Parents, carers and families are supported to be economically active.

Keith Farnish suggests that this is hardly more than an instruction manual for creating little wheels and cogs. "As we pack our children off to day centres and child-minders in order that we can remain economic units, and stop being parents, most of us work to produce things that nobody needs and we fail to perceive the things that we do need – healthy food, shelter, clean air, clean water, love, friendship, connection."

Saturday 9th May

From today until the 15th the Iona Community will be leading a week of experience and discussion on the theme "Off Grid, Off Oil" at the Camas Centre on the Isle of Mull. The aim is to explore how we can live a satisfying and enjoyable low-carbon life. The charge of £210 includes meals, accommodation and activities. For information, go to: www.iona.org.uk/Camas_Individuals.php or email: camas.bookings@iona.org.uk or ring: 01681 700404.

Sunday 10th May

Grant us, dear Lord, the serenity which comes from living close to you. Daily renew in us the sense of joy, filling every corner of our hearts with light and grace, so that, bearing with us the infection of a good courage, we may be diffusers of life and may meet all ills and cross-accidents with gallant and high-hearted happiness, giving you thanks always for all things.

Monday 11th May

In an industrial society we are heavily dependent on vast networks such as electrical grids, the food processing and supply network, the World Wide Web and transport hubs, all of them vulnerable to major failures, whether intentional or not. According to Keith Farnish: "Our lack of connection with the real world is a condition that has been created by the culture we live in. The various tools used to keep us disconnected from the real world are what make industrial society the destructive thing that it is."

"Local Resilience" is a key aim of the Transition Movement. Though it is hard to achieve, many towns have taken steps along the way. Some such as Lewes and Totnes even produce their own local currency which is helping to boost the local economy.

Tuesday 12th May

The Mayan civilisation in its heyday supported over half a million people, yet by the 8th century its great cities had cashed all their natural capital. The forests were cut, the fields were over-cultivated, the population was too high. The continuing building boom took more land and timber. The rulers could have invested in land reclamation, cut back on royal and military expenditure and encouraged birth control. Instead, they carried on doing what they had always done, only more so. They built higher pyramids, worked the masses harder, took more power themselves and fought more foreign wars. They squeezed the last drop of profit from nature and humanity. Must humankind always sacrifice its future on the altar of present gain and present comfort?

Wednesday 13th May

Does economic recovery necessarily have to involve ecological disaster?

The economies of nations and companies can only grow by taking something from somewhere else – either by increasing market share or by creating products from a finite resource such as oil, metal ore or ancient forests. The global economy can only grow by using additional resources taken from this finite planet. "Therefore" writes Keith Farnish, "it is obvious that economic growth is ultimately unsustainable. Yet we continue to be fobbed off with the message that we must have economic growth in order to develop as human beings. *Economic growth is the biggest lie that humanity has ever been sold, yet we are lapping it up because the lie is repeated day after day by every information source that we are subjected to.*"

Thursday 14th May

At the 2001 UNFCCC summit in Morocco, rich countries promised support for urgent action on adaptation to climate change, and asked 49 least-developed countries to draw up national plans outlining necessary measures. The plans so far drawn up would require \$1.6 billion to implement, but the international fund has just \$200 million available. Said Saleemul Huq of the International Institute for Environment and Development: "The rich countries can and must live up to their words and massively increase their funding to compensate the least-developed countries." Without such a commitment, the Copenhagen Conference (arguably the world's last chance of a global agreement on climate change) threatens to split the nations once again into rich and poor.

Friday 15th May

If we were all to follow the 4 Rs (Reduce, Repair, Reuse and Respect), the economy would indeed contract. For example, there would be less demand for consumer electronics, leisure goods and cosmetic home improvements. Instead, the essential economy (staple food, healthcare, utilities, education etc.) would benefit – all of them areas which directly affect our quality of life. Moreover, according to Keith Farnish, donation and barter are invisible activities as far as the economy is concerned, because they are of no value to a market economy, but they are perfect as tools for beginning a new way of life that doesn't require the exchange of cash or the needless production of goods.

Saturday 16th May

Operation Noah's AGM today from 11 to 3.30 at St. Mary's Church, Putney Bridge, is described as a day of inspiration and challenge. Speakers include Mark Dowd, ON campaign strategist, and Tasmin Osmond, who climbed the roof of Parliament to protest against a 3rd runway for Heathrow. For more information, email campaigns@operationnoah.org or ring 020 7324 4760.

Sunday 17th May

Father God, inspire, lift up and enlighten the fallen minds of mankind. Help us to assess wisely the benefits and risks of technology, that new technologies may never be directed to improper or evil ends. May we never plan on earth what we would not wish to admit to you in heaven. Let no neglect or blindness allow or threaten the destruction of this beautiful world.

This we ask in the name of your Son, who died to save us all.

Monday 18th May

Temperatures on the Antarctic Peninsula have risen by about 3°C. in the past 50 years – the fastest rate of warming in the southern hemisphere. Now an ice bridge supporting the huge Wilkins Ice Shelf has shattered, so allowing ocean currents to wash it away. This in turn would allow glaciers on land to slide more rapidly towards the sea, so contributing to a rise in sea levels.

Tuesday 19th May

WWF's director of global energy policy has slated the EU for claiming it will reduce European carbon emissions from 1990 levels by 20% by 2020. In fact the 8% reduction already achieved was due to de-industrialisation in ex-Soviet states. A further 7% cut is to be achieved via offsets in developing countries, using the UN Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), which often includes emission reductions that would have occurred even without the CDM. "The EU is pretending to do the 20% cut. That's cheating." By contrast, the US is now committed to stabilising emissions at 1990 levels by 2020: that involves a 19% cut from present levels. China too is committed to reducing its energy use per GDP by 20% by the end of next year and a further 20-30% by 2020. In addition, China has 14-16 pilot projects on coal gasification. Europe has just one. Even Brazil and Indonesia have ambitious targets for reducing emissions.

Wednesday 20th May

A joint report from the Economic & Social Research Council and the Technology Strategy Board adds to the voice of the House of