

Prayer guide for the care of creation



August 2012

“This is what the Lord says: Stand at the crossroads and look;
Ask for the ancient paths; ask where the good way is.
Walk in it and you will find rest for your souls.”
(Jeremiah 6.16-19)

“We cannot put our trust in science for a very simple reason:
What we do with the knowledge that science creates is not the
business of science. Science has nothing to do with good or evil.
Therefore we have to decide for science what is worth doing
before we use science to do it.”
(John MacMurray)

“Science without religion is lame: religion without science is blind”.
(Einstein)



Wednesday 1st August

Jay Coen Gilbert, founder of B Lab, an organisation dedicated to creating a new section of the economy that harnesses the power of business to solve social and environmental problems, writes: "If we don't use the market for a higher purpose than just amassing personal wealth, we're missing a huge opportunity, not just to do good to others, but to develop ourselves to our full potential as human beings." B Lab has pioneered legislation passed in seven US states to allow registration of companies as Benefit Corps, relieving them of any obligation to maximise shareholder profit and re-defining their purpose to include non-financial interests and to make a positive impact on society and the environment.

Thursday 2nd August

In states that have not passed Benefit Corps legislation, companies can become Certified B Corporations after an assessment, conducted by B Lab, to verify their social and environmental impact. Already there are 500 Certified B Corporations in North America and the concept is about to go global with enquiries from S. Korea to Chile to France. "My hope" says Jay "is that this community of companies can

inspire generations of entrepreneurs for at least the next century, before better ideas take over."
www.sveneberlein.com

Friday 3rd August

The Red Tape Challenge is a Government initiative to scrap, simplify or liberalise regulations, including 174 environmental ones covering asbestos, invasive species, air pollution, wildlife protection, common lands, noise pollution and animal traps. Conservation groups are concerned that the programme may be designed to clear the way for a new airport in the Thames Estuary near the Isle of Grain, which is a Ramsar site and includes five Special Protection Areas. A decision on the programme is likely next month.

Saturday 4th August

Beginning today in the beautiful surroundings of Lee Abbey in N. Devon is a week designed to explore creation care through the Psalms. It is hosted by Andy Lester of A Rocha and award-winning wildlife enthusiast David Beattie.
Details at www.leeabbey.org.uk or ring 0800 389 1189.

Sources:

CIWEM Business News
Earth Matters
Green Health Watch magazine
Resurgence
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

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

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Picture on front cover: Foxglove by Poppy Pickard

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Tuesday 28th August

The Government has declared its intention to get a Wi-Fi-based “smart meter” into every home and business by 2020 and to allow electricity suppliers to increase their charges to pay for installation and maintenance. However, according to the Minister: “It will not be an offence for householders to refuse to accept a smart meter” although “We will require suppliers to take all reasonable steps to install smart meters.” Clearly, some clarification is required.

Wednesday 29th August

EU funding under its LIFE+ programme has been approved for eight environmental projects including the Environment Agency’s project for capturing methane from expired and closed landfill sites. Economic and technical uncertainties have hampered progress towards managing methane emissions. Now the project will establish the viability of capturing, using and mitigating methane at these sites.

Thursday 30th August

FoE supporters dressed as giant bees have descended on Westminster as part of its campaign for the

government to introduce a National Bee Action Plan to stop the decline in bee populations. They handed in an invoice for £1.8 billion to the Government’s Natural Capital Committee, representing the amount it would cost UK farmers every year if they had to pollinate their crops without help from the bees.

To sign the petition, go to:

www.foe.co.uk/what_we_do/bee_cause_petition_35038.html

Friday 31st August

September 1st to October 4th has been designated “Creation Time” by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. This year’s theme is “Sustainable Energy in God’s Creation Time – a time for Prayer and Action”. Operation Noah has prepared sermon notes and prayers combining insights from bible passages with themes from ON’s Ash Wednesday Declaration.

See

www.operationnoah.org/creationtime

Other resources are available from:

www.ctbi.org.uk

Sunday 5th August

Father, we pray today for all who work closely with the natural world,

For farmers and gardeners who grow our food,

For scientists and technologists who probe the secrets of life,

For foresters who plant and harvest trees,

For photographers, artists and poets who capture beauty for others to see,

For conservationists and all who guard the precious heritage of the earth. Amen.

Monday 6th August

The Government’s aviation policy was published last month without reference to any consultation on airport capacity in the South East. A WWF/AEF report (wwf.org.uk/downloads/airport_capacity_report_july_2011.pdf) showed that there is available runway and terminal capacity to meet demand to 2050 in most regions including the South East WWF comments: “We don’t need more runways, we simply need to make better use of what we have.”

Tuesday 7th August

GT Energy has agreed to build Britain’s largest geothermal heating plant in Manchester, tapping an energy reservoir called the Cheshire Basin, with capacity to supply the heat demands of about 7 million homes. The plant will be based on two wells, about 3,000 metres deep, at a ½ acre site in the Ardwick district of Manchester. GT Energy’s CEO said: “At present, energy for heating is almost entirely fossil-fuel based, but as geothermal energy is abundant, we believe we can utilise this resource in an economical and efficient way for the benefit of Greater Manchester. The Renewable Heat Incentive is a world-leading initiative from the UK Government and will boost the development of renewable energy.”

Wednesday 8th August

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Thursday 9th August

Sainsbury's is working with energy company E.ON and Geothermal International to reduce its energy consumption by 30% in one hundred of its stores, reduce its carbon emissions by 30% by 2030 and to deliver renewable heat to all its stores by 2030. The two partners will install and operate pioneering geothermal heat pump technology throughout. E.ON said: "We've often said the most efficient power station is the one we don't have to build, and this technology is an excellent solution to deliver locally-produced renewable energy at a scale that really makes a difference." Sainsbury's added: "(This project) supports job creation in the renewable energy sector and our goal is to reduce our carbon emissions by 2020 as well as delivering energy cost savings for our business."

Friday 10th August

The world currently has 440 nuclear reactors, which contribute nearly 5% of the demand for primary energy. 200 further plants are planned, but the economics of nuclear power are so unattractive to private investors that few expect more than 100 to be built. If these were built over the next decade, they would merely replace

existing reactors which have reached the end of their life. At a construction cost of about \$10 billion per reactor, this programme would require \$1 trillion plus the long-term costs of waste disposal and decommissioning. As stocks of uranium 235 decline, we would either have to make plutonium by irradiating abundant uranium 238 or make fissile uranium 233 by irradiating thorium 232. Re-processing this material would be expensive, hazardous and polluting. Furthermore, the world already has 2,000 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium. Just 8 kg. of plutonium is enough to make a small nuclear bomb. It is inconceivable that proliferation could be contained in the process of making fuel for 100-200 additional nuclear reactors.

Saturday 11th August

Currently, 86% of the UK Department of Energy & Climate Change is dedicated to de-commissioning old power stations. Yet between 2005 and 2010 global solar hot water and wind power capacity each grew at 25% a year, while solar PV grew at over 50% a year. If these growth rates continue over the next 35 years, wind power capacity will rise to about 1.25 million gigawatts, solar water to 1.15 million

Racecourse, providing a forum for many Christian organisations including Christian Ecology Link. If you would like to help organise the CEL stall, please contact George Dow at g.dow@tiscali.co.uk or Paul Bodenham at paul@christian-ecology.org.uk If you plan to attend, look out for CEL's presentation on the G-stage and in the Abide tent.

Saturday 25th August

The Government has launched a consultation on 12 new Sustainable Development Indicators to be placed alongside Gross Domestic Product to indicate how society is progressing. The headline indicators are: economic prosperity, long-term unemployment, poverty, knowledge and skills, healthy life expectancy, social capital, social mobility in adulthood, housing provision, greenhouse-gas emissions, natural resource use, wildlife and biodiversity, and water availability. WWF believes that placing these indicators alongside GDP leads to confusion, and that well-being should be paramount.

Sunday 26th August

Father, we thank you that out of the earth and sea we receive provision for

our needs. We thank you for the skills in harvesting the earth's resources that people have passed from generation to generation. We thank you for the vision and work of all who channel earth's products into areas of need. Help us to use your gifts for the extension of your kingdom on earth and for the benefit of our fellow-humans.

Monday 27th August

Government subsidies for onshore wind generation are to be cut by 10%, so saving households £5-6 a year on energy bills. Under these arrangements, £44 of average household bills will go towards renewables in 2013-14, rising to £50 in 2016-17. It remains to be seen whether the Energy Bill expected in the autumn will encourage investment in renewables, or whether, as Tim Yeo MP chair of the Energy Committee fears, "The Government is in danger of botching its plans to boost clean energy, because the Treasury is refusing to back new contracts to deliver investment in nuclear, wind, wave and carbon capture and storage."

of CO₂ a year – the equivalent of the yearly emissions of 100,000 cars. Faced with this list, how many of us can plead innocence?

Tuesday 21st August

Mobile phone network provider O2 has acknowledged that mobile phone use is a significant source of greenhouse gases and has pledged to halve its network's emissions by 2015, both by improving the energy efficiency of its business practices and by educating its customers about greener phone use. Mike Berners-Lee has calculated that an hour a day using a mobile emits 1,250 kg of CO₂ – the equivalent of flying from London to New York economy class. He suggests carbon-saving activities such as:

- Texting instead of calling;
- Using a landline, which takes about 1/3rd of the power used when both callers are on their mobiles.

Wednesday 22nd August

A Private Member's Bill tabled in the House of Lords aims to close the loophole which allows people who throw litter from their cars to dodge fines, since identifying the culprit is

near-impossible. Councils in Greater London already have the power to issue a civil penalty for littering to the registered owner of the vehicle, who would be responsible either for paying the fine personally or nominating the culprit. The new Bill would extend this power to all local authorities in England. Last year, nearly 9 million drivers threw litter from their cars, and the cost to councils of clearing it up amounted to £862 million.

Thursday 23rd August

In European countries there is a massive demand for biofuels, which are mostly sourced from oil palm plantations, leading to massive land grabs in poor African countries. In Uganda, with support from the government, large companies have confiscated farms and common land which have been sources of food and sustainable agriculture such as coffee-growing, in order to make way for oil palm plantations. A 2010 report from FoE looked at 11 African countries and found that European companies had grabbed an area the size of Denmark in order to grow biofuels.

Friday 24th August

From today until the 27th the Greenbelt Festival will take place on Cheltenham

GW and solar PV to 1.6 billion GW. Other renewable technologies such as Concentrated Solar Power will also become important. Renewable energy is getting cheaper all the time as increased demand, caused by its lower price, stimulates competition among manufacturers, with technological advances leading to even greater price falls. Finally, renewable energy, unlike nuclear, is free of catastrophic dangers and long-term liabilities.

Sunday 12th August

Father, we cannot spread care for your creation throughout the world, but help us to begin where we are. Make us honest and careful in all our dealings, true in our words and actions. We cannot alter the course of a suffering and unjust world, but help us to light candles in the darkness, in the Name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who at his glorious day of Justice and Judgement will herald the triumph of righteousness and peace.

Monday 13th August

A report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation says that more must be done to ensure that communities affected by large wind farms can reap long-term benefits from them.

“What we would like to see is those living near wind farms having locally-embedded energy and jobs, as well as money to fund other community goals and schemes. By widening the remit of community benefit funds, beyond the village or parish in the direct shadow of the wind farm, more people can share in the benefits of investment, and more significant projects can be realised.”

Tuesday 14th August

More than 400 homes in Stockton-on-Tees have benefitted from energy efficiency measures funded by Eggborough Power and the government-backed Community Energy Saving Programme, which targets low-income households to improve their energy efficiency and reduce fuel bills. Now an additional 500 homes are to benefit from the £5.9 million scheme with a package of measures including cavity wall and loft insulation, boiler replacements, draught-proofing and new heating controls. The GoWarmParkfield project is expected to cut Stockton's carbon emissions by 180,000 tonnes.

Wednesday 15th August

The new version of the National Planning Policy Framework

acknowledges that building on brownfield land, i.e. land previously developed, should be a priority. Moreover, a site investigation should be undertaken by a competent person to include an assessment of risk, so that, after remediation, land should not be capable of being classed as “contaminated land” under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. CIWEM welcomes the changes, but calls for support for skills development and a competency framework for assessing soils and groundwater.

Thursday 16th August

A 5 MW. solar PV farm has been unveiled on the Cadland Estate, Fawley near Southampton. Covering 30 acres of former agricultural land, it comprises 18,000 solar PV panels which will produce enough electricity to power 1,000 homes. Anesco, the developer, believes that “farming can benefit from a wide range of renewable technologies. Helping to improve the sustainability of farming, from an energy consumption angle, is vital for the future of the industry.” Nevertheless, solar farms, unlike wind farms, remove valuable agricultural land from cultivation and, in the UK at least, are believed to be a less efficient way of generating electricity.

Friday 17th August

Lakes and enclosed sea waters are prone to thermal stratification whereby surface water heats up while colder water sinks to the bottom, where it lacks oxygen. This can cause algal blooms at the surface, which may be toxic and block sunlight to lower levels, so depriving them of the oxygen needed for life. At the extreme, there is no aquatic life left except algae and bacteria. Aquarius Marine Group has come up with the Aquaerator which, when placed at a 10 metre depth produces a plume of water rising up at 4.5 tons a second, or, if placed at a depth of 20 metres, at 13.4 tons a second. Aquaerators have destratified reservoirs at Lakeside in Doncaster and at Blagdon, Somerset, as well as fisheries at Thetford and Glastonbury, and are being tested in salmon farms by the Norwegian Technical Institute in Stavanger. www.aeration.uk.com

Saturday 18th August

It is estimated that, across the world, 18.3 million people spend an average of 13 hours a week on gaming. Clearly, game worlds are fulfilling genuine human needs that the real world cannot satisfy. How can the obvious power of games be turned

from wasteful escapism towards tackling real social and environmental challenges?

Already crowd-sourcing games are engaging thousands of players to tackle real problems for free. “Evoke” is a social networking game produced by the World Bank for use on computers and mobiles, designed to help players launch their own world-changing ventures. Others include “Free Rice” produced for the UN World Food Programme, “World Without Oil” and “Spore”. “The Long Game”, which shows how humanity can take us on to a new scale of co-operation, co-ordination and co-creation, is under development.

Sunday 19th August

Forgive us, Lord, for the damage we have done to your earth.

Forgive us that rivers and seas have been polluted by the waste of our civilisation.

Forgive us that the air has been fouled by our emissions of pollutants.

Forgive us that flowers and animals have gone extinct through our relentless invasion of their natural habitat.

Forgive us that we have so often valued profit more than the quality of our surroundings.

Help us to see the links between our lifestyle and the damage to your creation.

May repentance lead to change, and change set a pattern for others to follow.

Monday 20th August

In a report called “The Domestic Garden: Its Contribution to Urban Green Infrastructure”, experts from Reading and Sheffield Universities and the RHS highlight the gardening practices which threaten our environment, for example:

Petrol-driven lawnmowers emit a cocktail of toxic fumes and 36 kg of CO₂ each year;

Lawn-sprinklers can use up to 1,000 litres an hour – what a family of four would use in a day;

Building a 25 sq. metre patio emits a ton of CO₂ as well as reducing natural drainage;

Manufacturing the fertilisers and pesticides used by half of British households makes a significant contribution to UK emissions;

Gardeners’ tastes for the exotic are responsible for the introduction of invasive foreign species, with huge consequences for native biodiversity;

Peat dug for gardening compost in the UK releases almost half a million tons