

The challenge is not just to change our light bulbs, instal solar panels and drive at slower speeds. It is to embrace a complete change of lifestyle – which many people think is unachievable.

Tuesday 31st January

Constant grim news about climate change, the economy, job losses, inflation and so on can leave people feeling helpless, leaving them wondering whether anything can change and whether it's not all too late.

"The Transition Companion" (ISBN 978 1 900322 97 3) runs through the variety of initiatives being taken by hundreds of groups both in Britain and abroad who simply do not accept that we are helpless, and devote their energies to practical projects aimed at encouraging us all to pull up our sleeves and do whatever we can for the common good.

Sources:

The Transition Companion by Rob Hopkins
CIWEM Business Briefing
BBC Wildlife Magazine
www.ecdie.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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Picture on front cover: Overnight Vigil on the Thames Foreshore on the eve of the Climate March

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

January 2012

"Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off." (Proverbs 23.5)

"Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5.7)

"I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation . . . whether living in plenty or in want." (Philippians 4.12)

"When it says in Revelation 8 that there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour, that was because God was shifting the scenery for the next act." (Selwyn Hughes)



Sunday 1st January

Father God, who changes not with the changing years, we look back along the road we have come. We thank you for all your loving kindness and tender mercies along the way. When the road has been dark, you have not failed us, though we have often failed you.

We look forward, not knowing what may befall in the year ahead. Help us to live a day at a time, to trust

you as much in the shadow as in the sunshine and to find our way by the light of your will.

Father, you are both our Guide and our Goal.

Your company is our Stay and Strength. Go with us into this New Year and bring us at the last to our journey's end in peace. In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen (Leslie Weatherhead)

Monday 2nd January

The outcome of the Durban conference was deeply disappointing to those who worked and prayed for an agreement to limit global temperatures to 2^o C. above pre-industrial levels. Instead, there will be a legally-binding agreement by 2015, with details still to be settled, but even this will only take effect by 2020, despite scientific evidence that global emissions need to fall by 2015 if catastrophic climate change is to be avoided, affecting the world's poorest people. Following agreement to extend the Kyoto Protocol, Canada has withdrawn from it altogether, setting an appalling example to other industrialised nations.

Tuesday 3rd January

"Why does God allow these things?" is one of the most difficult questions Christians have to face. Like Job's comforters, we can attempt

answers, but there are no clear solutions. All we can do is to hang on to certain truths:

- God created this universe, therefore he knows what he is doing
- A God who gave his Son on a cross has got to have a wise purpose in whatever he does.
- God often allows our plans to be shattered because he has bigger and better plans for us.

"When you get to the end of your rope, just tie a knot and hang on."

Wednesday 4th January

Since the 1950s Britain with other Western nations has enjoyed almost unbroken economic growth and gains in living standards. Now, as Richard Heinberg points out, the party is over.

But moving towards a lower-carbon, less

energy-intensive future, looks like a move away from a good place to be. It's like trying to

persuade a child to come home at the end of a birthday party where it has consumed far too

many sugary cakes and drinks. The child has to be coaxed and dragged along. This perception

of a move away from what we have been enjoying for so long is what paralyses

governments and makes so many dismiss peak oil and climate change and stick their heads in the sand.

Thursday 5th January

The Age of Cheap Oil promised us so much: holidays on the moon, a leisured society, the "trickling down" of great wealth to everybody. Yet, the more reliant we have become on Cheap Oil, the more indicators have been telling us this was not a good idea.

Thursday 26th January

According to the US Joint Operating Environment 2010 report:

"By 2012 surplus oil capacity could entirely disappear and by 2015 the shortfall could reach nearly 10 million barrels a day." Current output is around 75 million barrels a day. Hopes of maintaining output centre on "unconventional oils" which includes deep-sea production, tar-sands oil and oil from coal. These have far higher carbon emissions, use more water, produce more pollution and often provide only about five units of energy for every unit consumed in exploiting them. Transition groups (www.transitionnetwork.co.uk) are exploring ways of countering the effects of scarce and expensive oil.

Friday 27th January

It is hard to look at the scientific data on peak oil and climate change and not feel fearful about the future. Engaging in Transition initiatives may not make the fear go away, but working with others and sharing our hopes and fears can be a lifesaver and a way of avoiding feeling overwhelmed. Many Transition groups have a place for "Heart and Soul" thinking, where Christian values can be brought to bear.

Saturday 28th January

Public attention since 2008 has been focussed more on the economic crisis than on potential energy shortages. Yet the mountain of debt which we have accumulated has only been made possible by the availability of cheap oil. As Jonathon Porritt puts it: "Conventional economic growth and cheap oil have marched hand in hand for the best part of 60 years; within just a few years, it will have become

increasingly apparent that both are on their last legs."

Sunday 29th January

Lord Jesus, born into a simple home, living the life of a simple carpenter, save us, we pray, from such entanglement in the complexities of life that we lose our simplicity of spirit, our sense of wonder, our taste for simple pleasures, our joy in homely things. Grant that no wealth of possession, no learning of mind, no pride of soul may take away our taste for lowly things or make the song of a bird, or the friendship of a child, or the joy of an unexpected visit, merely boring or dull. Amid all the distractions of modern life, keep our hearts childlike and simple, that the gates of heaven, closed to many who are merely clever or conceited, may be opened to us always. Amen.

Monday 30th January

Climate change is often talked about in a future tense. But for those who in recent years have suffered from drought or floods, its impacts have already arrived. A 2009 paper in 'Nature' asked what needs to be done to limit temperature rises to 2^o C. and concluded that the world's carbon emissions will need to have peaked by 2020 and that a 72% cut by 2050 will give us an 84% chance of avoiding runaway climate change.

In practice, this means limiting our personal emissions to an 86-92% reduction by 2050. This is roughly the per capita emissions produced today by Mozambique.

Each person in the UK now produces 9.7 tonnes a year of carbon emissions, to which must be added another 4.7 tonnes associated with imported goods.

German model where (unlike the British) the rate of reduction is known in advance.

Saturday 21st January

Today is CEL's "Ecoell Day" at the Magdalen Centre, Eversholt Street, London NW1 1BN in a programme designed to help families take the first steps to reducing their impact on the environment. George Marshall, author of "Carbon Detox" will speak on the practicalities. The programme runs from 10.30 to 5 and is free. Contact:

tony.emerson12@btopenworld.com or ring 0208 769 4078. See also: www.christian-ecology.org.uk/ecocell-day-21-jan-2012.htm

Sunday 22nd January

Lord Jesus, who did not hesitate to condemn what was wrong in the life around you, give us:

Courage to hold fast to our Christian faith;
Courage to overcome our fears and temptations;

Courage to maintain a brave witness to the world;

Courage to persevere to the end of life's battle. Amen.

Monday 23rd January

Professor Michel Andre, a laureate of the Rolex Awards for Enterprise, has examined the corpses of stranded whales and those hit by ships and found that they had suffered severe inner-ear damage, making them incapable of detecting sounds. More than 200 whales seen near the Canaries showed no reaction when exposed to noise. 6-10 collisions with shipping occur there each year, mostly with

sperm whales. Andre has developed an anti-collision system consisting of chains of acoustic buoys which can detect whales and transmit their locations to nearby ships. He has been less successful at persuading shipping companies and governments to fund the introduction of the system.

Tuesday 24th January

Following the oil spill off New Zealand from the MV Rena, 2,000 dead birds were recovered and it is estimated that another 25-30% would have died plus unknown numbers of whales, dolphins and seals, where petroleum compounds accumulate in their blubber leading to long-term damage to themselves and their offspring. Dr. Simon Boxall of Southampton University adds that damage below the surface can smother life and hamper the ability of microbes to break down contaminants. The Rena was registered in Malta, which will only achieve full compliance with international regulations next December. Inspections had revealed many deficiencies in the Rena, but no country ever considered banning the Rena from its waters.

Wednesday 25th January

"Dolphin-friendly tuna" can sometimes be anything but dolphin-friendly. Greenpeace has released aerial photos of tuna ships in the Pacific revealing a by-catch that included sharks, manta rays, turtles and even baleen whales. The problem lies with Fish Aggregation Devices – rafts trackable by satellite which attract not only tuna, but a host of other wildlife. The fishermen locate the rafts, then use vast purse-seine nets to scoop up everything around them. If all of us who buy tuna were to ask staff whether the tuna come from wildlife-friendly stocks, the right message might get through.

Now, as total UK personal debt stands at £1,463 billion (that's £30,306 for every adult), we are seeking oil in ever more challenging places. In addition, the climate is changing ever faster, with new records being broken every year, while our dependence on oil has left our economy vulnerable and fragile.

Friday 6th January

If we think we are being torn away from much that makes life worth living, we might reflect whether we might be moving towards a better place, where we have more time to discover each other, enjoying cleaner air, healthier food, less pressurised living and more contentment.

There are now Transition groups in 34 countries, exploring in different ways the consequences of scarce oil and extreme climate volatility.

"While engaging in Transition may not make fear of the future go away, working with others and sharing our fears and hopes can be a lifesaver and a way of avoiding feeling overwhelmed." (Rob Hopkins in "The Transition Companion")

Saturday 7th January

"In a world of triple-digit oil prices, distance suddenly costs money and lots of it. Many of those manufacturing jobs that we thought we had lost forever to labour markets overseas may soon be coming back home. For every increase in price of the fuel that powers the container ships that ply the oceans, China's wage advantage becomes less and less important and Western workers again become competitive."

(Jeff Rubin)

Increased localisation is not something we choose: it is an inevitable change of direction as

we pass the oil peak and begin to treat climate change with the urgency that it demands. "Localisation stands, at best, at the limits of practical possibility, but it has the decisive argument in its favour that there will be no alternative." (Dr. David Fleming)

Sunday 8th January

Give us, dear Lord, a deeper understanding of your purposes, that we may be steadfast amid the turmoil of our times. May our faith never fail, nor our love grow cold, nor our hope become faint. So may we look towards the coming of your, which you have promised through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Redeemer.

Monday 9th January

Introducing the Government's Water White Paper, Caroline Spelman said that Britain was already facing water scarcity in some areas and environmental damage resulting from over-abstraction. "Parts of England have less rainfall per person than many Mediterranean countries. Making sure we have enough water for everyone is going to be one of this country's major challenges . . . Severe weather events, population growth and the need to grow more food have all put pressure on water supplies and will continue to do so."

Tuesday 10th January

CIWEM's director Nick Reeves comments: "Central to delivering future water management is to value our water properly, and to do this we need to measure consumption accurately and then use tariffs that discourage profligacy and support those who generally struggle to afford their water. The White Paper does too little to

encourage water metering, which is a crucial part of this balance."

The Wildlife & Wetlands Trust warns that measures to reduce water use and better safeguard wetlands are being delayed, while concerns about urban flooding and over-abstraction are fudged. "Wetland drainage systems that soak up floodwater are easy to create, often inexpensive, but highly effective."

Wednesday 11th January

600 million tonnes of products enter the UK each year, ranging from vehicles, computers, TVs and ceramics to fuels, energy generators and pharmaceuticals, but recycling rates are often below 1%. The Waste Resource Action Project (WRAP) identifies "quick win" recycling strategies covering materials such as copper, lithium, cobalt and rare earths which could not only help to reduce the UK's carbon footprint, but also address supply scarcity of these materials. The biggest impact can come from extending the life of goods and reducing the consumption of electronics. "Lifetime optimisation" can often be achieved by leasing goods instead of purchasing them outright.

Thursday 12th January

A report from the European Environment Agency shows that revenue from recycling almost doubled between 2004 and 2008 as booming Asian economies pushed up the price of materials. Overall employment from recycling increased by 40% from 2000 to 2007. More jobs are created by recycling than by landfilling or incinerating waste.

Imports of rare metals increased by 50% from 2000 to 2009, but existing recycling infrastructure has not so far focussed on rare metals, so many of them are lost for ever.

Friday 13th January

As our oil and gas resources decline, the only indigenous sources of energy we will have are coal and renewables. Eyes are being turned once more on a Severn barrage, perhaps using reversible turbines that can use flood tides as well as ebb tides. As with wind turbines, a backup source of energy is required for periods when the tide is slack. Nuclear is insufficiently flexible to take this role, so unfortunately fossil fuel power stations would be needed. On the other hand, a tidal barrage would have a life span of at least 120 years and, with rising sea levels, would provide some protection against flooding. The environmental impact of a barrage would need to be assessed before a final decision was taken.

Saturday 14th January

Population growth in rich and poor countries alike is a key driver of rising carbon emissions. The Population & Climate Change African Forum brings together climate and health NGOs from nine African countries including the Ecological Christian Organisation (www.ecouganda.org) based in Kampala to press the UN to increase its funding for family planning and women's empowerment. Roger Martin, chair of Population Matters, comments: "We much admire PACCAF's work in campaigning for realism across the continent worst affected by soaring populations and climate change. Of course the main climate driver is excessive emissions by rich Western countries, so we campaign for non-coercive population stabilisation in all countries, alongside radical reductions in emissions in developed countries. This applies notably in the UK where the 10 million more people we are projected to have in the next 22 years would

have the carbon footprint of 220 million more Malawians. It's no use reducing your carbon footprint if you keep on increasing the number of feet."

Sunday 15th January

Lord, we praise and thank you for your great gifts of freedom and inventiveness, and we pray for the wisdom to use them aright in your service and in the service of all your creation.

Monday 16th January

Asia Pulp & Paper (APP) is part of the Sinar Mas Group which has felled more than a million hectares of Indonesia's tropical forests since 1984. Field investigations from June to October have shown that its suppliers have been clear cutting tropical forest inside Sumatra's Senepis Tiger Sanctuary.

APP has set four successive deadlines for sourcing 100% of its timber from plantations and has kept to none of them. The Netherlands Advertising Commission has judged APP's advertising as "misleading" and some, but not all, of its global buyers have ceased purchasing its products.

Tuesday 17th January

Brazil's Senate has passed a law opening up vast new areas of forest to agriculture and cattle ranching, and given an amnesty for illegal deforestation conducted before 2008. If signed into law by the President, the changes will jeopardise Brazil's significant environmental achievements and severely undermine global efforts to fight climate change. They will also expose poor Brazilians to bigger risks from floods and droughts.

Wednesday 18th January

A new FoE report called "Reclaiming Power" notes that countries with feed-in tariffs for electricity (FITs) have delivered dramatic increases in renewable capacity. Since China introduced FITs in 2006, its wind capacity has doubled in every year. The report advocates globally-funded FITs that can tackle climate change and energy needs from the bottom up. According to the UN Department for Economic & Social Affairs, public investment of \$100 billion a year for 10-15 years would make renewables cheaper than fossil fuels, allowing them to become the default choice for energy generation everywhere.

Thursday 19th January

2012 is the UN Year of Sustainable Energy for All. Norway has launched an "Energy + Partnership" scheme to address energy poverty and the climate agenda. But a truly global fund would allocate country funding on an agreed framework with civil society participation on the model of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria.

The International Energy Agency reports that if we are to stand a 50/50 chance of avoiding a 2°C rise in global temperature, we need an additional \$18 trillion investment in low-carbon energy by 2035. To achieve universal energy access we also need an extra \$50 billion a year.

Friday 20th January

Payments under a system of global FITs would be long-term and stable, so that communities and businesses can invest securely for the future. The rate of FITs would fall over time with reducing costs and risks, as happens with the