



Prayer guide for the care of creation

June 2010

"Then they (the disciples) returned to Jerusalem all were constantly devoting themselves to prayer together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers."
(Acts. 1.12 and 14)

"God pours his redemptive power into the world through the funnel of his people's prayers. The more that is made, the more power gets through. In some situations God does not move except in response to the prayers of his people."
(W.E. Sangster)

"Without prayer there is no power."
(Selwyn Hughes)



Tuesday 1st June

"Idolatry is about getting our values and priorities in their right order. If we put God first, then everything else falls into proper proportion. Idols today tend to be concepts, and one of the most damaging and life-denying concepts is that of economic growth." (Sam Norton speaking at the Scarborough CEL conference)

"What matters at this stage is the construction of local forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us." (Alistair MacIntyre in "After Virtue")

Wednesday 2nd June

David Cameron, the new Prime Minister, has committed all government departments to a 10% reduction in carbon emissions within 12 months. Chris Huhne, the Climate Change Secretary, said: "The benefits of the low-carbon economy are agreed between both parties in government. This is a priority agenda common to both manifestos." We pray for a common determination throughout government to make early and drastic cuts in greenhouse gas emissions throughout British society.

Thursday 3rd June

St. Silas church, Pentonville, London, has become the first solar-tiled church in Britain. The £380,000 project was funded by grants, charitable trusts and the sheer graft of parishioners who sponsored the roof tile by tile. Father Shaun Richards said: "I'm certain the idea will catch on, because we all have south-facing roofs, huge energy bills and a commitment to reduce our carbon footprint." The

tiles are expected to meet 47% of the church's energy requirements. The Diocese of London has a target of reducing carbon emissions by 20.12% by 2012.

Friday 4th June

Recycling of food waste to generate energy has been the practice of Harrow School for over a year. Staff load all food waste into a shredder which feeds the waste into bins provided by waste recycling firm PDM. The bins are collected each week. So far the recycled food has generated 1,250 kw. of power.

Saturday 5th June

"Conspiracy of Freedom" is the title of six regional events organised by Breathe in partnership with Tearfund, A Rocha and Stewardship, in order to kickstart a conversation up and down the country about simpler, more sustainable, more generous lifestyles. Elaine Storkey of Tearfund and Mark Powley of Breathe will open the discussions, which will close with a challenge to become a local changemaker. Events to come are:

Today at St. George's Centre, Leeds from 10 to 1.

June 7th at Holland Road Baptist Church, Brighton, at 7.30 pm.

June 10th at St. Aldate's, Oxford at 7.30 pm.

June 24th at the Barnabas Centre, Shrewsbury, at 7.30 pm.

July 12th at Oomoro Café, Smithdown Road, Liverpool 7.30.

For information & booking, go to:

www.breathenetwork.org/2010/04/05/conspiracy-of-freedom-here-goes/

Sunday 6th June

Father, help us to grasp the truth that without prayer there is no power. Help us to avoid the barrenness of busyness, and to find the fruitfulness that comes alone through prayer.

Monday 7th June.

According to former NASA scientist James Hansen “Coal emissions must be phased out as rapidly as possible, or global climate disasters will be a dead certainty” and “Energy efficiency is certainly an essential part of the solution to global warming, but it must be part of a strategic approach that leaves most fossil fuels in the ground.”

Tuesday 8th June

Hansen catalogues actions by governments that belie their public commitment to reductions in the use of fossil fuels:

1. They allow construction of new coal-fired plants
2. They allow construction of new plants that will produce oil from coal
3. They allow exploitation of tar sand deposits
4. They lease out remote areas for oil and gas exploration to search for the last drop of hydrocarbons
5. They allow highly destructive mountaintop removal in order to get as much coal as possible.

Wednesday 9th June

Given the imperative of phasing out coal emissions by 2030 and placing a prohibition on

the exploitation of tar sands, current reserves of oil and gas are by themselves enough to take emissions up to the maximum already agreed by governments. The problem according to Hansen is that governments, under the heavy hand of special interests, are not phasing out the coal-fired plants, which provide half America’s electricity and even more in India and China. Furthermore, if carbon capture and storage is the solution, who is going to pay for the increased operating costs and consequent rise in electricity bills?

Thursday 10th June

Hansen believes that energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy should be the top priority everywhere. But these two “solutions” will not be enough to solve the climate problem. He suggests that we take another look at fast nuclear reactors, which produce far less waste than current reactors, nor can their waste be used to make explosive weapons. Development of fast reactors in the USA was halted in 1994. Hansen believes it should be re-started.

Friday 11th June

Hansen’s main proposal for reducing carbon emissions he calls “fee-and-dividend”.

1. An annually rising fee is collected at the coal mine, oil well or port of entry for every ton of coal, oil and gas produced.
2. All the fees collected are distributed equally to every adult, with half shares to children.
3. People with a low carbon footprint will be the winners, while all others will have a big incentive to reduce theirs.

This system, unlike cap-and-trade, does not require a large bureaucracy, nor is there any leakage to market traders.

Does it work? In 2008 the government of British Columbia adopted a carbon tax with a payroll tax reduction. In the following election, the opposition campaigned against it and lost. Now both parties support it. It works.

Saturday 12th June

Israel's President Shimon Peres has opened the world's biggest reverse-osmosis desalination plant, which will supply 20% of Israel's domestic water consumption. The \$463 million Hadera plant will remove salt from the water by applying pressure on one side of a selective membrane. It will supply water at a cost of \$0.57 per cubic metre and will use 450 GW. of electricity a year.

Sunday 13th June

Father, we sometimes feel overwhelmed by the scale and complication of the environmental problems we face. Help us to see how we may respond in our daily lives, and help us to understand that where we lead, others will surely follow.

Monday 14th June

UK schools account for 9.25 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions a year, but the Government has set a target for all new schools to be zero carbon by 2018. Ashley Primary School in Surrey won an Ashden Award in 2009 for cutting its electricity by more than half. The children are responsible for monitoring energy use, and the solutions include a biomass boiler, solar thermal heating, PV lighting and low-watt laptops.

The consultancy C-Change pairs up businesses with local secondary schools on initiatives such as energy workshops, audits and low-carbon initiatives. www.c-changesc.org

Tuesday 15th June

How can energy companies be persuaded to sell less electricity and more energy-saving services?

In California, an energy commission sets a revenue target for utilities, to cover both costs and an approved profit rate. It estimates how much energy the utility will sell and then sets an energy price at the right level for its revenue target. If the utility overshoots its target, the surplus is returned to consumers. If it undershoots, the rates are increased to make up the difference. This system breaks the link between production and revenue, making utilities indifferent to sales. As a result, California's energy consumption has dropped while that of most US states has risen.

Wednesday 16th June

Today the All Party Parliamentary Climate Change Group meets in Westminster to celebrate the launch of the Centre for Alternative Technology's Zero Carbon Britain 2030 report, an update on the original ZCB report produced in 2008. It marks a significant step towards a national plan to steer Britain into the position of world leader on carbon reduction, involving the re-skilling of Britain, the creation of green jobs and investment in a low carbon economy. The report provides a unifying vision for Britain and an equitable pathway to solving the climate crisis, while preparing us for the vicissitudes of peak oil.

Thursday 17th June

The world's largest wave energy test will begin this summer off the Cornish coast. The £42 million Wave Hub will have an initial generating capacity of 20 MW. (enough for 7,000 homes) but can be scaled up to 50 MW. A 1,300 tonne cable will connect the Wave Hub to the onshore national grid. An independent study for the South West Development Agency calculates that the Wave Hub will create 1,800 jobs and inject £560 million into the UK economy over 25 years.

Friday 18th June

Europe's growing electricity demands have led to ten northern European countries including Britain to sign a Memorandum of Understanding later this year to bring forward an Offshore Grid Initiative to link these countries with high-voltage direct current (HVDC) cables. The project, costing up to 30 billion euros, will balance a drop in wind power in one place with high production elsewhere, minimising concerns about the intermittency of wind and widening the range of HVDC systems which, it is hoped, will one day bring desert-sourced solar power to northern Europe.

Saturday 19th June

85-year old Belgian priest Francois Houtart in his new book "Agrofuels: Big Profits, Ruined Lives" catalogues the ecological destruction caused the monoculture of crops grown for fuel: massive deforestation, soil degradation, water contamination and dire social consequences through concentration of land ownership and the eviction of rural populations from their land. Oil companies, automobile, chemical and

pharmaceutical companies are all leaders in agrofuel investment, showing little concern for the damage to the environment and the resulting destitution of people while they walk away with high profits. For the multinationals, the negative effects of their investments are just 'externalities' and do not enter into their economic calculations.

Sunday 20th June

Lord, we know that while we in our country have an abundance of good things, much of the world is in terrible want. Give us the courage to face these things and to think more deeply about them. May thought lead to action in whatever way is in our power; for the sake of Jesus, whose compassion for the poor sets us an example we cannot ignore. Amen.

(Frank Colquhoun)

Monday 21st June

Simon Reeve, presenter of the BBC series "Tropic of Cancer" reports on the plague of plastic that is the price we pay for our throwaway society. Most of the plastic ever created is still out there in the environment. An estimated 600,000 plastic containers a day are dumped overboard by ships. Plastics choke and kill at least a million seabirds every year. DDT and PCBs stick to plastics. Polluted fragments are so small that they are gobbled up by the fish that end up on our plates. The Pacific Garbage Patch is twice the size of France and doubles every decade. At stake is the future of our seas, our food and ourselves.

Tuesday 22nd June

The All Party Parliamentary Sustainable Resource Group in a recent report has called for annual discounts on energy and utility bills for communities that accept new local waste and recycling facilities. The landfill tax, currently £40 a tonne, will rise to £72 in 2013. EU legislation requires Britain to reduce by 2020 the amount of waste sent to landfill to just 35% of 1995 levels. This will require up to 500 new waste management plants at a cost of £9-11 billion. The report identifies a lack of innovation over engaging local communities, in contrast to much of Europe, where residents are used to receiving cheaper energy as a result of siting new waste facilities in their area. In addition, the report recommended that local authorities be allowed to run energy service companies themselves, in order to distribute locally-produced energy at a reduced cost to residents. The town of Lewes already runs its own Energy Services Company (ESCO).

Wednesday 23rd June

Thousands of car windscreens are scrapped every year. Now an entrepreneur, Sebastian Ramirez, makes greenhouses using overlapping car windscreens to make the structures watertight and to allow heating by solar convection. Eastex Materials Exchange allows organisations such as John Lewis and HM Prison Service to sell or give away for recycling anything from trouser presses to pheasant feathers to waste fuel. Kim Colly, Eastex co-ordinator at Peterborough Environmental City Trust, comments: "People are keen and able to commit to more sustainable technologies. The difficulty is in letting them know of the channels to help them do so."

Thursday 24th June

One teaspoon of healthy soil contains 100 million bacteria, 2,000 protozoa, 50 nematodes and a huge amount of fungal mycelium. Humus is what remains after microbes have decomposed. It improves soil structure and permeability, it can hold 10 times its weight in water, it reduces fluctuations in soil pH and it increases the soil's productivity. 60 years ago John Steinbeck's novel "The Grapes of Wrath" graphically described the devastation wrought by exhausted soils. In the same year Sir Alfred Howard's "An Agricultural Testament" pointed up the way to replenish the soil's vitality through increasing its humus content. Those lessons still have not been learnt.

Friday 25th June

Soils are major stores of carbon. They hold 3 times as much carbon as the atmosphere and 5 times as much as forests. A Soil Association report "Soil Carbon & Organic Farming" finds that organic farming results in 28% more soil carbon per hectare than non-organic farming in northern Europe and could increase the UK's arable soil carbon store by nearly 110 million tonnes over 20 years, offsetting at least 23% of the UK's agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. The increased carbon levels are due to the fact that inputs are based on fresh organic matter – grass, legumes, root systems, farmyard manure and compost – which, when broken down, produces humus. Chemical and inorganic inputs fail to achieve this.

Saturday 26th June

Most people agree that we need to eat less meat. What is not so clear is the distinction between “good meat” and “bad meat”.

Soya production is a major cause of forest destruction overseas and 90% of EU soya imports go into intensive pork and poultry production,

By contrast, grass-reared beef, lamb and mutton have an important role in building soil fertility in the absence of fossil fuel-based fertilisers, and as such should have a part (albeit a smaller part) in our diet. Cattle on a mixed farm would release methane, as they always have done, but arable land converted to pasture for cattle can store nearly 60% more CO₂ than would be released by the equivalent amount of methane.

Sunday 27th June

Father, we pray for the scientists responsible for research into ways of reducing our carbon footprint, and for the politicians who are responsible for converting their recommendations into legislation. Grant them honesty, integrity and deep perception of the long-term effects of their actions, so that short-term economics are not allowed to weigh their decisions when so much hangs on policies that will effect coming generations for years to come.

Monday 28th June

A new, highly infectious disease is attacking our native oaks, so far in 55 locations from the Midlands southwards. Called Acute Oak Decline, it attacks healthy, mature trees causing multiple longitudinal splits in the bark that ooze a dark fluid. Some of the affected trees have died. For the latest news, visit:

www.forestresearch.gov.uk/oakdecline

Tuesday 29th June

Food security is heavily dependent on the distribution of population. Population density in England is about 5 people for every 2 hectares – BUT nearly 80% of them live in urban areas. The peri-urban food zone of London alone covers much of the Midlands and Southern England. Cuba’s capital, Havana, has tackled the problem with urban gardens and allotments. Recent planning guidance from the UK government authorises smaller allotments and the use of vacant land by local authorities. But will this be enough? We need detailed studies of land use in peri-urban areas, including the availability of water.

Wednesday 30th June

If, as some suggest, our farms in future can no longer rely on inputs from fossil fuels, pesticides and mineral fertilisers, what would be their maximum sustainable yield?

The Zero C Farm Challenge is being addressed at Commonwork’s organic farm in Kent, where a nine-point Zero Fossil Energy Farming plan is being steadily implemented.

- All farm vehicles now run on biodiesel processed in an onsite biodiesel plant, using waste chip fat oil collected locally.
- An 85 kW woodchip boiler using locally-coppiced timber now provides all the hot water and heats the study centre.
- Further plans include setting up a web-based local food network and building a demonstration eco-home for study centre users.

For more information, email:

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or ring 01732

463255 ext. 12.

Website: www.commonwork.org/zfef.htm

Sources:

Broadleaf (Woodland Trust)
The Dendrologist
Green Futures
Living Earth (Soil Association)
Resurgence
"Storms of my Grandchildren" by
James Hansen
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by [email](#) (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Picture on front cover: Apple Blossom, Malus 'Lord Lambourne' by Steve Atherton from his allotment

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