

Prayer guide for the care of creation



August 2010

"This is what the Lord says:

'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths;
Ask where the good way is and walk in it, and you will find rest for your
souls.' "

(Jeremiah 6.16-19)

"We cannot put our trust in science for a simple reason:

What we do with the knowledge that science creates is not the business of
science. Science has nothing to do with good and evil. And so 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)



Sunday 1st August

Lord, you have given us this beautiful world. You have given us the ability to harvest its produce for our nourishment. Yet we have gone further. In our greed we are robbing future generations, poisoning your world and destroying many of your creatures. Bring us to our senses, dear Lord. Grant us to know that we interfere with your world at our peril. It is you, not we, that rule this earth, for you created all that lives and moves, and we have been put here as your servants to care for everything around us.

Monday 2nd August

This summer has brought extreme weather to Russia and the Far East. Western Russia has wilted under temperatures of 35°C. (100°F.), the country is suffering the worst drought for more than a century and the crops are suffering. Several weeks of floods in China have led to the Yangtse and its tributaries bursting their banks killing hundreds of people. Mukhariz in the United Arab Emirates has experienced a staggering 55.2°C. (131.4°F.), only 2.5°C. below the highest temperature ever recorded. Global temperatures this year have been the warmest on record and show no sign of cooling off.

Tuesday 3rd August

What should our response be to the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster? Scapegoats are easy to find, but in truth we are all responsible. Our society, as it now functions, needs oil for transport, plastics and food production, yet easy-to-get oil is now a thing of the past, so oil companies take ever greater risks in order to feed our addiction. If we believe in our mission under God to care for the earth, we need to act. The least we can do is to cut out unnecessary travel, over-use of plastics and purchases of imported foods from water-stressed regions.

Wednesday 4th August

Shareholders in polluting industries have a special responsibility to make their views felt. In Australia a new Climate Advocacy Fund promotes constructive engagement and shareholder resolutions to influence Australia's biggest companies. Julian Poulter, chair of the Climate Institute, said: "Companies are on notice that a head-in-the-sand approach to climate change won't be acceptable to shareholders and they must start taking responsibility for their future liabilities." In Britain, BP was persuaded by a shareholder resolution to drop its investment in the oil sands of Alberta, whereas a similar resolution put to Shell failed.

Thursday 5th August

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) has joined many environmental and human rights groups in calling on the President of Nigeria to set up an independent body to channel compensation for all who have suffered from numerous oil spills in the Niger Delta. ECCR also calls for public reporting of all major spills and the replacement of ageing pipelines with the aim of reversing the environmental degradation of the Niger Delta.

Friday 5th August

The world's biggest oil company, ExxonMobil, despite a 2008 commitment to stop funding climate change deniers, has now revealed 2009 contributions to climate sceptic groups amounting to almost \$1 million. The IPCC, which assesses the science of global climate change, attracts thousands of scientists who work for nothing. The IPCC secretariat employs 6 people, while its working groups employ fewer than 10 people each. Against them is ranged a huge weight of corporate funding. There is nothing wrong with Exxon funding research

projects, but if that work looks like the triumph of commercial interest over disinterested inquiry, it can only harm Exxon's global reputation and postpone effective global action to deal with climate change while the planet continues to warm.

Saturday 7th August

The Carbon Trust was set up with an annual budget of £100 million to support green energy initiatives. Now the Government has reduced its budget to less than £88 million. However Tom Delay, its chief Executive has undertaken to re-focus on supporting new start-ups at their earliest stage. Sir James Dyson said: "Inventive British companies that invest in research and development are seen as a risky proposition. This Carbon Trust scheme supports the UK's most promising low-carbon technologies by moving quickly to commercialise new ideas."

Sunday 8th August

Creator God, we thank you for the wonder of your creation. There is so much in it for us to enjoy. We thank you for the gift of science and what it has enabled us to do. Yet we are aware that science can be used for good and evil. We pray that recent scientific advances will not be abused by human pride and greed, but will cause us to wonder afresh at your creative power. (Gerald Hovenden)

Monday 9th August

Britain's meat and dairy farms are heavily dependent on animal feeds imported from South America, where expanding production is destroying rainforests and accelerating climate change. A private member's bill, introduced by Robert Ffello MP, is to receive a Second Reading in Parliament this autumn. It aims to limit the climate and wildlife damage caused by factory farming in Britain and to support planet-

friendly farming. Currently the Government spends more than £700 million a year of taxpayers' money in subsidising factory farms. For details of the Bill, go to: www.fixthefoodchain.com

Tuesday 10th August

A big majority in the European Parliament has voted for a law which from 2012 will ban illegal timber products from the EU. Companies importing timber will have to disclose the country of origin and give details of legal clearance. WWF-UK comments: "People are waking up to the fact that the meat and dairy industry generates 18% of the world's climate-changing gases, and that a hidden chain links animals in British factory farms to rainforest and wildlife destruction in south America. People don't want climate change and wildlife destruction handed to them on a plate. The Government must change the way meat and dairy products are produced to protect all our futures."

Wednesday 11th August

In Canada twenty-one leading forestry companies have joined with nine environmental organisations to sign a Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement to protect 72 million hectares – an area twice the size of Germany – with an immediate stop to logging 28 million hectares of the most critical habitat for caribou. The signatories manage two-thirds of all certified forest land in Canada and have committed themselves to the highest environmental standards for woodland management. The Boreal Forest is a massive carbon store and protecting it is vital to the fight against climate change.

Thursday 12th August

The protection of tropical forests is often in the hands of its indigenous peoples. The Central African Republic (CAR) has become the first African nation to ratify the International Labour Organisation's Convention 169, which recognises the land rights of indigenous peoples and protects their right to control their own development and maintain their cultures, languages and religions. The CAR includes 4.5 million indigenous communities including the Aka Pygmies who lead a semi-nomadic life in the rainforests and rely on them for their survival. The UK has so far refused to sign the Convention on the ground that we have no tribal peoples, but this ignores the impact British development projects have on the lives of indigenous people across the world. Survival International comments: "The CAR has taken a bold and important step. We hope that others, like the UK, will follow its example. The stronger this law becomes, the more difficult it will be for governments and companies to violate tribal people's rights."

Websites: www.survival-international.org
and www.ilo.org

Friday 13th August

Since the 2007 Heart of Borneo Declaration was signed by Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia, 123 new species have been discovered in the 220,000 square kms. of irreplaceable tropical rainforest designated in the Declaration. The Heart of Borneo is home to 10 species of primate, more than 350 bird species, 150 reptiles and amphibians and over 10,000 plants that are found nowhere else in the world. Adam Tomasek, leader of the WWF team, said: "The discovery of these new species underlines the incredible diversity of this remarkable area and emphasises the importance of the commitments

already made by Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia to protect it."

Saturday 14th August

A report from CIWEM called "Global Water Security: an engineering perspective" finds that the UK's reliance on 'virtual' water in the form of imported food, coffee and tea is exacerbating water shortages in other countries. Two-thirds of the UK water footprint is now imported in the form of food, energy and other goods from countries that are themselves under water stress. Peter Guthrie, chairman of the working group, said: "If the water crisis becomes critical, it will pose a serious threat to the UK's future development because of the impact on our access to vital resources. Food prices would rocket and economic growth would suffer. To prevent this, we must recognise how our water footprint is impacting on global water scarcity. We should ask whether it is right to import green beans – or even roses – from water stressed region like Kenya. The burgeoning demand from developed countries is putting severe pressure on areas that are already short of water."

Sunday 15th August

Lord, you have given us this beautiful world, with the ability to harvest its resources by sustainable means. Yet we have gone further. In our greed we are robbing future generations of their birthright. Teach us, Lord, how to conserve all that you have lovingly provided for humanity. Give us grace to let your hand, not ours, rule your world, because the earth is yours and all that is in it.

Monday 16th August

Antarctica's penguins, seals and whales rely on plentiful supplies of krill found off the shores of the continent. China's booming fish farming industry needs protein and omega-3 oils for its

feedstock. Hitherto, China's trawlers have caught only small supplies of krill, but this year two ships were sent to explore the potential for increasing the catch. Conservationists are concerned that fishermen are targeting krill swarms close to shore – just where penguins and seals draw their supplies. Gerry Leape of the Pew Environmental Trust comments: "The problem is one of prey depletion for land-based krill predators. As they are forced to move further off-shore to feed, this could impact on their reproductive success."

Tuesday 17th August

The transformation of Britain to a low-carbon society, as envisaged by the report ZeroCarbonBritain2030, requires a complex range of skills. The Institute of Mechanical Engineers in a report called "Have We Lost the Battle?" illustrates the gap in skills between the UK target of an 80% reduction in CO₂ emissions by 2050 and the technologies needed to achieve this. The Society for the Environment, through its 23 professional partners, awards the title of Chartered Environmentalist, and calls for urgent attention to be focussed on the skills required to achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions and adaptations to climate change.

Wednesday 18th August

The last government designated 10 sites for "eco-towns" where homes had to comply with Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. The new government has confirmed 4 of the sites – Bordon/Whitehill in Hampshire, St. Austell in Cornwall, Rackheath in Norfolk and near Bicester in Oxfordshire. In any event, all new homes must meet Level 6 (the highest standard) by 2016. New "eco-towns" must demonstrate value for money and engagement from the local community if they are to qualify for part of the £30 million funding for 2010-2011. Other

potential sites include Shoreham Harbour, Northstowe near Cambridge and locations near Taunton, Yeovil, Leeds, Coventry, Lincoln and Sheffield. The Department of Communities & Local Government has stressed the priority that "plans are well supported locally and will achieve genuine improvements in sustainability."

Thursday 19th August

If Britain is to hit its target of generating 35% of electricity from renewables by 2020, new investment amounting to £200 billion will be needed. Neil Woodford, head of Invesco Perpetual, one of the energy sectors biggest investors, warns that Invesco could not justify providing capital for projects such as the plan to build 33 gigawatts of offshore wind turbines without greater certainty that the money would deliver proper returns. "If regulators and the Government fail to recognise this, then the vital infrastructure investment this economy needs will not be built."

Friday 20th August

An updated FoE report on "Pathways to 40% Carbon Reductions – the impact of FITs and the RPI" demonstrates how three different local authorities can meet the 40% carbon reduction target by 2020 through action and investment in renewable energy. Feed-In Tariff (FITs) payments have a 25-year term and Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payments a 20-year term, so the year for calculating Net Present Value (NPV) has been selected as 2030. While Solar Thermal technologies remain NPV negative out to 2030, other renewable technologies such as Solar PV, Ground-Source Heat Pumps and Biomass CHP show positive economic benefits by 2030. The results suggest that technologies eligible for

FITs can form a cost-effective part of carbon reduction strategies for all local authorities.

Saturday 21st August

The Passivhaus pioneered in Germany is an ultra low-energy house. Over 10,000 certified Passivhauses around the world use timber-frame construction or blockwork walls with external render. Now the British firm Green Building Store has built the first certified Passivhaus using traditional cavity wall construction. The Denby Vale project in West Yorkshire proves that it is possible for stone-built houses with cavity walls to keep internal temperatures stable through winter and summer without additional heating or air conditioning. Bill Butcher of GBS said: "Good simple robust design, knowledge and care in application is all that is needed to achieve Passivhaus levels. Traditional British construction methods can be used to reach the performance levels needed for 2050 carbon reduction goals."

Sunday 22nd August

Father, we thank you for your gifts of inventiveness and resilience which enable us to respond to the challenges of a changing climate. Help us to acknowledge our dependence on you for every human achievement. "Take not thy thunder from us, but take away our pride."
(G.K. Chesterton)

Monday 23rd August

Montgomery Primary School in Exeter will be the first UK school to be built to Passivhaus standards. It will be super-insulated and draught-proof, with controlled ventilation to keep temperatures healthy and comfortable. Electricity will be generated by onsite solar PV panels and the school will include a Sustainable Urban Drainage System pond and wetland, a wildflower meadow, a tree walk and a

horticultural area. The school, built at a cost of £9 million, will have 420 pupils when it opens next August.

Tuesday 24th August

St. John's College, Oxford, and the new 200-pupil Ynysowen Primary School near Aberfan will both use ground-source heat pumps to harness solar energy absorbed by the earth as a cheap and reliable source of renewable energy. A heat exchanger made up of a network of polyethylene pipes is buried underground to transfer energy to or from the earth via a heat pump. The St. John's College installation involves 48 boreholes plus heat pumps with a capacity of 146 kW. for heating, and should save 17 tonnes of annual carbon emissions. The Ynysowen system uses 14 boreholes and a heat pump capacity of 74 kW. yielding annual carbon savings of 4 tonnes. The same ENER-G technology is being used at schools in Ayrshire, Worcestershire and Nottingham.

Wednesday 25th August

Government savings on Low Carbon Technology have been announced:

- £6.1 million efficiency savings and under-spending on budgets
- £4.7 million by cancelling the Bioenergy Capital Grants and Infrastructure schemes, though grants for 2010/11 remain in place
- £1 million out of the £2 million funding for Deep Geothermal energy generation
- £3 million by reducing the scope of the Offshore Wind Capital Grants scheme
- £700,000 by early closing of the Energy Savings Trust technology trials
- £2.9 million by reducing the scope of the Low Carbon Technology programme

- £12.6 million by reducing Carbon Trust grants for low carbon technology and business support.

In addition, the Sustainable Energy Commission, formerly chaired by Jonathon Porritt, is to be wound up.

Thursday 26th August

The independent Committee on Climate Change has commented on the above measures:

- The UK should protect funding for those low carbon technologies which, if developed here, will help reduce our emissions by 80% by 2050 (the official target) while providing the basis for long-term economic growth
- Without government support, some essential low-carbon technologies will get stuck in a 'valley of death' where development is curtailed and will fail to reach the market
- New low-carbon technologies are vital for generating cleaner electricity which can then be used for electric vehicles and energy-efficient buildings, so making a significant contribution to meeting the 2050 target of reducing emissions by 80%.

The Committee concluded that any reduction in current funding would see the UK losing out on critical opportunities to build a green economy. "Once financial pressures have eased, increased funding will be required for marine technologies and electric vehicles and for low-carbon innovation generally."

Friday 27th August

Access to clean water is a key component of the Millennium Development Goals. The Spannenburg groundwater drinking water plant in the Netherlands uses sand filters to purify the water before it is pumped into people's homes.

Until recently up to 1.25 cu. metres of used water disappeared down the drain. Now Netherlands-based supplier Berson uses a UV water purification and disinfection system to supply drinking water to more than 300,000 people in a largely rural area. "The re-used backwash water is biologically reliable and we are totally confident to use it as drinking water. We opted for UV as it does not need the use of chemicals."

Saturday 28th August

The annual Greenbelt Festival takes place this weekend at Cheltenham Racecourse. CEL will be part of a new 'green zone' which brings together all the environmental organisations featured in the G Source exhibition tent. The CEL stall is a great place for members to meet each other. Any who can spare at least 2 hours to help staff the stall may qualify for a free day or weekend ticket. Please email Paul Bodenham at paul@christian-ecology.org.uk if you can help.

Sunday 29th August

Father, we thank you for the wonderful world we live in, for the food you provide and the abundance of its store. Help us to look after the natural world, to watch it and to learn from it. Weed out from our lives all that hinders peace, so that your kingdom may be spread through us and that we may be channels of your peace.

Monday 30th August

According to the Local Government Association, Britain's landfill sites will be full in less than 8 years unless we see a major shift in recycling rates. The UK sends more waste to landfill than any other European country and is heading for huge fines if it fails to rein in the amount of waste it buries in the ground. Council tax payers will inevitably pick up the bill. The chairman of

the LGA said: "Taxpayers face huge financial penalties if targets to reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfill are not met.

Householders should be congratulated for their recent efforts

To increase the amount of rubbish they recycle, but that doesn't change the fact that Britain is fast running out of space to dump rubbish in the ground. With the current financial squeeze that all councils are facing, it is more important than ever that they work with residents to ensure that as much rubbish as possible is recycled."

Tuesday 31st August

Despite a growing shortage of landfill space, only 10% of UK municipal waste is incinerated in energy recovery plants. The European average is 30.4%. In Switzerland it is 78% and in Germany 72%. Is it likely that health-conscious Germans or Swiss will accept a technology that endangers health?

According to Sita UK, a waste-processing company, about 17% of Britain's electricity needs could be met by burning rubbish and harnessing the methane produced in landfill sites. Denmark, with a population of 5 million, has 32 waste incineration plants. Britain, with 61.4 million people, has just 24. A 50 MW. plant costing £200 million can supply 50,000 homes with electricity 24 hours a day. Yet planning permission for new plants has been denied over and over again.

Sources: CIWEM News
Positive News
www.edie.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

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