

What can Christians do as a community?

- **Operation Noah** is a project of CEL and the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland which empowers individuals and churches to act on climate change.
- Ask your MP to deal urgently and seriously with the issue, eg. by pressuring the government to cut and share emissions globally by schemes such as Contraction and Convergence as well as the individual ramifications of this: Personal Carbon Allowances.
- Encourage your local church to join the **EcoCongregation** scheme which helps communities to tackle issues such as climate change. EcoCongregation, England & Wales: www.ecocongregation@arocha.org 0114 263 6421; Scotland: Edinburgh: 0131 240 2274
- Get your local church to include **regular prayers** on this issue. See CEL's monthly Prayer Guide.

Take part in ecocell

ecocell is a toolkit to help you to live a more simple, more Christian lifestyle. It is designed to be used by house groups, small communities or just simply groups of households.

See www.christian-ecology.org.uk/ecocell.htm and www.greenchristain/ecocell

There are three levels of ecocell - find out which is best for you
Most people will start at ecocell 1.

Resources

CEL's Prayer Guide has daily prayers on environmental issues. It costs £10 pa (cheques payable to Philip Clarkson-Webb) and is available from 15 Valley View, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0SY, or free online from CEL's website.

Visit **CEL's web-site** (address below).

A comprehensive list of on-line resources, including references to many books on the subject, is at www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate/links.html and visit www.wcc-coe.org for information on the World Council of Churches climate change programme.

Mayer Hillman, *ack KY 7 Ub GUj Y h Y D Ub Y h z* Penguin, 2004. (explains personal carbon allowances.)

John Houghton, *c VU K Ufa]b[. H Y 7 ca d Y h Y 6 f] Y Z] b [*, 3rd revision, CUP, 2004.

Sean McDonagh, *7] a U h Y 7 \ U b [Y . h Y W X U Y b [Y t c i g U z* Columba, 2007.

Aubrey Meyer, *7 c b h f U W h j c b U b X 7 c b j Y f [Y b V W z H A Y : c V U G c i h j c b t c 7] a U h Y 7 \ U b [Y z* Green Books, 2000.

George Monbiot, *< Y U h* Penguin, 2006.

Michael Northcott, *H A Y A c f U 7] a U h Y . H A Y 9 h] W j c Z 7] a U h Y 7 \ U b [Y z* DLT, 2007.

JOIN CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

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CHRISTIAN
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CLIMATE CHANGE...

What can Christians do?

Scientists and governments now accept scientific evidence that the climate is changing. In the UK, rivers flood more frequently, spring comes earlier and aphids emerge in February. Worldwide we read of droughts, rising sea levels, retreating glaciers and an increase in weather-related disasters.

Human use of fossil fuels is largely responsible. When we burn fossil fuels to make electricity or to power our cars and aeroplanes, carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere. Other contributory causes to global warming are destruction of forests, over-grazing, energy-intensive agriculture, and more methane from increased rice production arising from population growth. **But the biggest cause is the huge consumption of fossil fuels in the developed world.**



What is happening to the climate?

The carbon dioxide, water vapour and methane in the atmosphere act as a sort of 'blanket' to keep in some of the sun's warmth. Without this 'blanket' our planet would be very cold indeed. By burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas we have released more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and the planet is heating up too much.



The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an international group of leading climate scientists brought together by the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organisation, says that most of the global warming since the mid-20th century is very likely (90% chance) due to human activities. Over the past 200 years the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by about one third due to human activities, principally the burning of fossil fuels. During the last 100 years the average global temperature has increased by about 0.75 degrees Celsius.



Future predictions

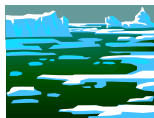
Because of thermal expansion and increased melting of glaciers sea level will rise by about half a metre which will be disastrous for huge numbers of people living in low lying coastal areas, many of whom are amongst the poorest people on earth.

There will be more floods and also more droughts leading to deaths and severe economic consequences — again especially to the most vulnerable.

The regional distribution of available food will alter markedly. The shortfall in food production will lead to millions of

'environmental refugees', largely in the developing world.

Without taking account of a number of feedbacks and 'tipping points' which would accelerate global warming still further, the IPCC predicts that during this century temperatures will rise between 1.1 and 6.4 degrees (the wide range mostly due to uncertainty about the future level of carbon dioxide emissions). This may not seem very much but a rise of 1 degree is likely to lead to extensive coral bleaching and 2 degrees may be the threshold that triggers the irreversible melting of the Greenland ice sheet which contains enough ice to raise sea levels by 7 metres. And above 3 degrees there are serious risks of large scale, irreversible disruptions to the way our world works such as the destabilisation of the West Antarctic ice sheet, the drying up of the Amazon rainforest, peat deposits, wetlands and permafrost, releasing huge amounts of carbon, escalating global warming still further. Whole ecosystems would disappear, probably for ever.



Cut and Share

To stay below the 3 degree threshold, global greenhouse emissions need to peak in the next 10 years and then fall to 70% below current levels by 2050. To allow developing nations to improve their material standard of living we in the developed world will have to reduce our use of energy and achieve **cuts** of about 90% so as to **share** with developing people to create a more equitable world. International discussion must urgently focus on a post-Kyoto climate change agreement to **cut and share** while nationally we should be moving to a system of personal carbon allowances.

What about the nuclear option?

Huge investments in renewables, and energy efficiency to reduce energy use, will be required if nuclear power is not to be part of the solution. The problems of nuclear waste, safety, security and by-products remain unresolved. Instead we need an immediate and substantial investment in energy reduction and wind, solar, tidal, wave, geothermal and bio-mass energy sources.

Why does this matter for Christians?

In order to meet the 80-90% target we will have to adjust our lifestyles to a 'low energy' way of living (the holiday air flight as a 'right' is simply not sustainable). What is lacking is not the technology; it is the political and moral will. We need a deeper conviction amongst our leaders and the population as a whole that there must be a radical change in the way we use energy.



The Bible does not address global climate change directly. But it does suggest that if we love and serve God and respect his creation he will bless us with 'the early and late rains' so that harvest will be good, while if we turn aside and worship other gods (like cars and status) the land will 'yield not her fruit' (Deut. 11.13-17).

The Psalms, too, echo this message of respect and care for God's creation (e.g. Psalms 65, 95, 104, 148). The climate is God's gift to us and the whole earth community. To put this wonderfully diverse planet at risk by dramatically altering something as fundamental as our global climate is blasphemous.

Through his bodily resurrection Jesus has transformed our relationship with the earth, which is to be treated with

great reverence. We Christians are called to love all neighbours, to be healers and servants.

What have the churches said?

'This task requires a response from each one of us. Through our own life styles we can contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Through our witness we can encourage governments to advance on the road towards responsible reduction targets.' (The World Council of Churches Climate Change Programme)

'Contraction and convergence appears utopian only if we refuse to contemplate the alternatives honestly.' (Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury)

What can we all do as individuals?

- Pray daily for the necessary 'conversion' in ourselves, our neighbours and our leaders to do all in our power to combat global warming.
- Buy 'green energy' from renewable sources.
- Cut out unnecessary use of cars and inessential air travel.
- Buy food grown or produced locally in order to reduce the distance that food is transported.
- **Cut down energy use at home:-**
 - Fit energy-saving lightbulbs; turn off lights.
 - Wear an extra jumper, turn down the central heating thermostat by 1 degree C, and set the hot water cylinder thermostat at 50 degrees C.
 - Insulate hot water tanks and pipes.
 - Get rid of the power shower and tumble dryer.
 - Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through windows.
 - Switch off TV, video, DVD player, set-top boxes and computers at the wall rather than leaving them on stand-by.
 - Use full loads in washing machines and wash at 30 degrees C.
 - Choose the right size pan for cooking food, keep lids on; don't overfill kettles.

Small individual actions can add up to a huge impact!