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Picture on front cover: Blackthorn at Roding Valley by Poppy Pickard.

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

May 2011



“God saw everything that he made and, behold, it was very good”.
(Genesis 1.31)

“The Lord answered Job out of the storm and said: ‘Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge . . . ? Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundations? Tell me if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone – while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?’
(Job 38.1-7)

“The world made specially for the uses of man? Certainly not. No dogma taught by the present civilisation forms so inoperable an obstacle to a right understanding of the relations which human culture sustains to wildness. Yet it is taught from century to century as something ever new and precious, and in the resulting darkness the enormous conceit is allowed to go unchallenged.”
(John Muir)



Sunday 1st May

Entrusted with an earthy home
Our minds did not create or build,
We live as visitors and guests
Until our years have been fulfilled.

Through centuries, without concern
For all the grandeur and the grace,
We've taken beauty from the earth,
And left it poor – a barren place.

Our carelessness has clogged the
streams,
Which once were clear and sparkling
strands,
Our industries have blacked the skies
And left a smog on all our lands.

O God, we've been ungrateful guests
Upon this earth, which you designed;
Within our time, help us restore
Our blighted world for all mankind.
(Jean Carriott)

Monday 2nd May

The latest UN climate talks in Bangkok
have ended with rich countries
declining to pledge firm emission
reductions targets, while Russia and
Japan have withdrawn altogether from
the Kyoto process. Proposals on the
table would allow developed countries
which have emitted most of the
greenhouse gases to take on just 35%

of emission cuts while developing
countries would be responsible for the
remaining 65%. FoE calculates that
current pledges of emission reductions
would result in global warming of up to
5^o C. – an outcome which would result
in billions of people losing their homes
and livelihoods.

Tuesday 3rd May

The latest UK government figures for
2010 show a 2.8% rise in greenhouse
gas emissions and a 3.8% rise in
carbon emissions. The US Pew
Environment Group reveals that the
UK's global place in terms of green
investment has slumped from 3rd to
13th despite our huge resources of
wind, wave and solar energy. FoE
comments: "The Government has
repeatedly promised to build a low-
carbon economy to tackle climate
change and insulate us from
fluctuating fuel prices, but the
Treasury refuses to lay the
foundations or pay for the bricks."

Wednesday 4th May

Many businesses believe they are
doing their bit by paying for carbon
offsets, which help to finance low-
carbon developments overseas. But of
the FTSE 100 companies reporting
their offsets, just 0.1% of their

and quickest ways to fight dangerous
climate change.

Tuesday 31st May

The proposed route of the new High
Speed rail link from London to
Birmingham would split apart over 50
ancient woodlands and damage ten
Sites of Special Scientific Interest,
fragmenting populations of butterflies,
bats and birds. The Wildlife Trusts are
calling on the Government to look at
all other reasonable options that could
increase the capacity of rail travel from
London northwards. The public
consultation ends in July.

For more information visit:
www.wildlifetrusts.org/HS2 and
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Sources:

CIWEM Business Briefing
Resurgence
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

the science is there to give us a platform. No longer will it be possible to set questions of outdoor space in planning to one side in a box labelled 'green issues'. No longer can outdoor learning be a minority concern in education, an occasional indulgence at the edge of learning. No longer can health strategies focus myopically on pharmaceutical treatment, to the exclusion of natural prevention. These things must move to the centre. Nature must take its rightful place at the heart of our thinking."

Saturday 28th May

The social enterprise Giveacar, founded last year by Tom Chance, arranges for the scrapping of old and unwanted cars and donates the proceeds to charitable causes. Giveacar is supported by 250 charities and has made donations exceeding £250,000. Part of the Big Society initiative is to empower the public to take a bigger part in the provision of local services.

Will social entrepreneurs like Tom Chance step into the void created by reductions in local services in order to soften the blow of diminished public services? If a new generation of social entrepreneurs create the jobs and generate the growth needed for

economic recovery, perhaps the Big Society will prove to be a society of opportunity.

Sunday 29th May

Father, help us to understand that we and all your creation depend on you and on one another. Teach us how to be good stewards of all that you have given us to tend, and help us to banish from thought and action all greed, selfishness and short-term thinking.

Monday 30th May

New research by the Chartered Institute for Environmental Health finds that care for people made ill by living in cold rented homes costs the NHS £145 million a year. 655,800 rented homes in England are so cold that they are officially a health hazard. More than thirty-five organisations are calling for the new Energy Bill to make it an offence for landlords to re-let the coldest properties until they are improved to a basic standard of energy efficiency, with powers for local authorities to step in to ensure that landlords make the necessary improvements, and to protect tenants from eviction who lodge complaints on health grounds. Stopping inefficient homes from leaking heat is one of the cheapest

emissions are currently offset elsewhere. The financial sector leads the way, with more than 61% of companies offsetting at least part of their emissions. In the IT, healthcare and telecommunications sectors there has been no offsetting at all. "If the FTSE 100 are to reduce their collective environmental impact, then offsetting, as well as ambitious emission reductions, must play a more substantial role."

Thursday 5th May

According to the International Energy Agency, 47% of new electricity demand in the past years has been for coal, the most polluting of fossil fuels. "Despite countries' best efforts, the world is coming ever closer to missing targets that we believe are essential for meeting the goal agreed at Cancun to limit the growth in global average temperatures to less than 2° C. A number of countries have shown that achieving rapid transition to cleaner technologies is possible, and can be done from the bottom up. We must see more ambitious, effective policies that respond to market signals while providing long-term predictable support."

Friday 6th May

A report from Cornell University on the greenhouse gas footprint of extracting shale gas has found that:

- The footprint of shale gas is significantly larger than that from conventional gas
- The footprint of shale gas is at least 20% greater than and perhaps more than twice as great as that from coal
- The footprint of shale gas approaches or exceeds coal even when used to generate electricity.

WWF comments: "If the Government is serious about tackling climate change, we need to reject this source of gas, have a clear plan to move away from our dependency on fossil fuels and harness the full potential of renewable technologies."

Saturday 7th May

A report from the US Democrat Energy & Commerce committee contains a list of more than 750 chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process employed to extract shale gas. These include toxic substances such as benzene, methanol and lead as well as known or suspected carcinogens. "Of particular concern is that we learned

that over the 4-year period studied, over 1.5 million gallons of carcinogens were injected into the ground in Colorado. Many companies were unable even to identify some of the chemicals they were using, so underscoring that voluntary disclosure is not enough to ensure that the economic benefits of gas production do not come at the cost of our families' health."

Sunday 8th May

"The idea that we live in something called the environment is utterly preposterous . . . Environment means that which surrounds us – a world separate from ourselves, outside us. But the world that environs us, that is around us, is also within us. We are made of it, we eat, drink and breathe it; it is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." (Wendell Berry)

Father, help us to understand that we and all your creation depend on you and on one another. Teach us how to be good stewards of all that you have given us to care for, and help us to banish from our actions all greed, selfishness and short-term thinking.

Monday 9th May

According to Nick Reeves, director of CIWEM, our attention has been too

taken up with the threat of peak oil and depleting fossil fuels, and we have been ignoring the far more serious threat of peak water.

"Unless radical changes are made, soon, we will run out of water first. The number of people (around 1 billion) without access to clean water will escalate, heralding an unprecedented humanitarian and ecological disaster. Water-wars are not just a real possibility – they are happening now."

Tuesday 10th May

Reports from the OECD and World Bank have suggested setting a better price for water. South Africa's introduction of a household monthly allowance via its free basic water subsidy allows for essential sanitation, cooking and drinking water, while charging the full cost of the infrastructure for non-essential use, so recognising that not all water use should be regarded as equal. "While it is a basic human right to have access to subsidised or free water for hygiene and hydration, why should filling a swimming pool or washing your car or watering a lawn be priced in exactly the same way?"

growth and global carrying capacity, held today and tomorrow at The Mermaid Conference Centre, Blackfriars, London EC4V 3DB. The 300 confirmed speakers include leading academics, NGOs and government agencies. Sessions will address:

- The likely causes and effects of northern and southern migration
- The most appropriate public policy responses to changes in population dynamics and common ground for dialogue
- The most important determinants of population growth and how to prepare for it
- How paradigms of gender and sexual rights should be developed to meet the challenges
- The implications of different global patterns of ageing
- The fair and sustainable level of carbon emission for each person.

To register, go to:

www.populationfootprints.org

Fees: £120 or £40 for students.

Thursday 26th May

A NASA study published in *Nature Climate Change* highlights the effects of black carbon and ozone emissions from vehicles. Ozone damages crops

and aggravates the asthma which afflicts 5 million Britons at a cost of £2.3 billion a year. Black carbon accounts for more than 1.6 million deaths annually and, together with methane, causes as much climate change as carbon dioxide, but is easier to tackle. Bringing new cars in developing countries up to EU emission standards would within 15 years prevent 200,000 deaths, allow an extra 13 million tons of grain to be grown and save \$1.5 trillion in health costs each year.

A UNEP report says that further cleaning of car emissions and introducing more efficient stoves in developing countries would save 2.4 million lives and 52 million tons of grain a year. It would also delay the onset of dangerous climate change by 3-6 decades.

Friday 27th May

Octavia Hill, founder of the National Trust, once said: "The need of quiet, the need of air, the need of exercise, the sight of sky and things growing, seem human needs, common to all men."

Fiona Reynolds, its Director-General, comments: "The time is ripe for a reassessment of the role of the natural environment in our national life, and

Sunday 22nd 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. Amen.

(The Book of Common Prayer)

Monday 23rd May

Beverage cartons such as Tetra Paks can already be taken to recycling centres, but a third of local authorities now provide a kerbside collection. The cartons are recycled using a pulping process where the paperboard and non-fibre layers are separated and turned into new materials. The wood fibres are used to produce high-strength paper products such as envelopes and carrier bags, while the polymer and foil layers can be recycled or used for energy recovery. One has to ask whether beverage cartons might be re-designed for simpler recycling.

Tuesday 24th May

The economic fallout from the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan, with the prospect of an increased cost of insurance and extra safety measures, is making investors think long and hard about the wisdom of embarking on new nuclear plants in Britain.

But what is the alternative? If we build coal-fired plants without as yet unproven CCS technology, we will be forced to pay a carbon premium and possibly have to close the plants down under European law. If we embark on another “dash for gas”, we risk dependence on unstable foreign governments for our supplies. If we embark on a massive campaign to insulate Britain’s notoriously inefficient homes, we could halve the shortfall in energy supply at a fraction of the cost involved in building new capacity.

Finally, we have yet to make full use of our own indigenous energy sources – wind, waves and solar. Investment in training is crucial to success in this field.

Wednesday 25th May

“Population footprints” is the title of a 2-day UCL-Leverhulme Trust symposium on human population

Wednesday 11th May

Farming takes up 70% of global water usage. With little sign of action to stem population growth and consumption, improving agricultural productivity is fundamental in addressing water shortages and increasing crop yields. “Measures such as no-tillage farming, improved drainage, drip and sprinkler irrigation and crop yield enhancement can all increase output, many of them at low cost.”

Thursday 12th May

According to CIWEM, a rise in water prices for non-essential use would improve agricultural efficiency. An OECD report highlights the example of Australia, where an increase in the price of water led to the halving of irrigation and water use without any loss of output. “Water should have an adequate price for commercial use, but different principles apply where water is used to maintain health and well-being and for environmental benefits.”

Friday 13th May

Farming is one of the few important professions which anyone can practice without formal training qualifications. CIWEM believes that ways must be found to help farmers

improve their water efficiency by means of training, technical help or assistance through microfinance. “The industry uses twice as much water as households, and often in a less efficient way.”

Saturday 14th May

“Tomorrow’s Water”, CIWEM’s annual Youth Water Prize aims to inspire and challenge young people to take an active role in solving water and environmental problems. The competition is open to teams of up to three, aged 15-20. The finalist with the best project is awarded £300 and an expenses-paid trip to Stockholm to compete for the \$5,000 Junior Water Prize. For more information visit:

www.tomorrowwater.co.uk

Sunday 15th May

Father, we pray for farmers and others who are striving to make a living from the land. Help us all to find means to support and encourage all of them who are desperately searching for ways of managing their land sustainably and economically.

Monday 16th May

Around one-third of households in England and Wales now have a water

meter, projected to rise to 50% by 2015 and 80% by 2030. However, there is no Government strategy to encourage a faster take-up. The Fairness on Tap coalition believes that the present system means that poorer households without a water meter are subsidising the more affluent to the tune of £400 million a year. "Water metering has benefits for consumers, water companies and the environment, helping to deliver water savings of 10-15%. But meters are only part of the solution: they must be supported by a package of tariffs which ensure that those who need help paying for water get that help and provide incentives to reduce waste, as well as advice, information and equipment to help households save water."

Tuesday 17th May

85-year old Anthony Smith, a former presenter of "Tomorrow's World", with a three-man crew aged 56-61, has completed a 3,000 mile crossing of the Atlantic on a raft made of polyethylene pipes and a pig shelter, so raising about £50,000 for the charity WaterAid. The voyage took them 66 days through bad weather, broken rudders and close shaves with freighters. Mr. Smith said: "We are

looking forward to eating fresh food and enjoying life's little luxuries again. But our excitement is tinged with sadness as we say goodbye to our trusty partner, the good raft An-Tiki, who has so steadfastly looked after us on this journey. We'll also miss the sights and sounds of life at sea, sunrises and sunsets, incredible wildlife, the camaraderie and that special space and solitude that ocean-goers come to love."

Wednesday 18th May

A report from the Dutch Food Standards Agency estimates that one-third to one-half of all antibiotic resistance in humans derives from the use of farm antibiotics. American scientists have found that flies from intensive pig farms carry bacteria resistant to the same antibiotics used in the pig farms, raising fears of a spread to humans of antibiotic-resistant bacteria responsible for MRSA and ESBL-E-coli. MEPs recently heard evidence that CAP payments are subsidising industrial pig farming. Their concerns over widespread disregard of animal welfare laws will be reflected in this summer's talks on reform of the CAP.

Thursday 19th May

It has long been known that cattle are a major source of methane emissions through belching and breaking wind. Now studies presented to the British Society of Animal Science show that adding linseed to cattle's diet can reduce methane emissions by up to 40% since linseed introduces "good" bacteria into the cow's stomach while rejecting the bacteria that produce methane. More than 100 dairy farms, with 30,000 cattle, now add locally-grown linseed to their cattle feed. David Tory, a Dorset dairy farmer, said: "It's clear the feed is having a positive effect. They've got what we in the industry call 'shine' and there appears to be a clear yield benefit – both signs that they're healthy and happy."

Friday 20th May

The Government is considering scrapping "Best before" dates on food packaging in an attempt to cut the 8.3 million tonnes of food thrown away each year – which results in an average-sized family throwing away £680 a year of the money they spend on food. The carbon impact of eating the food currently discarded would be equivalent to taking a quarter of our cars off the road. Julie Glotz, editor of

The Grocer, said: "People need to learn how to store things properly: it's just as important as understanding the difference between "use by" and "best before" dates. It's not about getting rid of dates altogether, but making sure people get the most from the products they buy, by storing them appropriately."

Saturday 21st May

Marks & Spencer has launched the first carbon-neutral range of women's underwear, including bras, knickers and suspenders, which have been certified by the Carbon Trust Footprinting Certification company. The range is manufactured in an M & S lingerie factory in Sri Lanka which employs renewable energy and reduced waste initiatives. M & S commented: "The complexity of a bra's supply chain makes it the ideal product to learn about carbon footprinting as it contains 21 component parts from 12 different suppliers. We're already applying the lessons we've learned to other product areas and have taken an important step towards giving every M & S product a Plan A attribute."