
Prayer guide for the care of creation



March 2013

“Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you endure.

They will all wear out like a garment. You change them like clothing, and they pass away; but you are the same, and your years have no end.”
(Psalm 102.25-27)

“Unlike God, nature is not infinite. The delicate balance that maintains life, while amazingly forgiving and adaptable, has its limits. Balance is maintained when the purpose of creation is maintained and God’s creatures live in love and care for each other because they are living in love with God. But as soon as this balance is forgotten, then the balance is upset.”
(Barbara Wood)



Friday 1st March

Since the Industrial Revolution, expansion of population and living standards has relied on cheap high-grade coal, oil and natural gas. High-cost remnants are still with us, but no longer will they be enough to drive further growth in population and, critically, in food supply. Conventional food supply is dependent on oil for pesticides and fertilisers and for transportation over thousands of miles. Modern agriculture is an industry that turns oil into food.

Saturday 2nd March

If population and resource consumption continue to grow near their present rate, we must find the capital – while we have it – to build large-scale electricity grids across Europe and Asia, fed by increasingly efficient wind and solar power with other renewables. Operating costs will be much lower than those of fossil fuels. This represents a threat to giant multi-nationals which have an interest in underplaying the threat posed by dwindling fossil fuel supplies. The US Congress is bribed – legally – to ignore both climate change and the logic of finite resources.

Sunday 3rd March

Show us, loving Father, how to protect your creation, not just the plants and animals, but the soil, air and water by which we live, so that no-one may exploit or pollute them for their own profit or convenience. Help us to cherish these necessities for our survival, and guide those in authority to ensure that the human spirit is not starved in pursuit of material comfort and wealth.

Monday 4th March

Expansion of the world's food supply is constrained by the availability of four finite resources: water, soil, potassium and phosphorus. As long as we build homes and grow food in deserts, we are pumping up irreplaceable underground water. Already around 300 million Indians and Chinese are fed by over-pumping underground water that will inevitably run out. Rich nations have the technology to eke out supplies. Poorer nations have fewer alternatives, and water scarcity is already causing friction between them.

For those who have lost their faith; For all, we pray, who are wounded in the battle of life and are nigh to despair.

Give to us all a vision of Christ's risen glory that we too may trust in his power; that we too may know that nothing can separate us from your loving purposes or finally defeat your will. (Leslie Weatherhead)

Sources:

CIWEM Business Briefing
WWF News
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by [email](mailto:prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk) (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
Website: www.greenchristian.org.uk

Picture on front cover: Daffodils by Philip Webb.

Christian Ecology Link Ltd is a company registered in England and Wales. Administrative Office: 10, Beech Hall Road, Highams Park, London, E4 9NX
Company Registration No. 2445198
Registered Charity No. 328744.
tel: +44 (0) 845 4598460
info@christian-ecology.org.uk

demand and encourage investment in new innovative solutions.

Friday 29th March. Good Friday

Lord Jesus, let us be with you,
wherever you are crucified today,
Wherever the will of man crosses the
will of God,
Where the will to violence crosses
God's will for peace,
Where lying and corruption cross
God's will for truth,
Where greed and possessiveness
cross the use of God's plenty,
Where we live not for others, but for
ourselves,
Where ugliness and disease cross the
will of God for beauty and well-being,
There let us find you, be with you,
share your pain and, with you, bring
about that redemption which you have
made possible by your sacrifice.
(Margaret Cropper – adapted)

Saturday 30th March

Bath University has set up a ground-breaking centre for energy harvesting and generation. Its NEMESIS project will look at novel materials that can convert the vibrations of machines and vehicles into electrical or chemical energy. It will also develop new

methods of separating water into hydrogen and oxygen in order to create clean-burning hydrogen fuel. Lead professor Chris Bowen said: "As we continually strive to create safer and more efficient machines and vehicles, the need has increased to power sensors that sit safely in hot and hostile positions near engines – where batteries would be unsafe or impractical. Through our research we also aim to create nano-structured ferroelectric and piezoelectric materials that can be used to split water, creating clean, environmentally-friendly hydrogen fuel."

Sunday 31st March. Easter Day.

Lord God, by whose power Christ was raised from the dead, so that the worst that men could do had no dominion over him, lay your hand in loving tenderness on all who seek this message most. We pray especially:
For those who have lost dear ones and whose hearts are sad;
For those who have lost health and vitality;
For those who have lost their youth;
For those who have lost their livelihood;
For those who have lost opportunities;
For those who have lost patience;

Tuesday 5th March

2013 has been designated by the UN as International Year of Water Cooperation. A UNESCO-sponsored agency called "Flow Regimes from International Experimental Network Data (FRIEND) is tasked with facilitating cooperation for research among its 162 participating nations. UN-Water provides the coordinating mechanism for all freshwater and sanitation-related issues, and organises the annual World Water Day on March 22nd.

Wednesday 6th March

Today from 6 to 8.30 pm runs an evening of discussion and debate at the Grant Museum of Zoology, UCL, University Street, London WC1E 6DE on "The Big Question" – human population. Speakers from ecology, history, finance, conservation and economics will discuss what some people believe to be undiscussable: Should we control human population growth? Each speaker selects an object from the Museum's collection to illustrate their point of view, followed by an open discussion. Entry is free: no

need to book. Contact: 020 3108 2052 or email: zoology.museum@ucl.ac.uk

Thursday 7th March

Land availability and erosion also limit our ability to grow food. We build cities on our best river valley soils, and so rely increasingly on more marginal land. There is no New World awaiting us. Such land as we have loses 1% each year from wind and water erosion. But this problem can be solved. If all cropland was cultivated on a no-till basis – where crop residues protect the soil against the elements – soil erosion need no longer be a threat.

Friday 8th March

Yield per acre for most grains is still growing at 1.2% a year, but so is population. There is a limit to grain productivity. What is the limit to population growth? How will we find the extra grain necessary to produce meat for the increasing number of meat-eaters when 1 pound of dressed beef requires 30 pounds of grain? The clear consequence is a rationing system by price. If food prices triple in the next 30 years as they have in the last 10, for those of us who spend less

than 10% of our income on food, this would be a cause for complaint. But for a country like Egypt, where people spend 40% of their income on food, the result could force the poor into malnutrition or outright starvation.

Saturday 9th March

North America has, per capita, 5 times as much water and 7 times as much arable land as China, but its use of one-third of its corn production to feed vehicles rather than people shows its willingness to ignore the global food problem – for now. Yet countries like Egypt, with surging populations, escalating food import bills and widening trade deficits, cannot now afford to feed its own people. Who will do it for them?

One day, feeding corn to vehicles rather than to people will be compared to a famous (if mythical) saying of Marie Antoinette “No bread? Then let them eat cake.”

Sunday 10th March

Heavenly Father, you know, more than we, what is happening to us and our world. We know that the way we live exploits and degrades your creation. May your Holy Spirit

enlighten our political leaders and guide us to care for our fellow-humans and the whole living world. May life be renewed and may your Name be magnified.

Monday 11th March

Last month the new Global Oceans Commission was launched by Jose Maria Figueres, former President of Costa Rica, and David Miliband, former UK Foreign Secretary, to alert policymakers, business people and citizens to the need for better management of our oceans, Co-Chair Trevor Manuel, Minister to the President of South Africa, said: “The global ocean is very much part of our economy and our society. It has shaped our history and will continue to shape our future – every aspect of what we are, the trade with other countries, the climate that we depend on.”

The Commission meets in Capetown this month and will issue a report and recommendations early next year to feed into the UN General Assembly debate on high seas biodiversity.

heating, which could be an answer to fuel poverty in many areas of Glasgow, particularly those with a mining past and a legacy of poor quality housing and high unemployment. Residents of Glenalmond Street already use geothermal energy and have heating bills of around £160 a year compared with £660 for an average Scottish family.”

Tuesday 26th March

The UK Green Building Council has commented on the Government’s commitment that new homes should be zero-carbon by 2016. It is concerned at the failure to embody the standards in new building regulations. CEO Paul King said: “By providing the clarity so urgently needed on changes to the building regulations and confirming its support for zero-carbon homes, government could inject confidence into a sector with huge growth potential for the UK economy. Without urgent confirmation of changes to the regulations, innovation in the construction sector and supply chains could stall.”

Wednesday 27th March

The International Energy Agency’s chief economist has said that in 2011 global subsidies for fossil fuels were worth \$523 billion, giving an incentive to emit a CO2 equivalent to \$110 per tonne, whereas subsidies for renewables were just \$88 billion. Yet, according to reports from Eurobarometer, almost 8 out of every 10 Europeans agree that fighting climate change can boost the economy and create jobs, while 70% of Europeans believe that investment in renewable energy should be prioritised over the next 30 years compared to alternative energy sources including shale gas, nuclear and carbon capture and storage plants.

Thursday 28th March

Only 10% of plastics in the world are recycled, while in this respect Britain lags behind other European countries. Recycled plastics are a resource, not a waste product. Technology now exists to allow separation of plastics from complex waste streams. Nigel Hutton of MPA Polymers calls for exemption from VAT on recycled plastics to help stimulate consumer

To enhance knowledge and develop capacity for water cooperation,
To spark concrete and innovative action towards water cooperation,
To foster partnerships, dialogue and cooperation around water as a top priority during and beyond 2013,
To strengthen international cooperation among institutions and social and economic sectors so as to reach a consensus on Sustainable Development Goals for the post-2015 era.

Saturday 23rd March

Earth Hour takes place today from 8.30 to 9.30 pm local time, when people around the world switch off their lights as a sign of solidarity in the drive to live more sustainably on this finite Earth.
The world's first Earth Hour Forest consists of 2,700 hectares of degraded forest land in Uganda, which is being planted with over half a million trees to help replace some of the 6,000 hectares of deforestation that occur every month. Standard Chartered has pledged 250,000 trees and the Earth Hour global community is asked to support the project.
www.earthhour.org/blog/introducing-earth-hour-forest

Sunday 24th March. Palm Sunday

Lord God, whose Son rode this towards a city which closed its heart against him, may we not shut out from him any part of the city of life, but acknowledge him as Ruler and hail him as King in everything we do and say and think, so that, knowing the things which belong to our peace, we may be his and he may be ours, for ever and ever. (Leslie Weatherhead – adapted)

Monday 25th March

Beneath the city of Glasgow lies a network of abandoned mines, from which water could be used to generate up to 40% of the city's heat. A research team from Glasgow Caledonian University is mapping the maze of abandoned tunnels to locate underground water reservoirs which could be used for ground-source heat pumps to extract heat from the water. GCU specialist Dr. Hytiris said: "After Hamburg and Stockholm, Glasgow could be the third city to have under-street heating. In 3 years' time we will have a full and accurate record of what lies under our feet. We believe this technology will in the long term provide cheaper and more sustainable

Tuesday 12th March

A news report from FoE called "Less is More" criticises the European Commission for seeking greater access to the natural resources of developing countries while failing to encourage the reuse of materials and reduction of wasteful consumption. 2,700 litres of water are needed to produce a cotton T-shirt, but Europeans discard 5.8 million tonnes of textiles every year and only recycle 25% of them.
Mining lithium in Chile for electric batteries contributes to water shortages and pollution, leaving local communities struggling to grow food. Major investment in recycling is crucial to meet growing demand, yet new EU targets for reuse and waste prevention could reduce demand for raw materials, create jobs and help Europe to become more prosperous and sustainable.

Wednesday 13th March

A study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences finds that 62 countries have suffered land and water grabs in the past decade, often robbing local people of vital

resources and leading to overuse of water.

In Liberia where, according to its government, 81% of people are highly or moderately vulnerable to food shortages, palm oil companies including Sime Darby are swallowing up farmlands and forests used by local communities. Affected communities are asking their government to re-negotiate the contracts with Sime Darby and to bring in reforms to the farming sector that encourage development which does not harm farm livelihoods.

Thursday 14th March

70% of the roses sold in the UK are grown in Kenya where, despite heavy water use, the carbon footprint is less than it would be if the roses were grown in the UK. Scientists at the East Malling Research Centre are replicating Kenyan winter-growing conditions in glasshouses in an attempt to minimise water use so that roses can still be cultivated in Kenya even if water shortages occur. Early results show that 80% water savings are possible under controlled conditions, with 30-40% savings under field conditions.

Friday 15th March

The European Parliament has voted overwhelmingly for a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy that would require fishery ministers to put an end to discards of unwanted live fish and to manage stocks better to secure a return to healthy stock numbers while minimising the impact on the marine environment.

Saturday 16th March

A CEL day of celebration called “The Stream of Life” takes place today from 10.30 to 5 at the Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds LS1 3AX. In the morning Philip Roderick, director of the Quiet Garden movement, will explore with body, mind and spirit the relationship between God, nature and humanity. In the afternoon, there will be workshops on prayer, worship, church life, climate change, agriculture and world development. For details visit: www.greenchristian.org.uk/stream or ring 0845 459 8460.

Sunday 17th March

Lord, we pray that your people, whether they be ministers, scientists

or lay people, may find the strength to give clear witness of the need to care for the world which you created. May they speak out courageously on the changes in lifestyle that are now seen to be necessary to protect your creation.

Monday 18th March

In the light of the increased flood risk to UK properties, the Chartered Institute of Water & Environmental Management (CIWEM) warns that, after June 2013, insurance for properties at flood risk may become unaffordable, if available at all. The Association of British Insurers should invest in flood reduction measures to reduce their own exposure to risk, using new methods and materials rather than simply returning properties to their previous condition. New planning guidance should designate flood plains as “blue belt” areas where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. CEO Nic Reeves comments: “It is fanciful to imagine that there is the time and money to build the vast defences and infrastructure necessary to meet the demands of a growing population in a much wetter country. We will soon have no choice but to designate some

parts of the country “blue belt” and protect them from development.”

Tuesday 19th March

The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust and RSPB have published a manual to help local authorities and developers use natural features to protect homes and businesses from flooding and to provide a safe habitat for wildlife. The WWT chief executive comments: “Britain has contributed to its own flooding problems by removing natural wetlands, which release rainwater slowly, and replacing them with tarmac and roofing, which cascade rainwater quickly towards flooding flashpoints. From 1950 to 2000 we lost 55,000 hectares of wetland to new housing and industrial growth. . . If every new development were to contain small low-cost mini-wetlands to absorb surface run-off, this would protect us from more flooding and make for a greener environment for both people and wildlife.”

Wednesday 20th March

Photosynthesis, the process by which plants transform sunlight into energy to help them grow, is to be replicated in an £800,000 project at the

University of East Anglia. Researcher Julea Butt said: “We will build a system for artificial photosynthesis by placing tiny solar panels on microbes. These will harness sunlight and drive the production of hydrogen, from which technologies to release energy on demand are well-advanced.” The hydrogen can then be used to power vehicles or be transformed into electricity.

Thursday 21st March

DIY firms such as B & Q, Homebase and Wickes, which between them run 900 stores, are removing from their shelves all stocks of neonicotinoid insecticides that have been implicated in the decline of bee populations. The 60 garden centres run by Notcutts, Hillier, Squires and Blue Diamond are doing likewise. Only the biggest garden centre group which includes Wyevale, Blooms and Country Gardens has declined to follow suit.

Friday 22nd March

Today is World Water Day. As part of the International Year of Water Cooperation, it has five aims: To raise awareness of the benefits and challenges of water cooperation