

Friday 30th August

Londoners Martin Riddiford and Jim Reeves have devised a gravity-powered lamp to bring light to homes in remote parts of the earth. The GravityLight is powered by filling a bag with rocks and sand, and slowly lowering it towards the ground. Gears transfer the weight into energy, creating around 30 minutes of light. The pair hopes to sell the lights for about £3.22 each to serve as an alternative to kerosene, which can take up to 20% of a household's budget as well as producing dangerous fumes. www.deciwatt.org

Saturday 31st August

Creation Time begins tomorrow and lasts until October 4th. It is a time for prayer and action for all the churches. Resources are available from Churches Together in Britain & Ireland (www.ctbi.org.uk). In addition, Operation Noah has prepared sermon notes and prayers for use during Creation Time, combining insights from bible passages with themes from Operation Noah's Ash Wednesday Declaration regarding climate change. www.operationnoah.org/creationtime

Sources:

"Sacred Economics" by Charles Eisenstein
Green Health Watch magazine
Positive News
www.edie.net

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

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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

Prayer guide for the care of creation:

Prayers about the Environment for each day of

August 2013

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"
(Luke 12.34)

"Man did not make the earth, and, though he had a natural right to occupy it, he had no right to locate as his property in perpetuity any part of it; neither did the Creator open a land-office, from whence the first title deeds should issue."
(Thomas Paine)

"Debt can endure for ever; wealth cannot, because its physical dimension is subject to the destructive force of entropy."
(Frederick Soddy)



Thursday 1st August

“Money today is not like bread, fruit or indeed any natural object. It is the sole exception to nature’s law of return, which says that all things ultimately return to their source. Money does not decay over time, but in its abstraction from physicality, it remains changeless or even grows with time exponentially, thanks to the power of interest.” -

Charles Eisenstein in “Sacred Economics”

Friday 2nd August

If I asked my bank “I would like £1 million to buy this forest to protect it from logging. It won’t generate any income, so I can’t pay you interest. But if you need the money, I could sell the forest and pay you back the £1 million”, the bank would have to decline my proposal. But if instead I said: “I’d like £1 million to buy this forest, cut and clear it, sell the timber for £2 million, out of which I will pay you 12% interest and make a tidy profit for myself”, an astute banker would agree to my proposal.

Money only goes to those who create new goods and services. This is why so many jobs are to be had by converting natural resources into

money, and so few by reclaiming common resources and protecting natural and cultural treasures. “There is no money in it” is a phrase we constantly hear.

Saturday 3rd August

Why, in a world of plenty, does half the world go hungry while the other half wastes enough food to feed them? We pour vast resources into wars, plastic junk and many other products that do not serve human happiness. Poverty is not due to a lack of productive capacity, nor to a lack of willingness to help. Many people would love to feed the poor, restore nature and do other meaningful work, but cannot because there is no money in it. Money utterly fails to connect gifts and needs. Why?

Sunday 4th August

Be with us, Lord, when we go shopping. If we have little money, help us to choose wisely and not to hanker after things we can’t afford. Make us content, in spite of the voices all around us inviting us to spend and spend.

climate change can be reached at the Paris summit in 2015.

Wednesday 28th August

A new method of growing crops called System of Root Intensification (SRI) has dramatically increased yields of many crops without the use of hybridisation, pesticides, synthetic fertilisers and GM technology. The crops include rice, wheat, potatoes, sugar, yams, tomatoes, garlic and aubergines. SRI demonstrates how farmers everywhere can eventually dispense with expensive pesticides and biotechnology in growing their crops. Farmers growing rice, instead of planting clumps in waterlogged fields, now plant younger plants one by one 25 cm. apart in dry fields. Careful weeding allows air to get to the roots. Yield increases of 30-45% are now commonplace. Professor Norman Uphoff of Cornell University explains: “It is the exact opposite of the 1960s green revolution which said you had to change the genes and the soil nutrients to improve yields. That came at a tremendous ecological cost. Agriculture in the 21st century must be practised differently. SRI offers millions of disadvantaged households far better opportunities. Nobody is

benefiting from this except the farmers; there are no patents, royalties or licensing fees.”

Thursday 29th August

Only 10% of rural Haitians and less than 25% of city-dwellers have access to proper sanitation, leading to high rates of cholera. Composting human waste prevents it from entering the water system, while the high temperatures of the compost kills off cholera bacteria. Sustainable Organic Integrated Livelihoods (SOIL), founded by Sasha Kramer in 2006, now provides compost toilets to more than 24,000 people across Haiti, including over 14,000 people still living in camps after the 2010 earthquake. Sasha Kramer says: “Our mission is to transform waste into resources. We primarily do that by taking human waste, which for most people is disgusting, and transforming into something valuable. We turn it into soil, and then we use that rich compost to do agricultural and reforestation projects.”

www.oursoil.org

mineral rights, oil reserves and patents. Only if rates of interest move into negative territory would this wealth begin to circulate and benefit society at large. Intellectual property could be returned to the commons by shortening the terms of copyrights and patents. New sources of wealth such as the genome and cyberspace should be kept in the public domain, allowing their use only to those whose aim is to benefit society and the planet.

Sunday 25th August

Father, we pray for all who work closely with the natural world:

For farmers and gardeners who grow our food;

For scientists and technologists who probe the secrets of life;

For foresters who plant and harvest trees;

For artists, poets and photographers who capture beauty for others to see;

For conservationists and all who guard the precious heritage of the earth.

Monday 26th August

If everyone worked 20% less instead of 20% of people working not at all, unemployment would no longer be seen as an unmitigated evil and people's time could be freed up to contribute their gifts to society. When every economic relationship becomes a paid service, we are left independent of everyone we know and become dependent, via money, on anonymous, distant service providers. That is a primary reason for the decline of community in modern societies, with its attendant alienation, loneliness and psychological misery.

Tuesday 27th August

China, the world's biggest producer of CO₂, has drawn up a plan to cap its greenhouse gas emissions from 2016. Its National Development & Reform Commission has put forward the plan to China's State Council, but experts indicate that the NDRC's recommendations will be accepted. Failure to include China and India in the Kyoto Protocol was cited by the US as a reason to justify its refusal to ratify the treaty. China's proposed cap will increase hopes that a legally-binding agreement on responses to

Help us if we are well provided with money. Save us from self-indulgence and extravagance. Help us to contribute to the needs of those who are hungry. Be Lord of all our lives, including our money.

Amen.

Monday 5th August

Before money was invented, gifts were the medium of exchange. Then money became a convenient means of connecting gifts with needs. Finally money became an end in itself – the one thing that is the measure of, and exchangeable with, almost anything else. A billionaire, when asked "How much is enough?" was stumped for an answer. The reason is that we have decoupled money as medium-of-exchange from money as store-of-value. Aristotle recognised in his "Politics" that wealth-getting for the sake of accumulation bears no limits. Increasing doses are required to dull the pain of unmet needs, but no amount can ever be enough. How many talented people sacrifice their youth hoping for an early retirement to a life of freedom, only to find themselves, at midlife, enslaved to money?

Tuesday 6th August

New money is created by debt and, as such, has no theoretical limit. Therefore it is easy for economists to believe in the possibility of endless exponential growth. But the real world is not like that. Lost in the abstract nature of money, we ignore the limits of the real world to accommodate the growth of money. Moreover, technology constantly widens the list of things available on the market – now including intellectual property, gene sequences and water rights. Charles Eisenstein describes an economic system that disallows profit-by-owning, yet rewards the entrepreneur's spirit that says: "I know a way to use it better" and allows that spirit free rein.

Wednesday 7th August

"How" asks Eisenstein "can we build communities when the building blocks – the things we do for each other – have all been converted into money? Community is woven from gifts. Unlike money transactions, in which no obligation remains after the transaction, gifts always imply future gifts. Gratitude is the knowledge of having received and the desire to give in return.

The Gift Circle developed by Alpha Lo consists of a weekly gathering where people state one or more things they would like to give and one or more things they want. Witnessing the generosity of others, participants feel more and more comfortable giving and receiving. A sense of community grows along with the knowledge that if you give, you will be known as a giver, and people will want to give to you in return.

Thursday 8th August

Because loans carry interest, the amount of money owed is always greater than the amount of money already in circulation. To make new money to keep the whole system going, we have to create new goods and services, such as by selling something which was once free, like converting forests into timber, ideas into intellectual property and social giving into paid services. "The imperative of perpetual growth implicit in interest-based money is what drives the relentless conversion of life, world and spirit into money. Completing the vicious circle, the more of life we convert into money, the more we need money to live. Usury, not money, is the root of all evil." (C. Eisenstein)

Friday 9th August

Economists describe as "externalities" the costs of production that are paid by someone other than the producers. A head of lettuce trucked across America from California is artificially cheap because the producer does not pay the costs of aquifer depletion, pesticide poisoning, soil salinisation and other effects of his farming methods. Oil producers essentially operate with free insurance. They get the profits, we assume the risks. In the financial sector, the largest operators can take huge risks knowing that they will be bailed out if things go wrong. Externalised costs make activities economical that are actually uneconomical. Deep-sea oil drilling and nuclear power are examples. "I keep the income and someone else pays the costs" reflects a mind-set where your well-being is fundamentally disconnected from mine. In a gift economy, your good fortune is my good fortune and your loss is mine too because you will have correspondingly more, or less, to give. If I depend on the gifts you give me, it is illogical to enrich myself by impoverishing you.

to give. Everybody I know has so much to give, and most of them feel they cannot because there is no money in it. Yet that is not because their gifts are unwanted. There is much beautiful work to be done. Money as we know it fails to connect gifts and needs. Why does everyone have to work so hard just to survive when such needs could be met by a tiny fraction of human labour? It is because of the scarcity-inducing nature of money."

Thursday 22nd August

Time Banks operate without money in schemes based on credits and debits recorded electronically. People who could not otherwise afford the services of a handyman, babysitter, physiotherapist etc. gain access to help from someone who might otherwise be unemployed. A retired lady without a car can make beautiful wedding cakes. A wheelchair-bound person who used to train police dogs needs her house painted and can offer puppy training. A retired schoolteacher used to teaching ceramics needs garden maintenance and can offer the use of her kiln. Japan has a similar fareai kippu currency which credits

people for time spent caring for the elderly.

Friday 23rd August

The Greenbelt Festival of arts, faith and justice takes place at Cheltenham Racecourse from today until Tuesday. Its goals include:

To present and create a variety of art forms – mainstream and challenging, established and unknown, large-scale and intimate.

To explore the breadth of Christian faith, be a catalyst for activism, and encourage dialogue between people of faith and no faith.

CEL will be there in the G Source tent and need help to staff it for a minimum of 2 hours. Anyone who would like to help, and be considered for a free ticket, is invited to email Paul Bodenham at paul@christian-ecology.org.uk

Saturday 24th August

When people are allowed to profit from merely owning something, without producing anything or contributing to society, wealth is hoarded and money ceases to circulate. Examples are land banks,

economy. 90% of the growth is expected to come from private vehicles, though improvements can be achieved in cities which promote non-motorised transport such as bicycles, walking and new modes of public transport. "Motorised traffic has significant adverse effects on health, contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases from air pollution and deteriorated safety in cities, leading to more than 1.3 million deaths per year from traffic accidents." However, Belgrade, New York and Seoul have all won awards for modernising public transport systems so as to improve energy security and quality of life.

Tuesday 20th August

"Most men would feel insulted if it was proposed to employ them in throwing stones over a wall, and then throwing them back, merely in order to earn their wages. But many are no more worthily employed now." (Henry Thoreau)

The history of technology is largely the history of labour-saving devices. A bulldozer can do the work of 500 lumberjacks. A computer can do the work of 500 old-time accountants working with pen and paper. So why,

after centuries of technological advance, do we find ourselves working as much as ever? And why do so many people live in daily fear of scarcity? Why has the oft-foretold "age of leisure" never arrived?

The reason is that, at every opportunity, we have chosen to produce more goods and services rather than to work less. We have been helpless to choose otherwise, largely because of the spectre of unemployment, with the consequential collapse of the economy. So must we for ever "kickstart the economy", provide more jobs and create new goods and services, even when we know that we are destroying our only home in the process?

Wednesday 21st August

Human beings, Eisenstein maintains, are born into gratitude: the knowledge we have received and the desire to give in turn. "Far from nudging reluctant people to give unto others against their lazy impulses, today's economy pressures us to deny our innate generosity and channel our gifts instead towards the perpetuation of a system that serves almost no one. A sacred economy is one that liberates our desire to work, our desire

Saturday 10th August

Venezuela and Bolivia have nationalised their oilfields, so not endearing themselves to investors in the oil industry. Foreign companies still operate the fields and profit from the service of extracting the oil, but the ownership of the oil is no longer theirs. What happens to the money depends on politics: it could go towards financing public works or, as in Alaska, the profits could be paid to residents as an annual payment. If the principle were extended to other commons, such as forests and oceans, this could make large amounts of money available for various levels of government to invest in public projects, in some cases replacing taxes on income.

Sunday 11th August

Forgive us, Father for the damage we have done to the earth.

Forgive us that rivers and seas have become polluted by the waste of our civilisation.

Forgive us that the air has been fouled by the burning of fossil fuels.

Forgive us that plants and wild creatures have gone extinct through our relentless invasion of their homes

Forgive us that we have often valued profit more than the care of your creation.

Help us to repent of our ways and turn again to you, the only source of all life.

Monday 12th August

Research by the Green Alliance reveals that £180 billion of investment in infrastructure is at risk because of uncertainty about the Government's commitment to low-carbon developments. If all the £60 billion of low-carbon investment planned for the next two years went ahead, it would add 0.7% to GDP by 2015. Offshore wind projects alone are worth more than four times high-carbon projects. The president of engineers Alstom UK said: "We provided 700 new jobs [in low-carbon projects] last year, with another 600 on the horizon. If the government delivers its Infrastructure Plan, the outlook for jobs, growth and skills will be bright. From the electrification of railways to offshore wind, low-carbon investment can be a real British success story."

Tuesday 13th August

A report from Oxford University called "Available power from tidal stream turbines in the Pentland Firth" calculates that tidal turbines between Caithness and the Orkneys could generate up to 1.9 gigawatts of electricity – almost half of Scotland's electricity needs. It would have to be a single joined-up scheme so that turbines do not cancel each other out and the greater energy produced by spring tides could be stored and fed back in at neap tides. Other tidal stream projects are under development at Kyle Rhea and Islay, while the Crown Estate has granted leases of 14 other sites. Technological advances such as floating platforms are allowing more energy to be extracted from tidal flows.

Wednesday 14th August

Planning consent has been granted for the world's biggest offshore wind farm – a 1,200 MW. array at Triton Knoll off the coasts of Lincolnshire and Norfolk. Costing £3.6 billion, it will provide 1,130 jobs across the country. Permission has also been granted for our biggest onshore wind farm at Pen y Cymoedd in South Wales, creating

another 300 jobs. These two new wind farms will generate enough power for almost a million homes and provide more than £4 billion of investment. Energy Secretary Ed Davies said: "We have provided certainty early to onshore and offshore wind investors and now see significant investment decisions being made that will benefit the UK economy for years to come."

Thursday 15th August

According to the European Wind Energy Association, since the beginning of 2013, 277 new wind turbines have been installed across Europe, adding 1 gigawatt of capacity to the grid. But since then orders have fallen off, with only one new project reaching financial close. "Offshore wind is a new industry that creates jobs, reduces fossil fuel imports and makes Europe a world leader with huge export opportunities. The installation rate shows what the industry is now capable of. But to attract investment, governments need to provide a stable regulatory framework and the EU should set a binding renewable target for 2030."

Friday 16th August

The EU Environment Committee has placed a cap of 5.5% on the use of food crops for biofuels and resolved that biofuels resulting from deforestation above a certain limit will not be counted as a renewable fuel. FoE comments:

"It's disappointing that a course hasn't been set to phase out the use of food crops for fuel. Instead MEPs have chosen to cap it at a level that is even higher than current use. It's crucial that when they vote again in September the current reforms are not watered down any further."

Saturday 17th August

A Renewable Heat Incentive for householders has been announced and will take effect next spring for new installations. The levels announced are:

Air source heat pumps 7.3p.per kWh

Ground source heat pumps 18.8 p. per kWh

Biomass boilers 12.2 per kWh

Solar thermal panels 19.2p. per kWh

The Renewable Energy Association welcomed the new tariffs, but was

disappointed that tariffs for non-domestic installations had still not been published. It urged the Department to at least confirm which technologies would be supported under the non-domestic RHI.

Sunday 18th August

Loving Father, bless the work of your church, that it may give:

A sense of identity where there is none;

A refuge to those who feel threatened by lawlessness or polluted surroundings;

A place of belonging where people may know they are welcomed, remembered by name and valued as individuals;

A faith that we are forgiven and accepted in the Name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ.

Monday 19th August

The International Energy Agency in a report called "A Tale of Renewed Cities" warns that urban transport energy consumption is expected to double by 2050 despite improvement in vehicle technology and fuel