
Prayer guide for the care of creation



February 2011

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

(Isaiah 55.9-11)

“We can say today that man is far too clever to be able to survive without wisdom . . . Now that we have become very successful (in science and technology) the problem of spiritual and moral truth moves into the central position.”

(E.F. Schumacher)



Tuesday 1st February

BP and the Russian state-owned company Rosneft have signed a far-reaching partnership to develop oil resources in the Arctic, ignoring scientific evidence of the potential for disaster in such a challenging environment. Big oil has decided to drive forward our oil consumption despite the obvious risks to the global climate and to the environment. If that means supporting the motor industry in procrastinating over the introduction of more efficient vehicles, so be it. If it means pressing governments for fossil fuel subsidies, they will do it. If it means expanding airports and keeping aviation fuel tax-free, they will make sure it happens. However, recent figures show that more graduates are choosing jobs in renewables than in a declining oil industry. As the chorus for a green future gets louder, the oil majors redouble their efforts to chase the oil deposits in ever riskier places – in deep water, tar sands and now the Arctic.

Wednesday 2nd February

The Green Energy Training Centre (GETC) in Wirral opened last November and has begun training courses for installers of microgeneration such as solar PV, solar thermal and heat pumps. The £280,000 GETC project is a partnership between renewable energy manufacturer Stiebel Eltron, training provider Scientiam and the Skills Funding Agency. Stiebel managing director Mark McManus said: "By 2016 all new homes must be carbon neutral, so there is massive pressure on the construction industry to ramp up its expertise in green energy. But there is carrot as well as stick. Green energy provides a real commercial opportunity for properly-trained installers."

Thursday 3rd February

Household Energy Services in Shropshire has a team of 50 trained volunteers who provide an

independent free home energy survey for homeowners across the Welsh Marches considering renewable energy options. As winners of the Big Green Challenge 2010 HES also advises farmers on ways of reducing their carbon footprint. www.h-e-s.org

Friday 4th February

In a report commissioned by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Peak Oil, the Lean Economy Connection paints a bleak picture of fuel and energy shortages and advocates a rationing system called Tradable Energy Quotas (TEQs) which gives every citizen a set number of vouchers which they give up whenever they buy fuel or energy. In addition, people can buy extra vouchers and sell any which they do not need. Caroline Lucas MP said: "The TEQs scheme would guarantee that the UK's targeted carbon reductions are actually achieved, while ensuring fair shares of available energy."

John Hemming MP added: "What is needed is an intelligent response both to climate change and to fuel depletion. The model set out in this report addresses both sides of the problem. It is the first coherent proposal to do this and it merits close attention."

Saturday 5th February

"Green Doctors" offers home visits and advice in target areas around the country on how to make homes more environmentally friendly and cheaper to run. They aim to reduce fuel poverty in the most vulnerable households. Their workshops are available for groups of tenants and residents. Their teams undertake large-scale contracts with housing associations and groups of homes. (www.groundwork.org.uk)

Sunday 6th February

Lord, you know the obstacles your people face in adapting lifestyles to the new imperative of sustainable living. Support the trailblazers, we

pray – those who are committed to change, and can lead us towards a better way of living. Help us all to set our sights on zero-carbon living by 2030 and to work together to achieve that goal.

Monday 7th February

Carbon offsets have been compared to the sale of indulgences in the Middle Ages – buying our way out of carbon reductions without necessarily making any reductions ourselves. Jonathon Porritt asks: “When you’ve done all you can to reduce your own carbon footprint, what are you going to do about the rest? Ignore it, or deal with it by finding the best carbon offset scheme on the market?” Three essentials apply to such schemes:

1. **Additionality:** If the project to be funded would have happened anyway, it cannot be said to offset carbon emissions.
2. **Leakage:** If the project leads to higher emissions elsewhere (e.g shifting the pollution somewhere else) it is not offsetting any carbon emissions.
3. **Permanence:** If a forest is likely to be felled or destroyed within a few years, it cannot be a valid investment to offset carbon emissions.

Schemes with a sound track record include A Rocha’s Climate Stewards (<http://www.arocha.org/gb-en>), Climate Care and the Carbon Neutral Company.

Tuesday 8th February

The carbon footprint of the shipping industry is larger than Germany’s and much larger than that of aviation. 1 in 30 tonnes of CO₂ generated by human activity comes from ships, and the growth in shipping looks set to continue as global population and living standards continue to rise. The Carbon War Room has established a database for the fuel efficiency of ships and the results are available for charterers, ship insurers and port authorities. Most ship owners

don’t pay the fuel costs, so have little interest in fuel efficiency. The Carbon War Room is working with investors to provide the \$3 million cost of air lubrication systems, in return for a share of the fuel savings that would result.

Wednesday 9th February

Ed Gillespie of Futerra Sustainability recalls a 45-day round the world trip travelling only by cargo ships. The carbon footprint of a passenger on a container ship can be about 1/300ths of someone taking a comparable flight. But shipping companies are reluctant to include passengers on cargo ships because of heightened port security, complicated bureaucracy and the wish to minimise hassle. Ed pins his hopes on a revival of the commercial airship, which should be 90% more carbon efficient than conventional aircraft, making an Atlantic crossing in 48 hours – slower than by aircraft but faster than a ship – without the risk of deep-vein thrombosis or seasickness.

Thursday 10th February

Transition Streets, a project of Transition Town Totnes, is a street-by-street approach to energy efficiency, community building and domestic micro-generation, supported by a £625,000 grant from the Government’s Low Carbon Communities Challenge. So far 35 solar PV systems have been installed, generating 9634 kWh and earning their owners £4,682 under the government’s Feed-In Tariff. www.transitionstreets.org.uk

Friday 11th February

Collecting firewood in rural Africa becomes ever more difficult as forests are destroyed. Peter Irungu Mwathi, an agricultural economist in Kenya, has invented a simple solar concentrator using mirrors which reflect the sun’s heat onto a container, so heating the contents. This can be used to heat water, sterilise the soil for seed-

sowing or to roast nuts or coffee beans. Global Village Energy Partnerships supports small enterprises in the energy sector. Many small wind turbines are springing up in rural Kenya thanks to help from GVEP with the initial investment.

Saturday 12th February

The John Ray Initiative has arranged today's Environment Day at Redcliffe College, Gloucester, on "Energising the Future". Speakers include Andy Brown of Progressive Energy asking "Can Coal be Clean?", John Twidell on "Renewable Energy – practical and moral outcomes", Ian Hore-Lacy on Nuclear Energy and Brendan Bowles, director of Climate Stewards, asking "Can developing countries model low-carbon prosperity?" Booking forms are available at:

www.redcliffe.org/environmentconference2011

Sunday 13th February

"Dear Lord, our heavenly Father,
In a world of darkness, give us your light;
In lands of war and prejudice, grant us your peace;
In a world of despair, give us hope;
In a world of sadness and tears, show us your joy;
In a world of hatred, show us your love;
In a world of arrogance, give us humility;
In a world of disbelief, give us faith.
Give us the courage to face the challenges of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, housing the homeless and healing the sick.
Give us the power to make a difference in your world, and to protect your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."
(Anna Crompton aged 14)

Monday 14th February

A report from the Institute of Mechanical Engineers called "Population: one planet, too many people?" says that the projected extra 2.5

billion people by 2200 will 'crush the earth's resources'. Energy, food, water, urbanisation and finance will be significantly affected, while climate change could displace up to 1 billion people, putting further pressure on urban areas. Among the engineering solutions suggested are:

- Using existing sustainable energy technologies rather than waiting for new ones to be developed
- Replenishing groundwater resources
- Improving the storage of excess water
- Increasing the energy efficiency of desalination.

The report calls for the Government to set up a knowledge 'swap-shop' of engineering skills with other countries.

Tuesday 15th February

At the Cancun conference, Optimum Population Trust called on delegates to make family planning and family self-restraint an explicit part of their strategy for combating climate change. Research has repeatedly shown that investing in education and empowerment and in family planning services to enable couples to avoid unintended births is a cost-effective complement to conventional approaches to tackling climate change. As a UNICEF report has said: "Family planning could bring more benefits to more people at less cost than any other technology."

Wednesday 16th February

Funding for the London Development Agency's work in tackling climate change is likely to dry up with the imminent abolition of the LDA. The London Assembly has called for transitional funding from the government so that existing initiatives can be preserved and projects transferred to the Greater London Authority. Members urged the Mayor to make it clear in his budget that tackling climate change remains his top priority.

Thursday 17th February

Caroline Spelman, the Environment Secretary, has said: "The global cost of one year's worth of deforestation is estimated at £1-3 trillion, and in the long term our natural capital is just as important as our human and financial capital."

Nick Reeves, CIWEM director, comments:

"Extinction is as natural a process as evolution, but we are unthinkingly obliterating the planet's species at least 1,000 times faster than normal – unthinking because obliteration is accompanied by massive ignorance, even denial. This calls for serious science, serious action and serious money. But the word from Whitehall is that scientific research which is not commercially useful is at risk. It will require huge political will to put in place the structures to ensure that biodiversity is recognised to be more valuable alive than extinct. And it will require a new economic model based on nature, nurture and replenishment."

Friday 18th February

This weekend A Rocha UK celebrates its 10th anniversary at the King's Park Conference Centre, Nottingham NN3 6LL. Dave Bookless and Peter Harris will lead the celebration and CEO Steve Hughes will guide discussions about the future. There will be a chance to visit local nature reserves. Cost: £120 including full board. For details email: margaret.young@arocha.org or ring 020 8574 5935.

Saturday 19th February

Europe's largest ground-source heat pump has been opened at the One New Change shopping centre near St. Paul's Cathedral. The owners, Land Securities, claim that 15-20% of the centre's energy needs can be delivered by the heat pump, so saving the business £300,000 a year. Details of the carbon footprint of the new shopping centre have not been revealed.

Sunday 20th February

Look mercifully, dear Lord, upon your world and forgive us for the harm we have done to your creation. Save the nations from the lust for money and power, from hatred and jealousy, and from the worship of material things. Grant that justice may triumph over oppression and that people everywhere may learn to serve you in the peace and freedom of your Kingdom. Amen.

Monday 21st February

The National Energy Foundation (NEF) is an independent body that offers:

- Technical expertise for business
- Community programmes that change the way people source and use energy
- Sustainable energy training courses
- Helping government and local authorities to deliver a low carbon economy
- Information about renewable energy and saving energy with tools to help people move to a low carbon lifestyle.

Website: www.nef.org.uk

Tuesday 22nd February

NEF Communities Fund offers financial packages to help communities save energy and implement large-scale sustainable energy projects. By joining in large projects, people can achieve greater savings than by acting alone. NEF can pay for technical experts to prepare feasibility studies, planning applications and business plans as well as raising funding for the capital equipment. The village of Hook Norton in Oxfordshire is an example of what can be achieved.

Website: www.hn-lc.org.uk

Wednesday 23rd February

NEF is partnering the Sustainable Energy Academy (SEA) in delivering its Old Home

SuperHome project which aims to transform the energy efficiency of our existing housing stock, so reducing UK carbon emissions by 60%. The project won a prestigious 2009 Ashden Award. Sarah Harrison, owner of a SuperHome in Camden, London, said: "I've made 82% carbon savings to my Victorian house, and now I've helped hundreds of people renovate their homes through having my home open, something I would never have done without SEA. The great thing is that they help to organise the publicity and make sure people turn up on the day you have the house open."

Thursday 24th February

"Local United" is an NEF project set up, with support from NESTA, to help community activists set up social enterprises to address the challenges of peak oil and climate change. It aims to speed up the rate at which good ideas are adopted by community groups motivated to build low carbon economies. For further information, email: communities@nef.org.uk

Friday 25th February

A report from the GMB union, the public services union, surveys 357 local councils and ranks them according to their rate of re-use, recycling or composting. Top of the league comes Staffordshire Moorlands with 61.8% of household waste being re-used, recycled or composted. The Landfill Tax, currently £48 per tonne, will rise to £80 per tonne by 2014. £1 billion a year is now charged to households through the council tax, rising to £1.7 billion by 2014. "Unless councils make a concerted effort to improve recycling rates, the landfill tax is set to rise to about £670 million a year, taking the total cost of landfill to over £3 billion a year."

Saturday 25th February

Aberdeenshire currently produces 150,000 tonnes of waste a year, of which 50,000 is sent for recycling. SITA UK is planning a £60 million waste treatment plant to include a biological treatment facility, in-vessel composting and a gasification plant. The project will create 35 permanent jobs and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill by 70%. SITA plans to consult the community to address possible concerns about pollution.

Sunday 27th February

Give us, loving Father, the wisdom so to deal with the things we possess that they may never possess us. Deliver us from faithlessness and fear, and guide our thoughts and actions into the ways of justice and peace, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Monday 28th February

The new Localism Bill will establish Neighbourhood Plans, so giving extra powers to local communities, but contains nothing to support sustainable development nor to facilitate strategic planning for wider environmental objectives. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy is "to enable all people to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life *without compromising the quality of life of future generations*" (editor's italics). There is nothing in the Localism Bill to suggest that future generations need to be considered at all. Some overall guidance is needed to ensure that local communities do not ignore the needs of future generations.

Sources:

Green Futures
CIWEM Business Briefing
www.edie.net

Future event:

“Ending the Age of Thorns: Surviving Consumerism” is the title of a CEL gathering at St. John’s Church opposite Waterloo Station, London, on **Saturday March 5th from 11 to 5**. Peter Owen Jones, presenter of the BBC’s “How to live a simple life” and “Extreme Pilgrim” will open the day with Tim Cooper, Professor of Sustainable Design and Consumption at Nottingham Trent University. There will be workshops on Green Economics, Shopping as if the planet mattered, and Greening the Church in daily life. Cost £20 (£15 for CEL members). To book a place, ring 0845 459 8460 or email: bookings@christian-ecology.org.uk

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by email (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
Website:
www.christian-ecology.org.uk

Picture on front cover: Camelia in bud by Poppy Pickard

Christian Ecology Link Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales. Administrative Office:
10, Beech Hall Road,
Highams Park, London, E4 9NX
Company Registration No. 2445198
Registered Charity No. 328744.
tel: +44 (0) 845 4598460
info@christian-ecology.org.uk