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Picture on front cover: Winter Trees
by Poppy Pickard

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



January 2011

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."
(Ephesians 6.17-18)

"When I pray, I'm like an electric bulb put into its socket full of light and power. When I don't pray, I'm like that same electric bulb disconnected from its socket. No light and no power."
(Anon.)

"Prayer at its best opens earth to heaven."
(Selwyn Hughes)



Saturday 1st January

Professor Tim Jackson in the Sustainable Development Commission's report "Prosperity Without Growth" explains why governments and people are caught in a profound dilemma: "The modern economy is structurally reliant on economic growth for its stability. When growth falters, politicians panic. Businesses struggle to survive. People lose their jobs, and sometimes their homes. A spiral of recession looms. Questioning growth is deemed to be the act of lunatics, idealists and revolutionaries.

In short, society is faced with a profound dilemma. To resist growth is to risk economic and social collapse. To pursue it is to endanger the ecosystems on which we depend for our long-term survival."

Sunday 2nd January

Lord, God, creator of all, we have turned from your love and followed the ways of greed and injustice, fear and violence. In our selfishness we have denied the needs of others and built a society which takes but seldom gives, which values success above love, which seeks growth in output rather

than in maturity. Forgive us, Lord, and grant us the strength to turn from our evil ways.

Monday 3rd January

According to Tim Jackson "Prosperity has vital social and psychological dimensions. To do well is in part about the ability to give and receive love, to enjoy the respect of our peers, to contribute useful work and to have a sense of belonging and trust in our local community." And yet all our capabilities are bounded on the one hand by the scale of the global population and on the other by the finite ecology of the planet. "To ignore these natural bounds to flourishing is to condemn our descendants – and our fellow-creatures – to an impoverished planet."

Tuesday 4th January

"Economic growth has until now been the default mechanism for preventing collapse . . . As long as the economy expands fast enough to offset improvements in labour productivity, there is no problem. But if the economy doesn't grow, people lose their jobs, output falls, public spending is curtailed and the ability to service

what we have, in order to make us buy more – on mobile phones, computer screens, high street billboards, bus stops, flashing screens in railway stations and public transport. Then, on our television at night, there is plenty more."

Government has already banned tobacco advertising and David Cameron has expressed concern about the commercialisation and 'harmful and creepy' sexualisation of childhood. A compass report called "The Advertising Effect" proposes a complete ban on advertising in public places. Something like this already happens in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and other cities in North and South America. "The global financial crunch, the accumulating evidence of our terrible impact on the world's resources, and the challenges produced by our spiking population, mean we need to find a different path, a more modest way forward. But we need politicians up to the job and a new political and economic model. That's going to require guts and imagination."

Sources:

"Prosperity without Growth?"
by Professor Tim Jackson,
Sustainable Development
Commission 2010.

Positive News
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

farm buildings and turn them into a classroom and tearoom where people can gather to re-connect with food and farming. Fordhall Farm, Market Drayton, was saved from developers earlier this year. The renovations will include hemp and lime mortars, sheepwool insulation and renewable energy infrastructure.

www.fordhallfarm.com

Saturday 29th January

Bungay Community Bees in Suffolk is a community supported agriculture scheme where members hold shares in the harvest and take part in the beekeeping year. The aim is to increase the number of bees and beekeepers and promote more sustainable ways to farm honey. For a fee of £20 a year, members go on visits to working hives with opportunities to have hives in their garden, a chance to attend free bee-keeping courses and an end-of-season honey harvest and party.

www.sustainablebungay.com

Across the country, bee-keeping courses are run by the British Beekeeping Association part-funded under DEFRA's Healthy Bees Plan.

www.Britishbee.org.uk

Sunday 30th January

"The mulch of decay and death gives way to growth anew,
Bare soil sprouts green shoots.
The river that breaks banks can also cut new channels, spread fertile loam,
The canker of bitterness can ripen into the fruit of forgiveness,
Bridges can be rebuilt, stronger and more secure;
Stony hearts can be melted, icy faces warmed,
Deserts can bloom again.
The groaning of a dying creation gives birth to a new world.
One day a man returned from death,
And hope was vindicated,
The last enemy defeated;
Nothing wasted.
One day all things will be made new."
Reproduced by permission from "Nothing is Wasted" by Dave Bookless, A Rocha, from the book "God Doesn't Do Waste".

Monday 31st January

Nick Reeves, director of CIWEM, believes it is time to tackle the advertising which fuels our unsustainable over-consumption. "Daily we are bombarded by images that do their best to make us feel dissatisfied with our lives, and with

public debt is diminished. A spiral of recession looms. Economic growth may be unsustainable, but 'de-growth' appears to be unstable . . . The failure to take this dilemma seriously may be the single biggest threat to sustainability that we face."

Wednesday 5th January

Jackson believes that novelty plays a central role in economic growth. There is a perfect fit between the continual production of novelty by firms and the continuous consumption of novelty in households. The restless desire of the consumer is the perfect complement to the restless innovation of the entrepreneur. Taken together, these two mutually-reinforcing processes are exactly what is needed to drive growth forwards.

Despite this fit, the relentless pursuit of novelty creates an anxiety that can undermine social wellbeing. Individuals are at the mercy of social comparison. Firms must innovate or die. The economy itself is dependent on consumption growth for its very survival. The 'iron cage of consumerism' is a system in which no one is free."

Thursday 6th January

In Tim Jackson's view "Simplistic exhortations to resist consumerism are destined to failure. Yet governments are deeply conflicted. On the one hand, they have a role in protecting social and ecological goods while, on the other, they are committed to ensuring economic stability." Yet "the narrow pursuit of growth represents a horrible distortion of the common good and of underlying human values. It also undermines the legitimate role of government itself. At the end of the day, the state is society's commitment device, *par excellence*, and the principal agent in protecting our shared prosperity. A new vision of government that embraces this role is urgently needed."

Friday 7th January

The report summarises the steps that governments can take to effect the transition to a sustainable economy. The process must begin to redress the perverse incentives and damaging social logic that lock us into unproductive social competition . . .

“Prosperity today means nothing if it undermines the conditions on which prosperity tomorrow depends.”

Saturday 8th January

The impact of a no-growth economy on the labour market is set out in Canadian economist Peter Victor’s book “Managing Without Growth – slower by design not disaster” (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar). In his scenario, unemployment is averted by reducing both the total and the average numbers of working hours. Sharing the work more equally across the available workforce could maintain full employment even with static output.

Sunday 9th January

Save us, loving Father, from over-reliance on human ingenuity and short-term solutions as we strive to repair the damage we have wrought to your world. Acknowledging our reason as your most precious gift, inspire us to put our trust in you alone, who gave your Son for us on the Cross.

Monday 10th January

George Soros in “The New Paradigm for Financial Markets” traces the emergence of a “global bubble” in 2008 to policies of increasing liquidity as a way of stimulating demand for goods – the overriding aim being to promote economic growth. In other words, the markets were not undone by isolated practices carried out by rogue individuals, nor even by the turning of a blind eye by careless regulators. They were undone by growth itself.

Tuesday 11th January

Paul Ehrlich forty years ago suggested that the impact of human activity is the product of:

1. The size of the population (P)
2. Its level of affluence (A) and
3. The technology available (T)

$$I = P \times A \times T$$

Both affluence and population increase have driven a fivefold growth in the global economy over that period. Advocating limits to population growth has been seen as infringing human liberties – despite the fact that the fastest growth has occurred in developing countries where it has been driven largely by lack of

New Guinea is considering a scheme for charging ships on a sliding scale based on the amount of carbon they emit. The Carbon War Room, founded by Sir Richard Branson, has launched an online tool which grades 60,000 commercial ships according to their emissions (www.shippingefficiency.org) and it is expected that major shipowners will lodge their emissions data to boost their green credentials. Shipping emissions could be cut by 30% through increased efficiency, and by even more if designers pursue new concepts such as sails, kites and solar power.

Wednesday 26th January

The world’s biggest solar boat – a giant 500 ft. by 50 ft. catamaran called Turanor meaning “power of the sun” is on a 160-day voyage round the world, stopping for public exhibitions at major ports. It accommodates 5,382 square feet of solar PV cells providing 103 kw. of power stored in the largest lithium ion battery ever made. It can carry 50 passengers at a maximum speed of 15 knots and can travel for 3 days at 7.5 knots without any sunshine. The object, says Swiss adventurer Raphael Domjan, is to highlight the urgent problem of

shipping pollution – double that caused by aircraft – and to demonstrate the possibilities of clean transport. www.planetsolar.org

Thursday 27th January

Gerber Juices, Britain’s largest producer of fruit juices, has partnered Cannington Cold Stores in installing an anaerobic digester which disposes of their waste fruit and turns it into clean energy. Micro-organisms break down the biodegradable material and so create biogas which, in a combined heat and power plant, converts into electricity. This rural power station provides enough electricity for the cold store as well as for about 200 local homes, exporting the surplus to the national grid. The scheme reduces waste disposal costs by £150,000 a year and avoids around 152,000 journey miles to landfill.

www.gerberjuice.com

Friday 28th January

Britain’s first community farm, with over 800 shareholders around the world, has been awarded over £250,000 by the Regional Development Agency to renovate old

sustainable food procurement which will require food to be traceable to its production source. "Livestock and eggs will need to be sourced from suppliers with accredited or certified environmental standards, and no endangered fish will be used. By 2012 sustainability will be included in all catering contracts. This includes the London Fire Brigade, the Metropolitan Police and Transport for London.

Saturday 22nd January

The costs of disposing of radioactive waste from new nuclear power stations have been capped by the Government at £1 billion. Anything above that will be borne by the taxpayer. Chris Huhne, the Energy Secretary had earlier warned of a £4 billion funding gap in the costs of disposing of Britain's existing nuclear waste. The question remains: Is it right to leave to future generations the costs of our profligacy? Is it right to increase those costs by building new nuclear plants?

Sunday 23rd January

Loving Father, the world is full of your glory, but now it is threatened by our greed and negligence. Forgive us for

our lack of concern. Unstop our ears so that we hear the groans of creation so afflicted by human thoughtlessness. Stir us up to act now to protect your suffering world. For the sake of your Son, who died to redeem us all.

Monday 24th January

The effects of the Pakistan floods on millions of rural people will be felt for a long time. In 2009 Pakistan reported 6,033 tonnes of obsolete persistent organic pollutants (POPs), banned under the Stockholm Convention as possible sources of cardiovascular diseases, metabolic disorders and cancer plus suspected endocrine disrupters. Large stocks were reported near intensive cash crops and other agricultural activities and thousands of tonnes may have been released during the floods. A UN study has found that climate change increases exposure to POPs and heightens their toxic effect on humans and the environment.

Tuesday 25th January

Shipping contributes about 1 gigatonne of CO₂ a year to the atmosphere, more than the whole of Britain. Now Papua

education and insufficient access to contraception.

Affluence has been seen as synonymous with well-being – despite evidence that increasing incomes above a certain level does not always guarantee well-being and sometimes detracts from it.

That leaves us with technology.

Wednesday 12th January

According to German economist Dieter Helm "The easy compatibility between economic growth and climate change, which lies at the heart of the Stern Review, is an illusion. There is no credible socially-just, ecologically-sustainable scenario of continually-growing incomes for a world of 9 billion people. Simplistic assumptions that capitalism's propensity for efficiency will allow us to stabilise the climate or protect us against resource scarcity are nothing short of delusional . . . Even as the engine of growth delivers productivity improvements, so it also drives forward the scale of throughput. Nowhere is there evidence that efficiency can outrun scale in the way it must do if growth is to be compatible with sustainability."

Thursday 13th January

According to Jackson "Achieving a lasting prosperity relies on providing capabilities for people to flourish within limits set not by us, but by the ecology and resources of a finite planet. . . Government already intervenes in people's choices e.g. in the structure of education, procurement policies, planning guidelines, employment policies, trading standards and support for community initiatives. It is all part of balancing individual freedoms with public benefits, of balancing the present with the future. . . Rampant individualism which seeks short-term gratification ends up undermining prosperity, not just for society as a whole, but for individuals as well."

Friday 14th January

Economic historian Avner Offer in "The Challenge of Affluence" suggests that, left to themselves, individuals tend to be irredeemably myopic. We favour today over tomorrow in ways which, to an economist, appear entirely inexplicable under any rational rate of discounting the future. He suggests that this fallibility has always had a social solution in the form of 'commitment devices' such as savings

accounts, marriage, norms for social behaviour – mechanisms which help us to curtail our appetite for immediate arousal and protect our own future interests. Unfortunately these commitment devices are being eroded and undermined by affluence. “Lured by our evolutionary roots, bombarded with persuasion and seduced by novelty, we are like children in the sweet shop, knowing that sugar is bad for us, but unable to resist the temptation.”

Saturday 15th January

According to Jackson, the principal role of government is to ensure that long-term private goods are not undermined by short-term public interests.

So why have governments so often elevated consumer sovereignty above social goals and actively encouraged the expansion of markets into new areas of people’s lives? “The state itself appears deeply conflicted, striving on the one hand to encourage consumer freedoms that lead to growth and on the other to protect public goods and defend ecological limits. Government itself is caught in the dilemma of growth.”

Sunday 16th January

“Except the Lord builds the house,
Its builders build in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
The watchmen stand guard in vain.”
(Psalm 127)

Father, we pray for all who hold authority in our land, for the Queen and her family, for ministers and scientists, for judges and civil servants, that they may seek your hand in all their decisions and work for the furtherance of your kingdom, in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Monday 17th January

Jackson suggests twelve Steps to a Sustainable Economy, including a shift in the burden of taxation from economic ‘goods’ e.g. incomes, to ecological ‘bads’ e.g. pollution. In the UK, the proportion of taxation from green taxes is actually lower than it was in 1997. “A sustained effort by government is now required to design appropriate mechanisms for shifting the burden of taxation from incomes onto resources and emissions.”

Tuesday 18th January

Mohammed Nasheed, President of the Maldives, speaking at Cancun, said he was uncomfortable sitting with the G77/China bloc of nations which mostly hold the view that Western nations should cut emissions while developing countries should only reduce the rate of emissions growth. “It is true that we need to develop, but equating development to carbon emissions I thought was quite silly. There is new technology. Fossil fuel is obsolete, it’s yesterday’s technology. So we aim to come up with a development strategy that’s low carbon.” The Maldives aims to become carbon neutral by 2020.

Wednesday 19th January

Kevin Anderson, director of the Tyndall Centre, said at Cancun that unless emissions were drastically reduced in the next 10 years, global temperatures were expected to rise by more than 6° C. by 2060, causing floods, droughts and mass migrations. The only way to reduce emissions sufficiently while allowing poorer nations to grow was to halt economic growth in wealthy countries over the next 20 years. “Politicians should consider a rationing system similar to

the one introduced in the 1940s if we are to address the scale of the problem we face. Halting growth does not necessarily mean a recession or a poorer lifestyle . . . Our emissions were a lot less 10 years ago and we got by OK then.”

Thursday 20th January

A report from FoE called “Biofuels: Driving to Destruction” claims that if government plans to treble biofuel use by 2020 succeed, the increased demand would see an area the size of Northern Ireland given over to biofuels grown overseas. Since more than 90% of them come from food crops such as soya, palm oil and sugar cane, the results would be:

Forests, grasslands and peatlands destroyed to give way to biofuels;

Increased climate emissions due to burning and ploughing up natural habitats;

More hunger in poor countries as less cropland is available to grow crops for human consumption.

Friday 21st January

The Greater London Authority has announced a commitment to