

A word to church leaders

If you are a leader in your church, and realise that creation care needs greater emphasis, you may have more opportunity than individual members of your congregation to get things going, but a good deal of what has been said above applies. There are ministers who are very keen but cannot get their parishes to see it that way! Some of CEL's resources may help.

A word to the experts

Even if you are an expert in some aspects of ecology or closely involved in some kind of environmental activity, CEL resources will help you to link your environmental concern with practical action in your local church.

Books

R.J. Berry, ed., *The Care of Creation, Focusing concern and action* (Inter-Varsity Press, 2000).

Tony Campolo, *How to Rescue the Earth Without Worshipping Nature* (Word, 1993).

Nigel Cooper, *Wildlife in Church and Churchyard* (Church House Publishing, 2001).

Tim Cooper, *Sustaining the Earth* (St John's Extension Studies, Nottingham, 1997).

Edward Echlin, *The Cosmic Circle, Jesus and Ecology* (Columba, 2004).

Peter Harris, *Under Bright Wings* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1993).

James Jones, *Jesus and the Earth* (SPCK, 2003).

Hugh Montefiore, *Preaching for our Planet* (Geoffrey Chapman, 1992).

Ghillean Prance, *The Earth Under Threat* (Wild Goose, 1996).

John Stott, *The Birds our Teachers: biblical lessons from a lifelong birdwatcher* (Candle Books).

Grove Booklets: Ethical Studies No. 66 **Keith Innes, *Caring for the Earth***; No. 74 **Edward Echlin, *The Christian Green Heritage***; Grove Worship Series No. 137 **Andrew Pearson, *Making Creation Visible: God's Earth in Christian Worship***.

To find out how **WE** can help you further send for **CEL's RESOURCES** Leaflet.

This has information on **CEL publications, ChurchLink, prayer guide, exhibition panels, and speaker service.**

For general information on CEL, our members' email discussion group **CELINK**, and our monthly **email newsletter**, contact:- Laura Deacon, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER. Tel. 01524 33858.

Email: info@christian-ecology.org.uk

Website: www.christian-ecology.org.uk

CEL Patrons: Rt Rev James Jones, Fr Sean McDonagh, Rev Dr Ruth Page, Jonathon Porritt, Prof Sir Ghillean Prance, Dr Elaine Storkey.

TO JOIN CEL

Please complete your details below, cut along the dotted lines and send to:-

Membership Secretary,
CEL FREEPOST, SE8672,
9 Nuthatch Drive, Earley,
Reading RG6 5ZZ.



- I would like to join CEL (£18 standard; £10 low income; £28 joint/family/corporate).
- My church would like to join CEL (Please send a donation, recommended amount £25).

Tick box as appropriate

Please make cheques payable to: **CEL**

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CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK



Going Green? The Christian Way

Are you a committed Christian who is beginning to feel you should be doing something about 'green' issues?

If so, read on — this leaflet is for you!



Stay Committed !

The first message is to stay committed to your faith. Test what is written here or elsewhere by the standards you have — the witness of the Bible, of the Church, of the Holy Spirit and your fellow Christians. Becoming green is **NOT** joining a new religion.

Right to be green

You are **right** to be concerned about the state of the environment and to feel that something needs to be done about it. We cannot go on regarding it as a sideline, or as a 'secular' issue, not for ordinary Christians.

You are not alone !

Leading Christians of all persuasions have gone on record about the importance and urgency of environmental issues. Groups of Christians **are** responding to the problems. This leaflet is produced by one such body — **Christian Ecology Link**.

How it fits in

The Christian Church has sometimes been accused of opposition to environmental concerns. However, in the Bible and in numerous other Christian writings the importance of care for creation has been emphasised. The Creation Story in Genesis tells us that God created the world and everything in it (Gen. 1:31). Adam and Eve were put into the garden of Eden to 'till it and keep it' (Gen. 2:15). Christians acknowledge that 'The earth is the Lord's' (Ps. 24:1). We should care for the earth **because it is God's creation**. Humans were put on the earth to look after it, not pollute it. The basic principle is often described as stewardship — that the Creator has given us a role in caring for His creation.

Other concerns

Stewardship is usually understood by Christians in terms of responsible and regular financial giving and the wise use of money by the Church and individual Christians. Occasionally the concept is widened to include issues of social responsibility, poverty and unemployment, but environmental issues are usually ignored because, it is said, people are ultimately more important than trees or animals (Matt. 6.26). Yet trees and animals are also God's creatures. He feeds the sparrows and clothes the grass of the fields. They are good in His sight (Gen. 1.24). In other words, the **whole of creation** is of value to God.

Stewardship relates to everything in God's creation, as it all interacts. If fellow Christians argue that stewardship relates mainly to 'human' social issues, invite them to consider how (say) climate change and pollution affects the lives of the humans about whose health they are concerned.



Getting support and interest

It may seem that in your local church nobody else seems prepared to take any interest in environmental issues and some are actively hostile. Do not take it for granted that nobody is concerned. **Persist, but be tactful**. Raise the topic with your Church leaders. Mention it in your church discussion group, house group or church meeting if you have such things; or put an item in your church magazine. If there is some type of social responsibility group try to get them to include the topic in their programme.

Practical Action

Even if you are a complete newcomer to environmental issues there are books which provide a simple introduction to the subject. Many contain suggestions for action by individuals or groups. CEL's website has examples of practical actions taken by local churches. EcoCongregation also helps churches show their care for God's creation in spiritual and practical ways with a series of modules and an award scheme. (See CEL's Guide to Sources for contact details.)

Many churches have held shared meals, where the food provided is based on CEL's **LOAF** principles: food which is **L**ocally produced, **O**rganically grown, **A**nimal friendly and **F**airly traded. Your church could use CEL's 'One Bread' Service which is also based on the LOAF principles. Other churches have signed up to CEL's Operation Noah community climate change campaign and are reducing the amount of greenhouse gases they produce.

As Christians we need to live with integrity and to set a good example. It is very important to work towards an environmentally friendly lifestyle, in other words to live sustainably. CEL has a number of leaflets on different topics, including an environmental audit for churches.

Civic responsibility

Many environmental issues go well beyond what it is possible to do at the individual level; they involve communities and nations. Why not find out from your Town Hall or Council Office what is happening in your area?

So We hope you will find these ideas helpful and feel able to follow some of them up. If you join CEL you will get a magazine and other resources to help you go further.