

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

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Prayer guide for the care of creation



June 2013

“The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

(Romans 8.26-27)

“God pours his redemptive power into the world through the channel of his people’s prayers. The more prayer that is made, the more power gets through. In some situations God does not move except in response to the prayers of his people.”

(W.E. Sangster)

“Morning by morning they gathered it (manna) as much as each needed, but when the sun grew hot, it melted.”

(Exodus 16.21)

“A person who knows that enough is enough, will always have enough.”

(Lao Tzu 6th century BC)



Saturday 1st June

Tomorrow is Environment Sunday, when churches everywhere celebrate God's Creation. A Rocha has produced a resource pack including a service outline, hymns, prayers, sermon and children's activities.

www.arochoa.org/int-eu/resources/church-resources/

Sunday 2nd June

Father, we thank you for a new awareness among many people of the need to care for and heal your world. Show us, we pray, the actions we can take to play our part in the healing process, to lead by example and to be prepared to give reasons for what we do.

Monday 3rd June

The Government's Energy Bill reaches its Report Stage in the Commons today. Much depends on the inclusion, or otherwise, of a firm target for decarbonising our energy supply by 2030, so unlocking the generation of thousands of new jobs in renewable energy. Also under discussion will be a proposal to give financial incentives to use less energy.

Tuesday 4th June

Readings from the Mauna Loa Observatory in Hawaii have shown that concentrations of atmospheric CO2 have reached 400 ppm. for the first time in the last 3-5 million years. WWF comments: "It challenges us all to come to terms with the fact that fossil fuels need to stay in the ground and that, instead, we need to switch to renewable alternatives if we want to avoid dangerous climate change. WWF is calling for the global climate deal to be concluded in Paris in 2015 to reflect the best possible science as represented by the IPCC's 5th Assessment Report to be published later this year."

Wednesday 5th June

Rob Dietz and Dan O'Neill in "Enough is Enough" list some of humanity's most pressing problems:

- Greenhouse gas emissions are destabilising the climate.
- Billions of people are living in poverty, engaged in a daily struggle to meet their basic needs.
- The health of forests, grasslands, oceans and other wild places is declining to the

efficient biomass ones, saving energy, cutting emissions and saving money."

Friday 28th June

The plastics recycling association Recoup has warned that Britain risks missing its recycling targets for 2013-2017 unless plastics packaging collected from households doubles in volume by 2017. The recycling rate for plastic bottles collected by council has reached 52%, though the other 48% costs over £24 million to dispose of, losing a possible value to reprocessors of £63.7 million. New policies are needed to cover everything from collection, sorting and reprocessing equipment to changes in legislation and developing a national plastics recycling communication initiative.

Saturday 29th June

WWF has commented on a report by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Beef and Lamb which claims that there is no clear evidence of the environmental impact of livestock production: "This simply isn't true. Compare the UN FAO report 'Livestock's Long Shadow' and the UK Government's Foresight report 'The

Future of Food & Farming'. There's lots of evidence of the high environmental impact associated with livestock production. WWF is supportive of extensive pasture-based farming as this is kind to the environment and helps conserve biodiversity . . . High meat diets in the West, and increasingly in the developing world are not just bad for people's health – they're bad for the planet too."

Sunday 30th June

Father, we confess that our feet often stumble as we learn to walk the path of prayer, for there are hard places. Help us to apply ourselves to follow your Son in the practice of prayer, to surrender to his power over our lives and to trust in his promises. Amen.

Sources:

"Enough is Enough"
by Rob Dietz & Daniel O'Neill
"Environment" (CIWEM)
www.edie.net

said that up to 20% of water is lost from water companies' networks and customer supply pipes, while 66% of sewers carry both sewage and rainwater, so that intense rainfall can make them overflow, causing pollution, floods and poor water quality. This year, in a review by Ofwat, water companies must set out five-year plans for investment in infrastructure as well as stating what they will charge customers. "Water companies need to make better use of their resources by sharing water within their networks and with neighbouring companies."

Wednesday 26th June

A new anaerobic digestion (AD) plant has been opened near Wallingford, Oxfordshire, with the capacity to generate over 2.3 MW. of renewable energy, enough to power over 4,000 homes. Besides processing food waste from Windsor and Maidenhead under a 25-year contract, it will process food waste from restaurants, pubs, retailers and food manufacturers. In addition to renewable energy, the plant will generate renewable heat which will be used to dry woodchips for sustainable fuel. The residual digestate will be

applied to over 2,500 acres of farmland, displacing chemical fertilisers. Agrivert, the developers, already have an AD plant at Cassington, Oxfordshire, and plan to open another at Trumps Farm, Chertsey, Surrey.

Thursday 27th June

The UK Green Investment Bank has announced a £4.9 million investment to replace inefficient heating systems with biomass boilers fuelled by sustainably-sourced wood pellets. A further £5.1 million investment from Equitix Energy Efficiency fund will replace heating systems in community facilities with energy-efficient biomass boilers. The money could fund over 60 projects, providing public and private organisations with savings of up to 30% on energy bills. The GIB chief executive said: "The GIB is helping to fund energy-efficiency measures for everyone from our largest companies to individual households through the Green Deal. Today's announcement will provide a low-cost and straightforward way for schools, leisure centres and local businesses to switch their old, inefficient and high-emission boilers to new energy-

point where the planet is experiencing a species extinction crisis.

- National governments are drowning in debt, while the global financial system teeters on the verge of ruin.

Most of us are overlooking the underlying cause: our economy has grown too large . . . it is simply too big for the social and ecological systems that contain it.

Thursday 6th June

According to the World Bank "Economic growth is the essential ingredient for sustained poverty reduction." Yet an expanding economy has not solved global poverty and shows no sign of doing so. The global economy has grown 25-fold in the last 100 years, but still 2.7 billion people have to live on less than \$2 a day. Someone is profiting from economic growth, but it's not the world's poor. In the UK the gap between the richest and poorest 10% has grown by nearly 40% over the past 30 years. In "The Spirit Level" Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett show how income inequality is associated with health and social problems including mental illness, drug use, lower life

expectancy, lower educational performance, heightened violence and rates of imprisonment.

Friday 7th June

Dietz and O'Neill propose, as a substitute for a growth economy, a steady-state economy, with "enough" as its goal. This prioritises well-being above consumption and long-term health above short-term gains. "The pursuit of endless economic growth, with all its downsides, is clearly unsustainable in the 21st century. A steady-state economy is the sustainable alternative to perpetual economic growth." They then ask: "Is it possible to have full employment and no poverty, fiscal responsibility and reduced environmental impacts without relying on economic growth?"

Saturday 8th June

The world has no off-site self-storage where we can extract resources and send our wastes. A steady-state economy must follow three rules first formulated by Herman Daly:

1. Exploit renewable resources no faster than they can be regenerated.

2. Deplete non-renewable resources no faster than the rate at which renewable substitutes can be developed.
3. Emit wastes no faster than they can be safely assimilated by ecosystems.

Market prices often fail to reflect the effects of resource depletion, waste generation and loss of ecosystem services. To eliminate this market failure, we need policies that strike a balance between maintenance of healthy ecosystems and provision of sufficient goods and services.

Sunday 9th June

Father, we sometimes feel overwhelmed by the scale and complication of the environmental problems we face. Help us to see how we may respond in our daily lives to the challenges that face us, and teach us to see that where we lead, others may follow.

Monday 10th June

In 1967 America's population reached 200 million. Just 40 years later it reached 300 million. The UK's population is projected to increase from 63 million to 73 million by 2035.

The UN's "medium" projection for the world's population is a rise from 7 billion now to 9.3 billion by 2050. Overpopulation is more than just an environmental issue. It's an issue of social justice. The greater the world's population, the smaller the share of finite natural resources there is available to each person. To alleviate poverty, citizens of wealthy nations must consume less, and population levels in all countries must be stabilised or reduced. We certainly need smaller footprints, but we also need fewer feet.

Tuesday 11th June

About 80 million unintended pregnancies occur globally each year. By coincidence, 80 million is also the number of people added to the global population each year. Surveys have shown that girls who go to school and obtain an education tend to have fewer children than others. Economist Jeffrey Sachs gives these reasons:

- Girls in school are likely to postpone marriage and child rearing.
- When girls learn about sex, contraception, reproductive health and the trade-offs associated with having lots of

Saturday 22nd June

Victor Lebow in 1955 laid out his vision for society:

"Our enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption. The measure of social status, of social acceptance, of prestige, is now to be found in our consumptive patterns. The very meaning and significance of our lives today is expressed in consumptive terms."

What if he had said instead: "We need to make well-being our way of life?"

And what if the full force of the marketing teams at Coca-Cola, McDonalds and other multinationals went to work on marketing this change instead of selling ever more health-destroying products? It could happen – but only if we, the public, demand it.

Sunday 23rd June

Help us, dear Lord, so to deal with the things we possess that they may never possess us. May we live at peace with all your creation, and may we hold the goods that you have given us as instruments to be used in your

service and for the furtherance of your kingdom on earth.

Monday 24th June

A study for the community group "The People who Share" has found that the sharing economy – in which goods and services are based on collaborative consumption – is worth £22.4 billion in the UK and £330 billion globally. Businesses such as LoveHomeSwap, ParkatmyHouse, Ecomodo and Zipcar all record increases in participation. According to Zipcar's manager: "The pay-as-you-live generation is here to stay. Car clubs lead to a reduction of cars on the road and fewer miles driven. Sharing resources, be it cars, office space or even clothes, just makes sense." 33 million British residents are already sharing resources. The Trussell Trust has seen a 170% increase in the number of people given food boxes over the last year, and a 76% increase in the number of food banks set up.

Tuesday 25th June

The chairman of the Environmental Agency, Lord Chris Smith, speaking at a conference of the Institute of Water,

they could also guarantee jobs and, in the process, decouple the goal of full employment from the perceived necessity to grow the economy. This would further additional goals, such as:

Providing an income for people who need it;

Providing reasonably cheap labour to accomplish useful public works such as caring, cleaning, gardening etc.

Relieving the psychological and social problems that arise when people want to work but can't find a job.

Thursday 20th June

Continuous economic growth presents us with a dilemma if we rely on growth to generate employment, while seeing that continuous economic growth is undermining the planet's ability to support life. Policies like work-time reduction and guaranteed jobs offer a way out of the dilemma. "When enough people across society demand meaningful work that is valued appropriately, the system of employment will adapt to get the job done." (Dietz and O'Neill)

Friday 21st June

Henry Ford once declared that he wanted "to employ more men, to spread the benefits of this industrial system to the greatest number, to help them build up their lives and their homes." But a court order forced him to pay the shareholders a special dividend rather than to reinvest the money as he wanted.

Corporations are legally bound to put their shareholders' interests first. In the USA the courts have granted corporations the power to spend virtually unlimited money on political campaigns. Buckminster Fuller once remarked: "You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete."

Governments can help with incentives to set up alternative business structures by abolishing much red tape and providing tax breaks. They can also require publication of social and environmental performance in addition to financial data.

children, they are more likely to aim for smaller families.

- Having an education can empower a young woman to be a stronger negotiator with her spouse about family size and child rearing.
- Having an education can help a young woman develop a career, and that often leads her to desire a smaller family.

"While high-income countries need to attend to population issues within their borders, they also have a role to play in supporting education throughout the world."

Wednesday 12th June

Policies to reduce birth rates must be founded on principles of compassion and non-coercion, otherwise they will be rightly rejected. Dietz and O'Neill put the question: What impinges on our freedom more – non-coercive policies designed to limit family size, or the inevitable exhaustion of resources that will come from continued population growth? They suggest the creative use of TV dramas and soap operas to promote discussion of population numbers. "If we want to achieve a sustainable economy, conserve some natural

ecosystems on this finite planet, and give people – including those not yet born – a fair piece of the pie, we need to stabilise our numbers."

Thursday 13th June

In a steady-state economy, total incomes would remain stable, in correspondence with the finite nature of resources available to the economy. Wilkinson and Pickett show in "The Spirit Level" that more equal societies perform better on a variety of health and social matters – less drug addiction, less violence, less obesity, less mental illness and a higher life expectancy. But surely the prospect of higher pay is an incentive for hard work and innovation?

In "Drive: the Surprising Truth of what motivates us" Daniel Pink suggests that larger financial incentives lead to poorer performance on almost anything but the most rudimentary of tasks. People perform best when they are given the freedom to direct their own work, the opportunity to improve their skills, and when they feel their work has meaning and purpose.

Friday 14th June

“The measure of Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.” (Robert F. Kennedy in 1968)

GDP is not a measure of wealth, but one of economic activity – of money changing hands. For example, it includes money spent on clean-up of oil spills. If more people get cancer and require treatment, the costs count towards GDP. The costs of war, crime and family breakdown all contribute to GDP. In the language of economics, GDP does not distinguish between benefits and costs, but lumps everything together under the banner of economic activity. Therefore a new measure of real benefits is urgently needed.

Saturday 15th June

If the goal of society were to change from “growing the economy” to improving well-being and preventing long-term environmental damage, many proposals that are currently “uneconomic” would suddenly become possible. If we believe that human progress is synonymous with a bigger economy, then GDP is the right measure. If however, like Robert Kennedy, we believe that progress flows from the health of our children, the strength of our marriages or the intelligence of our public debate, then we must demand more appropriate measures of progress.

Sunday 16th June

Father God, you have inspired thinkers and scientists down the ages to search out the mysteries of your creation and to benefit humankind in so many fields. Send down your Holy Spirit now, in this our time of need, that he may reveal the path we must now follow if we are to fulfil your purposes on earth. Remove all prejudice, special pleading and vested interests from our society, that we may truly seek your will and find the courage to surmount all obstacles.

This we beg in the name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Monday 17th June

The prospect of widespread unemployment is often seen as an objection to a steady-state economy. This has made economic growth a requirement for creating and maintaining jobs. But, as economist Peter Victor explains: “The shortage of employment has become more important than the shortage of products. Whereas in the past we needed to have more people at work because we needed the goods and services they provided, today we have to keep increasing production simply to keep people employed.”

Many jobs today that need doing simply don't get done because it's too unprofitable to do them, while people perform many jobs that don't really need doing, but that are supported by the market (e.g. brokering speculative financial deals). These flaws need to be fixed as we make the transition to a steady-state economy.

Tuesday 18th June

Gains in productivity are currently used to increase production, but they

could instead be used gradually to shorten the working day, week, year and career. In the Netherlands since 1980, unions and employers have agreed to reduce unemployment by sharing the available work. Its Life-Course Saving Scheme 2006 allows people to enter and leave employment more easily, without adverse effects on their career. It also provides workers with greater financial security by spreading income more evenly over their lifetime. As a result, Netherlands work on average 1,377 hours a year, whereas in Britain the average working year is 1,647 hours and in America 1,778 hours. The Dutch work six fewer weeks a year than the British, with a 4% unemployment rate in 2009 and a higher rate of labour participation amounting to nearly 80% of the working population.

Wednesday 19th June

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the right to work. This right is partially upheld in India, Argentina and some European cities such as Zurich. Just as developed countries guarantee education, refuse collection and medical care (except in America), so