
Prayer guide for the care of creation

July 2012



“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.

There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard; their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

(Psalm 19. 1-4)

“In this house with starry dome, Floored with gemlike plains and seas,
Shall I ever feel at home, Never wholly be at ease?

“World Strangeness” by William Wordsworth)



Sunday 1st July

Lord, we confess our sins that stain the sanctity of all creation,

Our wild consumerism that has exhausted the earth and our greed that has caused hunger, destruction and inequality.

We ask your forgiveness that we have not been good stewards of the garden that manifests your glory.

We ask your forgiveness as our style of life is often rotten and has left a bad smell in your nostrils.

Free us from ruining the green valleys and polluting the tranquil waters that refresh the soul.

This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ, who poured out his blood to reconcile everything. Amen.

(Tearfund prayer for Rio + 20)

Monday 2nd July

“Protecting our environment and decarbonising the economy used to be seen as essential, with investing in a green future a means to re-build our economy” writes Nick Reeves of CIWEM. “Now it seems this was merely a luxury, and no longer a necessity. Why is government money going into the banking system rather than into green infrastructure projects,

retrofitting of buildings, green transport, green energy, water efficiency, flood defence schemes and homes? Such projects have never been cheaper to fund. They would provide jobs instantly, and de-carbon the economy. What’s stopping us?”

Tuesday 3rd July

When, 40 years ago, Lucas Aerospace was threatened with closures and redundancies, a committee of workers put forward 12 proposals for new products such as a portable life-support system, a safe braking system for buses, robotic devices for remote fire-fighting and mining, hobcarts for spina bifida sufferers etc. They would have saved jobs and created new ones. Today, the talk is all of markets, as if they were a natural, elemental and irresistible force. The test of any 21st century government’s success will be if it delivers a timely boost to the economy, thousands of green jobs, energy security, a good deal for consumers and reversing the sharp rise in carbon emissions.

Wednesday 4th July

Growing cotton successfully requires big applications of pesticides and

the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, to which the UK Government is a signatory. The areas of the Park allocated as oil concessions cover 85% of its land and, besides the mountain gorillas, are home to chimpanzees, hippos and forest elephants.

Sources: CIWEM Business News
Positive News
www.populationmatters.org
www.edie.net
www.wwf.org.uk

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Picture on front cover: Pyramidal Orchid, by Philip Webb

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Additional Prayers

contracts by sourcing all the required straw within the region.

Sunday 29th July

Father God, you have made us stewards of all your creation. Give us a reverence for all your handiwork. Help us to guard your creation from waste and abuse, so that all may enjoy the fruits of the earth with thankful hearts, and share them with all who are in need.

Monday 30th July

The UK population is officially projected to increase from 62 million in 2009 to around 72 million in 2033 – an increase the size of ten Birmingham. Research by the London School of Economics commissioned by Population Matters finds that this growth could cost taxpayers over £1 trillion in additional government spending and add 1 billion tonnes to our CO2 emissions. To counteract this would require 27,000 more wind turbines by 2033. Roger Martin, chairman of Population Matters, comments: “None of the extra £1 trillion required would be spent actually improving anything for anyone: it would just be trying to maintain standards. As long as our

population continues to rise, we are always simply running to stand still, like a hamster in a wheel, and leaving much less for real investment in real improvements. Meanwhile the environment would suffer and congestion increase anyway. If we could only stabilise our numbers, we could escape the hamster wheel and go somewhere better. . . What most economists apparently don't understand is that building ever more hospitals and schools simply to play catch-up with population growth is not 'investment' in the classic sense of a current sacrifice for future gain. Indeed, it should rightly be a charge on current rather than capital expenditure. . . . According to a YouGov poll, 80% of UK adults are already concerned at the impact of our rising numbers, and would prefer a smaller population – which is hardly surprising given that England is now the most crowded country in Europe.”

Tuesday 31st July

British oil exploration giant SOCO has announced plans to explore for oil in and around the Virunga National Park, a World Heritage site and home to a quarter of the world population of endangered mountain gorillas. WWF warns that this project could violate

fertilisers. The Better Cotton Initiative, supported by WWF, Oxfam and local organisations runs sessions in Pakistan to train farmers to use fertilisers and pesticides only when they are needed, resulting in a 75% reduction in their use over 6 years, and a corresponding increase in farmers' incomes. BCI cotton is now grown by 40,000 farmers in Pakistan, and Ikea has pledged to increase its use of BCI cotton from 5% to 100%. www.panos.org.uk

Thursday 5th July

The Danish government has set a target for all energy needs to be met from renewables by 2050, leading to an 80-95% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels. Wind power will provide 50% of electricity needs by 2050, the use of oil and gas will be phased out by 2030, and energy for heating will come entirely from renewables by 2035. Energy minister Martin Lidegaard said: “This will prepare us for a future with increasing prices for oil and coal. Moreover, it will create some of the jobs that we need so desperately, now and in the coming years.”

Friday 6th July

An EC report titled “The State of Renewable Energies in Europe” shows that employment in the renewable energy industry rose to 1 million in 2011 – an increase of 25% from 2010 – with a turnover of 125 billion euros. In Britain 32,000 people are employed in the industry, of whom 11,000 work in wind energy, 6,000 in biogas and 5,000 each in solar and biofuels.

Saturday 7th July

A report for the Renewable Energy Association finds that deep geothermal energy could provide up to 20% of Britain's electricity needs and heat millions of homes. Development of the resource could provide a backup for variable wind power and could create thousands of jobs, but the current subsidies are not enough to attract international investment. Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project where a geothermal heat and power plant is to be built, called for the Government to back the birth of a new industry. Currently, only two schemes, both in Cornwall, have planning permission, while investors wait to see what the returns might be before committing to any development.

Sunday 8th July

Heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us dominion over all the earth. Give us new insight into your purposes for the human race, and new wisdom and determination in making provision for its future in accordance with your will. This we ask in the Name of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Monday 9th July

Lord Turner, chairman of the Financial Services Authority has said: "Banks can create credit and private money . . . Before the crisis we not only failed to have policies to control the credit boom, but we made it worse by policy mistakes justified by poor economics." A new documentary called "97% owned" aims to answer questions like "Where does money come from?" "Who decides how it gets used?" "What impact does that have on the world we live in?" It points to simple and effective ways to change our monetary system which would lead to a more stable economy, less debt, less poverty and less inequality. It can be watched at:

www.positivemoney.org.uk/97percent

Tuesday 10th July

Every day \$7 trillion is traded in currency deals around the world, with huge profits being pocketed by banks and traders. One trader, Ethical Currency, is paying 0.01% from all currency transactions towards the UN Millennium Goals which aim to eradicate extreme poverty and reduce child mortality and Aids. Its founder, Alistair Constance, said: "If all currency traders paid this levy, \$30-40 billion could be raised for charity . . . We've worked closely with civil society partners to promote and advise on the global take-up of the levy and I've advised the UN on how such a tax would work in practice."

Wednesday 11th July

45 years ago the magazine Resurgence was launched. Its long-time editor Satish Kumar looks back to that time: "It was a society where money, finance and material possessions were all-powerful. Everything was measured in terms of materialistic benefit, even education and health. . . Children are conditioned in our education system, between the ages of 5 and 20, to believe that nothing else matters but getting a good degree and landing a

people petitioned for a veto of this legislation. The Landless Rural Workers Movement commented:

"What we really need is to strengthen agrarian reform and reinforce family-based agriculture, which not only creates more employment but produces more food."

Thursday 26th July

WWF's One in Five Challenge, supported by Lloyds TSB, BskyB, M & S and other leading companies aims to cut business flights by 20% within 5 years. Latest results show that members, on average, cut their flights by 41% in the first 2 years, saving £2.4 million and reducing CO2 emissions by 3,600 tonnes. WWF comments: "If these progressive companies can cut their flights by 41%, others can too. Members say that lower-carbon ways of staying connected actually help them to increase their efficiency, citing less time spent out of the office, faster decision-making, productivity gains and increased collaboration as the main benefits from using technology to replace the need to travel."

Friday 27th July

The Government's Green Deal, due to be unveiled this autumn, is designed to encourage people to make their homes and businesses more energy-efficient. Recent changes in the rules have been welcomed, but Consumer Focus director Audrey Gallacher calls for further steps to stimulate consumer demand and greater ambition to reach people in living in fuel poverty.

"Without clear incentives such as council tax or stamp duty discounts, we are worried that people won't see the benefit or relevance of the scheme to them"

Saturday 28th July

An application to build a 40 MW biomass plant beside the A 11 near Snetterton has been approved by the Breckland Council after consultation with 3,200 local people. It will burn primarily oilseed rape and cereal residues, but also miscanthus and wood chippings, generating enough energy to meet the annual electricity consumption of 62,000-68,000 households, and would cut CO2 emissions by more than 120,000 tonnes a year. The project will result in a £9 million annual investment in East Anglian agriculture from fuel supply

alone we may find our true hope and salvation.

Monday 23rd July

Research at Tokyo University published in Nature GeoScience finds that humanity's unquenchable thirst for fresh water is driving up sea levels even faster than melting glaciers. Trillions of tonnes of water are pumped up from deep underground reservoirs and channelled into fields and pipes to keep communities fed and watered. The water then flows into the oceans, but far more quickly than the ancient aquifers are replenished by rain. Professor Robert Nicholls of Southampton University commented: "In the long run, I would still be more concerned about the impact of climate change, but this work shows that even if we stabilise the climate, we might still get sea level rise due to how we use water. The sea level would rise 10 metres or more if all the world's groundwater was pumped out, though removing every drop was unlikely because some aquifers contain salt water."

Tuesday 24th July

Australia has declared the world's biggest network of marine protected areas, covering more than a third of its territorial waters, including the Coral Sea and the Great Barrier Reef. WWF commented: "Marine sanctuaries provide areas where wildlife can feed and breed and help ensure the food security of millions of people who rely on the ocean for their daily sustenance and livelihoods. The oil spills and ship groundings in recent years have shown the range of threats facing our oceans. It's important that we ensure that places are set aside for conservation as well as having well-managed ocean use."

Wednesday 25th July

A month before the Rio+20 conference the Brazilian government issued a new law which grants amnesties, promotes impunity for environmental criminals and significantly weakens legal protection for forests across Brazil. Illegal deforestation carried out around springs and headwaters, in mangrove swamps and other wetlands, has been forgiven, and restoration of vegetation can be done using eucalyptus and other exotic species. Yet 2 million

well-paid job." For 45 years Resurgence has been countering this with its affirmation of human and spiritual values, carrying the torch for a more harmonious world.

Thursday 12th July

Child benefit costs the taxpayer £12 billion a year and is payable regardless of parental means. It is important that child poverty is not aggravated, according to Population Matters, but the benefit should be paid only for the first two children in any household, though the current level of benefits should be maintained for those with larger families. Continuing population growth in Europe's most densely-populated country is contributing to housing shortages, traffic and transport congestion, energy and water security worries and unwanted carbon emissions. Limiting child benefit to two children per household would mean that the rest of society would not be subsidising those who choose to have larger families.

Friday 13th July

A White Paper on care for the elderly is due out this month. A "Garden Partners" scheme in Wandsworth run by AgeUK and funded by the local

NHS trust matches older people no longer able to keep up their garden with younger residents who share their interest in gardening. An official audit involving 46 people and running now for three years has concluded that it could have saved the taxpayer as much as £11,000 a year per person. It showed that 80% of the older people said it helped them maintain or improve physical activity and build new social networks, helping to prevent isolation and depression.

Saturday 14th July

One of this year's Ashden Award winners is Cumbria-based Energy4All, which enables anyone to invest in renewable energy provided they have at least £250. It manages eight local co-operatives with 7,690 members who between them own over 20 MW of capacity in UK wind farms. In 2011 these generated over 45 GWh of electricity, so saving 19,500 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Sunday 15th July

Father God, grant us the serenity to accept things we cannot change, The courage to change the things we can,

And the wisdom to know the difference. (Reinhold Niebuhr)

Monday 16th July

One of the winners of a 2012 Ashden Award is Barefoot Power – a socially-driven business for supplying light and energy systems to rural communities in emerging countries. It provides affordable LED lamps and solar panels, and trains partners in their use and impact, reaching out to 40 communities in Africa, Asia and the Americas. The purchase of an LED lamp is a one-time fixed cost for villagers and, being powered by solar panels, generates lighting that is cleaner and safer than kerosene lamps.

Tuesday 17th July

The new EU Energy Efficiency Directive sets a target for a 20% energy saving by 2020, but pressure from the UK forced changes which make the target non-binding. WWF comments: “Even the 20% target allows member states to count action both before and after the 6-year lifetime of the target . . . Investing in energy efficiency would result in more jobs, lower bills and cuts in carbon emissions. It’s essential we make this

a cornerstone of UK energy policy. We can’t afford not to.

Wednesday 18th July

The UK has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Iceland which will enable its volcanoes to supply deep geothermal energy to the UK and to share information on oil and gas developments including offshore drilling. The Renewable Energy Association comments: “it’s important that the UK Government doesn’t overlook the UK’s own geothermal resource which could supply up to 20% of electricity needs and the majority of our heat needs. Not only is it cost effective to develop our own capacity; it provides energy security by protecting us from unstable international energy markets, and it keeps jobs and revenues in the UK economy.”

Thursday 19th July

Critics of renewables tend to overlook the subsidies provided to other electricity generators. A study by Scottish Renewables of the levels of subsidy for various energy sources found that, according to the OECD, coal, oil and gas prices in the UK were subsidised by £3.63 billion in 2010,

compared to £1.4 billion of support for renewables. The annual cost of nuclear de-commissioning in 2011/12 was estimated at £2.9 billion.

Friday 20th July

Discarded fishing nets are a major environmental problem, especially in developing countries. Now carpet-tile manufacturer Interface is trialling a scheme in the Philippines to recover the nylon nets and use them in the manufacture of carpet tiles. The scheme aims to improve the lives of local fishermen while providing Interface with a novel source of recycled materials. The project forms part of Interface’s Mission Zero goal to eliminate entirely its negative impact on the earth by 2020.

Saturday 21st July

After 22 years of drilling two miles below Antarctica’s ice sheet, a Russian team has broken through to a vast freshwater lake called Lake Vostock which has been sealed off from the rest of the world for the past 20 million years. The onset of winter prevented the team from taking samples, but work will be resumed in December. Dr. Lewis Dartnell, an astrobiologist at University College

London, commented: “The ocean on Europa, Jupiter’s ice-moon, is also miles deep below solid ice and doesn’t have any sunlight. Life in Lake Vostock would be in a similar environment. You don’t rely on plants or the oxygen or food they produce. Instead, life would be geothermal, relying on the heat of the planet, or chemo-autotrophic, relying on energy from inorganic ions. The pressure is no problem as fish live in the Challenger Deep 7 miles below the surface of the Pacific at pressures of well over 10 tons per square inch. Similarly the cold is no problem since insect-like creatures live on frozen mountaintops at –20 degrees C. with natural antifreeze in their bodies. But the lake is almost certainly without oxygen, and the odds are against us finding an anaerobic animal.”

Sunday 22nd July

Save us, dear Father, from the worship of power – power over nature and power over other humans. Deliver us from the worship of science, so that, while acknowledging the God-given skills of scientists, we may be spared from the abuse of their discoveries. Free us from false hopes and misplaced trust, so that in you