

Prayer guide for the care of creation



January 2010

“Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure, there your heart will be also.”

(Mt. 6.20-21)

“God has not given us a sense of beauty, an enjoyment of food and wine, an ear for music, in order to tempt and test us. But we must not put our trust in them or regard them as the purpose of our lives. But freedom from such a dependence is a mark of our conversion.”

(Barbara Wood)



Friday 1st January

The latest figures from the Met. Office show that the earth has warmed by 0.15° C. every 10 years since the mid-1970s. Every year since 2001 has been among the top eleven warmest on record despite a recent slowing-down in the rate of warming due to natural variations in ocean currents and the sun's activity. If emissions continue to rise at the present rate, temperatures will reach at least 2° C. above pre-industrial levels between 2035 and 2055. This would cause reduced yields from all major cereal crops as well as forest fires, droughts, glacier melting and flood risks. Yet by peaking emissions in 2016 and reducing them by 5% a year till 2100, we could save at least 60% of the land that would otherwise become unsuitable for crop growth by 2080.

Saturday 2nd January

Food, farming and change of land use are responsible for one-third of greenhouse gas emissions. Change of land use is often driven by our demand for more industrially-produced pork, chicken, beef and dairy products. According Peter Melchett of the Soil Association, too many people believe there is a magic bullet to solve the problems of agriculture, such as

biofuels (which often increase GHG emissions), GM technology and anaerobic digesters. He believes that the solution is simple – but only if we all accept the need to change to climate-friendly diets and climate-friendly farming. “We need to change from the Western model of meat-intensive diets to diets with less dairy and meat, more grass-fed beef, lamb and mutton, and more fruit, vegetables and pulses. We need to change from an agriculture dependent on artificial inputs like oil-based nitrogen and mined phosphates, to a system that relies on the sun to fix nitrogen through legumes such as clover.”

Sunday 3rd January

Heavenly Father, you know, more than we, what is happening to us and our world. We know that the way we live exploits others and degrades your creation. May your Holy Spirit enlighten our political leaders and guide us to respect and care for the living world. May life be renewed. May your Name be magnified.

A prayer from Benin.

Monday 4th January

We are often told that the public demands cheap food, which is why supermarkets force down the prices

they pay to producers. But this is a myth created by supermarkets to justify extra profits while remaining competitive, They persuade us with loyalty cards and special offers to buy as much as possible, whether we need it or not. As a result, 23% of all food purchased is thrown away and even more is discarded before it can be purchased if it fails to meet supermarket standards for size, shape and appearance. Yet the ordinary consumer, by adjusting his/her buying habits, has the power to change all this. All we need is (a) the information and (b) the resolution to act.

Tuesday 5th January

St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10.25 encourages his readers to eat whatever is sold in the meat market and whatever is set before them at a meal. "For the earth and its fullness are the Lord's". Yet much of the meat, fish and dairy products available in supermarkets is the result of intensive farming which is steadily destroying the planet. Animals reared intensively are filled with a variety of chemicals to make them grow faster, heavier and leaner, and to combat the diseases which are inseparable from intensive livestock farming. Human health too is affected by the intake of these

chemicals. In the relentless pursuit of profit we are damaging both ourselves and the planet which is our life support.

Wednesday 6th January

Conventional farming is dominated by the international chemical industry which has bought up nearly all the seed companies. As a result, we have lost 97% of our food varieties since 1900 and it is now an offence to sell any seed that is not on the severely-restricted EU-approved list. The increasing demand for organic food reflects the public's unease with the intensive use of pesticides in conventional farming. But conversion to organic farming involves lengthy and expensive procedures. Perhaps we need a new and simpler standard of sustainable farming.

Thursday 7th January

Many cheap products are only cheap because they are produced in developing countries and sold on world markets at the lowest possible price. Small producers of tea, coffee and sugar, for example, seldom get a fair price for their labour. The Fairtrade Foundation helps to guarantee a fair price to producers and also pays them a premium to improve facilities for the

whole community. The Fairtrade symbol enables consumers to see at a glance which products are marketed under this scheme.

Friday 8th January

CEL, and the EcoCELL project in particular, has promoted the LOAF principles as a guide to buying food that is

Locally grown, supporting local producers,
Organically produced, resulting in healthier food,
Animal-friendly, avoiding intensive livestock rearing,
Fairly-traded, ensuring a fair deal for producers.

Some suggested questions for consumers:

Do I really need this item?
Am I tempted by advertising?
Do I need to buy two just because the store claims it would save me money?
Did the producer get a fair price?

Saturday 9th January

Agriculture in the semi-arid tropics is likely to be most affected by climate change. A key to improving crop yields in these areas is the better capture and storage of rainwater. 95% of water in developing countries is used

to irrigate farmlands, so the spread of drip irrigation systems is vital.

Techniques for minimising soil disturbance, such as reduced tillage and crop rotations also have a major role to play. The International Crops Research Institute has developed pearl millet hybrids that endure temperatures of 40° C. and deliver normal yields with limited water. New varieties of chickpeas and pigeon peas mature in 65-75 days and so reduce the need for water. More research is needed to develop drought-proof crops.

Sunday 10th January

Father God, you have shown us clearly where our present lifestyle is leading us. Open the eyes of all – especially the rich and powerful – and draw us together in a common determination to change our ways, to reduce our consumption of natural resources and to share what we have with others who have so little to sustain them.

Monday 11th January

Our society has never been more wasteful than it is today. In order to keep the economy running, we are urged to keep on buying. Manufacturers have to continually find

ways of creating desire for their products, making us dissatisfied with what we already have. So products are designed with a deliberately short lifespan and generally unrepairable, in order to make sure we keep on buying. In 2006/7 we produced 29.1 million tonnes of waste, of which 89% was household waste – nearly 10 kg. per week for every man, woman and child.

Tuesday 12th January

When discarding items, we use the term “throwing it away”, But in a finite planet there is no “away”. Everything that we discard – whether we put it in the dustbin or the recycling bin or just throw it on the ground – we are actually passing to someone else to deal with. If it is landfilled, it is passed to future generations. If it is incinerated, the emissions given off by the incinerator adds to the gases that are warming our world. Door-to-door collections deal with recyclables such as paper, glass, tins and kitchen waste. But the lightest and most durable form of packaging is plastics and these, with the exception of plastic bottles, are less easy to recycle. Perhaps we should avoid plastics wherever possible.

Wednesday 13th January

“As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them”. (Ecclesiastes 5.11)
Our actual needs in this world are relatively small. Yet the whole advertising industry is geared to making us unhappy with what we have and encouraging us to desire what others have. The bible’s word for this is “covetousness” and we are commanded as strongly to avoid this as to avoid committing theft and murder.

Thursday 14th January

Gandhi famously said: “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed . . . One who would serve God will not encumber himself with everything that comes his way. He will take only what he strictly needs and leave the rest.”
What then should we do? God told the first humans to look after his creation. So should we. Yet many companies, responding (they say) to public demand, are causing immense stress to God’s creation. Are we justified in supporting them? Perhaps we should be more selective in choosing where to buy and what to buy.

Friday 15th January

EcoCELL, CEL's sustainability course, outlines a simple way of measuring the waste we create. First, weigh yourself. Second, weigh yourself with the weekly bags that you put in the waste and recycling bins. The difference is the weight of your rubbish. Third, do the same thing every week and notice any increase or decrease. Cutting down on waste is a real challenge when almost everything we buy provides us with waste.

Saturday 16th January

Many products can be re-used in some other form. Yoghurt pots with holes drilled in the bottom are ideal for germinating seeds. Cast-off clothes are welcomed at charity shops unless they are completely worn-out, in which case they make useful cleaning cloths. Cartridge World shops accept printer cartridges, including Epson, which they will either re-fill or exchange for a new one. Gardening and other tools can be re-furbished by a charity called Tools for Development and shipped to developing countries.

Sunday 17th January

Father God, help us to change.
To change ourselves and to change our world.
To know the need for it.
To deal with the pain of it.
To feel the joy of it.
To undertake the journey without understanding the destination.
The art of gentle revolution.
(Michael Leunig)

Monday 18th January

Palm oil is an ingredient in many consumer products such as soap, margarine and cosmetics, but new palm oil plantations in Indonesia are causing devastation to much virgin rainforest. Now Greenpeace has published evidence that Sinas Mar, Indonesia's biggest palm oil producer, has persistently engaged in illegal deforestation and peatland clearance. One of Sinas Mar's biggest customers, the Unilever corporation, has promptly decided to stop buying from this company. Strangely, Sinas Mar is a member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, which promotes environmental sustainability in the industry. Greenpeace now expects other big customers such as Nestle, Kraft and Proctor & Gamble, to follow

Unilever's example and remove Sinas Mar from their supply chain.

Tuesday 19th January

70% of the world consumption of fresh water is used in agriculture – the majority of it in livestock farming. While it takes 625 litres of water to produce 1 kg. of potatoes and 1,300 litres to produce 1 kg. of wheat, it takes no less than 15,500 litres to produce 1 kg. of beef. Source:

www.waterwise.org.uk/images/site/embeddedwater

Each of us in the UK uses 135-165 litres per day, whereas much of the world has about 10 litres per day – the same amount that we use daily to flush the toilet. Waterwise UK is offering a total of £20,000 in prize money at the launch of its annual Future Friendly Awards. One category is for family actions taken to save energy and water and to reduce waste. The winner receives a bespoke eco-home makeover worth £10,000. The other category is a community award for local champions of their community who have inspired people to reduce their environmental impact. The prize is a £10,000 bursary to further their good work. Anyone over 16 can enter for the awards.

<http://www.futurefriendly.co.uk/>

Wednesday 20th January

Householders with a water meter use 10-15% less water than those without, yet only one-third of households in England and Wales have a meter. The Environment Agency warns that England faces severe water shortages as it feels the bite of climate change and a growing population.

“Widespread water metering, implemented by water companies, including safeguards for vulnerable groups, would provide a fairer charging system and is vital to help reduce water consumption and avert future severe shortages. . . Parts of England already have less available water per person than Spain or Morocco. Climate change, increases in population and our growing demand for water will mean that there will be even less water in future.” Most local water authorities include water-saving tips with their bills.

Thursday 21st January

“I know of no environmental problem that is not made worse by population increase.” (Sir David Attenborough) A report from the Optimum Population Trust called “Fewer Emitters, Less Emissions, Less Cost” finds that family planning is eight times cheaper as a way of tackling global warming than

solar power, and four times less costly than wind power. Every £4 spent on family planning saves 1 tonne of CO2 emissions. Now OPT has launched a carbon offset project to enable people to offset their carbon footprint by making donations to OPT to meet the huge demand for family planning around the world. For more information, go to:

www.popoffsets.com

Friday 22nd January

According to the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) around 30% of all CO2 emissions come from energy use in homes. We are commonly invited to buy energy-saving devices, appliances and gizmos – all of which carry their own carbon footprint. A far more effective response is to take regular readings of our electricity and gas meters, then to review our existing lifestyle to see where changes can be made. Heating the house is the single biggest energy use. Setting the timer to reduce the time the system is operating is one way to reduce consumption. If water from the tap is too hot to touch, don't add cold water – just turn the thermostat down! Today the average living room temperature in our homes is 21^o C.

Forty years ago it was 15^o C. Split the difference!

Saturday 23rd January

Everything that we plug into mains electricity uses energy. If a red light shows, it is using energy. Computers, washing machines, dishwashers, DVD players, TV sets, mobile phone chargers – all can be turned off at the wall without damage to the equipment. Lighting uses 19% of all domestic energy. Modern compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) use 20% of the energy used by old tungsten filament bulbs and last ten times longer. CFLs can now be found for every application. In the longer term, LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes) show promise of becoming the ideal low energy light source.

Sunday 24th January

Father, we pray, each one of us, for an honest appraisal of our own lifestyle, that we may admit to ourselves and to you all that we are contributing, directly and indirectly, to the pollution of your world. Help us to bear witness, by our example, to our resolve to amend our lives, so that others may take heart and act accordingly.

Monday 25th January

Energy use is closely related to economic development – which is why China's energy use is rising by 19% per person per year and India's by 11% a year, while in Europe it is rising by 3% a year. Energy comes largely from coal, gas and oil, the use of which threatens to de-stabilise the world's climate during this century. The uncomfortable truth is that our current economic system positively encourages us to use more energy.

Two changes are necessary:

1. Taxation should cease to be largely based on income, but should increasingly be levied on consumption;
2. Carbon reductions must be equitable shared. Carbon personal allowances are one way of achieving this. Another is the method known as "cap and share" whereby production of coal, gas and oil is capped at source and, with adjustments for vulnerable users, the burden of resulting price rises is shared equally.

Tuesday 26th January

Packaging of consumer products always involves carbon emissions in its manufacture and processing. How can we, the consumers, express our

disdain for excessive packaging?

Apart from complaining to the manager of the store, we can respond by changing our buying habits or by simply leaving excess packaging at the checkout.

Tap water is clean, fresh and free.

Bottled water has a high carbon cost in its manufacture, filling and transportation, leading to unnecessary carbon emissions and more packaging going to landfill.

Wednesday 27th January

Mesquite, the common name for the drought-resistant tree *Prosopis*, is a tree which tolerates poor, saline and alkaline soils and the hottest temperatures ever recorded. Mesquite beans are ground into flour, a gluten-free food rich in protein, carbohydrate, calcium, magnesium, iron and zinc. The flour also contains lysine, an amino acid that aids recovery from injuries. It is native to Central and South America where the flour is boiled into a syrup or chewed as a snack. The tree has been introduced to Africa and Asia, but too often the thorny, shrubby types have become invasive weeds. Garden Organic has backed continuing research into how the trees can be used in a variety of ways, but especially as an insurance

against famine in arid countries. For more information visit:

www.gardenorganic.org.uk/tow

Thursday 28th January

A study by the Institute of Migration entitled "Migration and Climate Change" endorses the IPCC prediction that the greatest single impact of climate change could be on human migration and that, by 2050, 200 million climate refugees will be forced to move by climate change. The study says that forced migration hinders development by

- Increasing pressure on urban infrastructure and services
- Undermining economic growth
- Increasing the risk of conflict and
- Leading to health, education and social outcomes for the migrants themselves.

Forced climate migrants are not classified as refugees and there is international resistance to expanding the definition of refugees to include climate refugees. Hence there is no "home" for climate migrants. The study makes recommendations to meet this situation. For details visit:

www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/cache/offonce/pid/1674?entryId=16561

Friday 29th January

Sellafield has been fined £75,000 plus £26,000 costs for breaches in health and safety law when two contractors inhaled radioactive dust. The HSE inspector commented: "The incident highlights the importance of Sellafield following its own arrangements for protecting workers when undertaking potentially hazardous work with the risk of exposure to radiation." A year earlier, in October 2006, all except one of our eight nuclear power stations were shut down. Heysham and Dungeness were suffering from fuelling problems, while the other five were shut down due to cracks. Questions about the reliability, safety, economics and carbon footprint of nuclear energy continue to be raised. For details go to: www.foe.org.uk

Saturday 30th January

CEL's EcoCELL project is described as "a journey in practical discipleship", designed to be travelled in groups of friends, neighbours, and church members. At the start of their journey together, participants

- Discover where they are now in terms of ecological footprint
- Decide on worthwhile and realistic goals of sustainability

- Plan how to get there by embarking on a programme of action in which members help and support each other.

A CD is available (price £5) to help start an EcoCELL programme from: Tony Emerson, 44 Leigham Vale, Streatham, London SW16 2JQ. Tel. 020 8769 4078. Email: tony.emerson12@btopenworld.com

Sunday 31st January

Father, we pray for all climate refugees, for all who become displaced from their homes through climate disasters such as heatwaves, droughts, floods, famine and sickness. Guide and equip the relief and development agencies and make us generous givers as we seek to address the suffering caused in part by our addiction to fossil fuels.

Sources: EcoCELL
The Organic Way
www.edie.net
www.scidev.net

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by [email](#) (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk For further information and requests for prayer, please write or email: Philip Clarkson Webb, 15 Valley View, Southborough, Tunbridge Wells TN4 0SY Email: pcw@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Picture on front cover:

Winter Fuschia. by Poppy Pickard

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