

RESOURCES

The **Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism** (ECTWT) produces a small colourful quarterly journal on tourism issues called **Contours** and leaflets on **Golf Tourism, Let's Go Cruising** and **Let's Gamble**. (For a set of these leaflets send an SAE and 3 first class stamps to CEL.) The ECTWT is composed of the regional conferences of churches in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Middle East, Latin America and the Pacific, as well as the Catholic Federation of Asian Bishops conferences. Write to ECTWT, Mr Tan Chi Kiong, Ex. Secretary CCA Centre 96, 2nd District, Pak Tin Village, Mei Tin Road Shatin, N.T. Hong Kong SAR. Email. contours@pacific.net.hk

European Christian Environment Network has good web pages on Tourism. www.ecen.org/toueduc.htm

Churches Tourism Association is a network of churches, individuals and corporate bodies. It produces a quarterly newsletter. Its aims include: raising awareness and developing skills in local churches to exploit the opportunity of tourism for faith sharing and income generation, particularly through making church buildings and grounds more accessible; helping Christians who work in tourism; alerting the church to environmental problems caused by tourism. St Mary's House, Charlton on Otmoor, OX5 2UQ. 01203 696460 www.churchestourismassociation.info

Tearfund provide **The Tearfund Guide to Tourism**, a video **Don't forget your ethics** which explores issues of ethical tourism for people intending to visit developing countries and a campaign sheet on ethical tourism. They also have free leaflets on general ethical tourism. 100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE. 0845 355 8355. www.tearfund.org

Tourism Concern is a British based charity which would welcome your support. 277-281 Holloway Road, London N7 8HN. 020 7133 3330. Website. www.tourismconcern.org.uk The Tourism Concern book: **The Good Alternative Travel Guide** by Mark Mann (Earthscan, 2002, £9.99) is a good reference source for the UK and abroad.

Christian Aid have a leaflet Planning a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land which includes ways to support Palestinian Christians. 35 Lower Marsh, Waterloo, London SE1 7RL. 020 7620 4444. www.christian-aid.org

SUSTAINABLE HOLIDAYS

The Field Studies Council has 17 centres across the UK 045 345 4071 www.field-studies-ouncil.org They

run week-long courses and weekend courses on many diverse topics: insects, flowers, geology, butterflies, mosses, algae, birds, molluscs, archaeology, painting, stained glass, ceramics, arts & crafts, creative writing, local history, poetry and literature.

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) runs cheap holidays which involve various types of wildlife conservation work. Get fit, make friends, help nature conservation. 163 Balby Road, Doncaster DN4 0RH. 01302 572244. www.btcv.org

Grow local, eat local. The Island of Skye has proved that even on a remote Scottish island it is possible for virtually all the hotels and restaurants to serve locally grown fruit and vegetables in season. Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association. 01478 640276. www.horticultureskye.co.uk



**CHRISTIAN
ECOLOGY LINK**



HOLIDAYS & TRAVEL

Must Christians be 'green' tourists?

We may take pride in inserting an energy-efficient light bulb in our house, giving a £10 donation to an environmental charity, and occasionally walking to the shops instead of taking the car. But what about our choices of where and how to holiday? They too have an impact on the environment. **This includes the pollution involved in the transport used in getting there!**

Tourism is the world's largest industry and has wide ranging social and environmental effects. By travelling we can break down cultural barriers and learn how others live. But with tourism comes **congestion, waste, overcrowding, and profligate spending**, loss of land for hotels, disruption of local culture, depletion of finite water resources, and pollution caused by use of jet planes and cars to get to our destinations.

Should we travel long distances just to lie on the beach and shop? In exploring other cultures might we actually be helping to destroy them? Is it fair to go on expensive holidays when most people in the world are too poor to do so? **Is there a place for Christian 'sustainable tourism'**, or should we just stay at home? See inside for some positive suggestions.

JOIN CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

Send £18 standard (low income £10) or £28 family/corporate, or a donation for church membership (recommended amount £25) to CEL, FREEPOST, SE 8672, 9 Nuthatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 5ZZ. Cheques payable to CEL. For more information contact: CEL, 10, Beech Hall Road, London E4 9NX. Tel: 0845 459 8460. Email info@christian-ecology.org.uk

Send for copies of this leaflet to CEL Publications, 40 The Avenue, Roundhay, Leeds LS8 1JG.

Please send a donation to cover cost of printing and postage, or at least an S.A.E.

You are welcome to photocopy it if you acknowledge CEL. Nov. 2004/Jan 2011.

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Holidays as Holy Days?

Holidays in the past were 'holy days', times for worship, play and refreshment. Can we find ways of making our holidays 'holy days' of joy, wonder, simplicity and relationship rather than consumption, ostentatious luxury and insulation from the reality of others?

Today's world offers us opportunities both to appreciate the fullness of God's creation and to meet with people whose lifestyle may be very different from ours.

So is there a problem?

God's people are a people on the move, both spiritually and literally. Abraham travelled into new lands and cultures. Jesus had no regular roof. Paul took the good news of Christianity throughout the eastern Mediterranean. But none of these biblical travellers jettied round the world on climate damaging planes!

Air Travel and Climate Change

Climate change is arguably the most serious environmental problem that the world faces and air travel is its fastest growing cause. One reason why it can be cheaper than other modes of transport is because there is no tax on aviation fuel or VAT on tickets. The environmental damage caused by flying to a destination probably outdoes whatever good you might do when you arrive. An individual's return flight from Britain to the USA causes more pollution than an average person's car travel in the UK over a whole year. The global warming effect of flying to Spain is 9 times what it is by taking a train. As air traffic increases so does noise pollution, with planes leaving Heathrow and Gatwick at a rate of one every 1 to 3 minutes.



Employment

Tourism provides jobs and hard currency, But often in mass tourism around 80% of the holiday fee goes to the tour operator and travel company and less than 20% to local people. This is especially important in less prosperous areas. For example, much of the food and drink consumed is flown in from outside and provides no economic benefit to the local community.

Land Use in Developing Countries

Some money from tourists supports nature reserves, but too many visitors to beauty spots destroy what they came to see. Farmland is often taken over for tourism with families forced into slums. Thousands of women and children become prostitutes for tourist money.

Over-Exploitation

On an island off the west coast of Malaya, one 18-hole golf course uses as much water in a year as would supply a village of 20,000 people.

Pollution and Health

Coastlines in parts of the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, and Hawaii are so polluted from over-use that swimming poses a serious health risk. Up to 90% of the chemicals sprayed on golf courses in countries such as Thailand end up in the air. Golf tourists, workers and nearby residents are contracting illnesses from the chemicals heavily used for pest and weed control.

Relating to others

Many Christians go on pilgrimages to the Holy Land. But how many package tours give people the opportunity to worship with Palestinian Christians and to meet Palestinians and Moslem Israelis as well as Jewish Israelis? How much tourist money goes to Palestinian Christians?

Planning your next holiday

Write a number in each box to rank these ideas in order of importance to you as an individual, group or family in planning your next holiday.



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| <p><input type="checkbox"/> Give 25% of the money you would have spent on your holiday to organisations campaigning to save wildlife.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Give 25% of the money you would have spent on your holiday to organisations campaigning for fairer tourism. (See overleaf.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Become more informed about tourism issues by obtaining and using the resources overleaf.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Travel independently, using local hotels and local transport so that money spent goes straight into the local economy, not to the shareholders of tour operators.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Go on a holiday in the UK to learn more about wildlife and nature. Become more appreciative of your local environment.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do not demand European style luxuries if visiting a country where people are sacrificing firewood, soil, water and other resources in order to gain your custom. Buy local food and goods.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If going on a travelling/exploring type holiday, treat it as a pilgrimage and ask your vicar/cleric/priest to give a blessing before you set off.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Before you go on a planned holiday write to the organisers and ask how they minimise the environmental impact.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on the cost to God's creation, not just the cost to your bank balance. Holiday nearer home so you don't need to fly. Travel by bus, train or boat rather than air or car.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stay near whatever interests you, e.g. historic city, cathedral, beach or countryside. Explore that place in depth, instead of driving around and gaining only a superficial impression.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality is an important Christian virtue. Invite a foreign student in this country to stay for a short visit at your house. Visit tourist and beauty spots near you and perhaps gain a new perspective and appreciation of local life in both your country and theirs.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Your own suggestion</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |
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Questions: How does your church respond to tourists? Is it a welcoming friendly church? Can visitors get in? Does it demonstrate to tourists the importance of caring for God's Creation? If your church organises holidays, house parties, retreats or days out does it take the issues discussed in this leaflet into account?