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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](mailto:pcw@christian-ecology.org.uk)  
Website: [www.greenchristian.org.uk](http://www.greenchristian.org.uk)

Picture on front cover: Winter Trees at Kew by Quentin Pickard

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](mailto:info@christian-ecology.org.uk)

## Prayer guide for the care of creation



# December 2013

“We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

(Romans 8.22-23)

“God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him (Christ) and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace with his blood, shed on the Cross.”

(Col. 1.19-20)

“No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

(Matthew 6.24)

“Anyone who believes that exponential growth will go on for ever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist.”

(Kenneth Boulding)



### **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

Dear God, we pray for another way of being, another way of knowing. Across the difficult terrain of our existence we have attempted to build a highway and in so doing have lost our footpath. Lord, lead us to that footpath. Lead us where, in simplicity, we may move at the speed of natural creatures and feel the earth's love beneath our feet. Nothing can be loved at speed. Father, lead us to the slow path, to the joyous insights of the pilgrim – another way of knowing, another way of being.

(Michael Leunig)

### **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

“In rich countries today, consumption consists of spending money they don't have, to buy goods they don't need, to impress people they don't like” (Clive Hamilton). Rob Dietz and Dan O'Neill in “Enough is Enough” believe that a steady-state economy, if enacted, would favour sharing and sufficiency over shopping and insatiability. But the key phrase is “if enacted.” “For without sweeping changes to the culture of consumerism, there is little

hope of enacting steady-state policies and replacing the mania for more with the wisdom of enough.”

### **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

A steady-state economy was foreseen by John Stuart Mill when he wrote: “It is scarcely necessary to remark that a stationary condition of capital and population implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be . . . as much room for improving the Art of Living and much more likelihood of its being improved, when minds cease to be engrossed by the art of getting on.”

Just 80 years ago John Maynard Keynes wrote in similar vein. How then can we harness our best minds to the task of working out a roadmap from our present fixation on economic growth to a position where we, in his words, “value ends above means and prefer the good to the useful.”?

### **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

Brian Draper in his book “Less is More: Spirituality for Busy Lives” describes a battle between the ego which would possess the world and

which promotes a new way of thinking about the economy. A major conference on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March at the URC Centre, Birmingham B4 9SX will bring together the issues and seek a role for the Church to play in transforming the economy. Keynote speaker: Dan O'Neill, the co-author of “Enough is Enough”.

### **New Year's Eve**

Loving Father, bless us in the year to come. Satisfy the world with your goodness. Replenish our hearts with your blessings and with the rich gifts of your hands. Protect and guard us throughout the coming year from all manner of evil. Lift our hearts with trust in your promise to redeem all creation, through the power of your dear Son.

Amen.

### **Sources:**

“Enough is Enough”  
by Rob Dietz and Dan O'Neill  
(Earthscan)  
Clean Slate (Centre for Alternative  
Technology)  
[www.edie.net](http://www.edie.net)

### **Additional Prayers**

will. May we become willing agents to carry out your purposes. So may true joy fill our lives – joy undimmed by passing sorrows – joy which knows the love that will win all hearts at last.

#### **Friday 27<sup>th</sup> December**

North Somerset has been named Britain's top performing council in terms of reducing carbon emissions, according to a report from Eunomia's Local Authority Recycling Index. "They collect a wide range of materials. They also recover large amounts of food from separate food waste collections and recyclables from household waste recycling centres. If every UK authority's recycling scheme performed as well as North Somerset, every year the UK would save 6.72 million tonnes of CO2 emissions, the equivalent of taking 2.2 million cars off the road."

#### **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December**

WWF has launched a Bioplastic Feedstock Alliance with Unilever, Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola and Nike, with the aim of selecting and harvesting crops such as sugarcane, corn, bulrush and switchgrass to

make plastics from natural materials. Experts from industry and academia will help guide the sustainable development of bioplastic feedstocks. "Ensuring that our crops are used responsibly to create bioplastics is a critical conservation goal, especially as the global population is expected to grow rapidly through to 2050."

#### **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December**

Father, whose patient ways with us and whose unfailing love surprise and humble us, go with us along the unknown paths of this New Year. Forgive the sins of the year that has nearly passed. Help us to live more worthily and to serve you more faithfully, so that our love may show forth a new beauty and a deeper harmony, so that your holy Name may be glorified.

#### **Monday 30<sup>th</sup> December**

"The age of growth economics is over. If we carry on as before, our legacy will be a ruined planet, inescapable debt and brutal inequality."

With these words, CEL has launched a campaign called "Joy in Enough"

the soul or spirit which would take us to what is deep and lasting. He sees possessions, work, social status, physical appearance etc. as fashioning a superficial identity. We need to struggle for a new sense of self, and he gives many practical ways of moving towards this goal. He writes mainly about individual transformation, but if enough individuals took the course he suggests, society could indeed be changed.

#### **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

The Warsaw climate talks have ended in acrimony after development and environmental bodies walked out in protest at the lack of progress in tackling the climate crisis. Particular criticism was levelled at Australia and Japan which chose the occasion to weaken their carbon emissions targets just when the Philippine people are crying out for help in the face of Typhoon Haiwan, which according the World Meteorological Organisation was made worse by the rise in sea levels. FoE comments: "Climate change is probably the greatest threat humanity has ever faced. It's staggering that so many developed nations would rather

spend their time playing to vocal minorities at home rather meet this global threat head on."

#### **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

Australia, with Indonesia, is the world's biggest exporter of thermal coal. The new Federal Government is opening up new coal reserves in the Galilee Basin to international miners and allowing full access to state forests and protected areas for coal and gas developments. By 2020 Australia expects to be the largest exporter of shale gas. The World Heritage Great Barrier Reef is being dredged and exploited to provide gas export facilities for foreign investors including Britain's BG Group. Australia's \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation is under threat from the new government, adding uncertainty to potential investors in renewable energy.

#### **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December**

According to the Global Carbon Project, emissions from burning fossil fuels are now 61% above 1990 levels, the baseline year for the Kyoto Protocol. In 2012 the biggest fossil fuel emitters were China

(27%), the US (14%), the EU (10%) and India (6%). The projected rise of 2.2% in 2013 follows a similar rise in 2012. The US is still the highest emitter per person at 16 tonnes a year while in India each person produces on average 1.8 tonnes. Since 1870, 70% of emissions have come from burning fossil fuels and 30% from deforestation and other changes in land use.

### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December**

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 we face, and teach us to see that where we lead, others may follow.

### **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

The UK Green Building Council has warned that over 10,000 jobs in construction and insulation could be lost if the Government cuts “green levies” on energy bills. 33,000 people are currently employed delivering the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Green Deal. “The Prime Minister needs to realise that going

after ECO in a bid to cut energy bills will decimate the very industry that is helping people – including some of the most vulnerable in society – to reduce their bills in the long-term.”

### **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

The Code for Sustainable Homes according to the Environmental Audit Committee has driven up home building standards and helped create a thriving sustainable building industry. But the Government is considering removing local authorities’ discretion to set high standards on energy and water saving in favour of a one-size-fits-all national standard. Joan Walley, chair of the EAC, comments: “The Code for Sustainable Homes incentivises developers to think about sustainability at the outset of a project. It is a proven and flexible way of pushing up building standards and should not be dropped.”

### **Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

Since 2011 deforestation rates in Brazil have doubled and last June peatland fires in Indonesia caused record-breaking smogs in Singapore and Malaysia. A survey of 786

### **Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

For over 60 years, say Liz and Mike Zeidler, we’ve been hooked on unhappiness, believing what every magazine, advertisement and gloom-and-doom headline tells us, that we’ll be happy when we have a new car, a new hairstyle, a new government etc. We are riddled with fear, blame and a sense of lack.

A reduction in demand seems to imply a degree of self-sacrifice, and that’s a hard sell indeed. But if, as suggested, we actually become happy through actions that just happen to reduce demand, the focus on happiness begins to make sense. When we reject the assumption that the route to happiness is via increased wealth and greater consumption, and focus instead on the real paths to happiness, we naturally and happily consume less.

### **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

Father God, we turn from a world distraught by confusion and tumult, to worship at the cradle of a little Child whose power can yet bring peace to the earth and goodwill to all people. May our worship renew our courage, strengthen our

determination and guard our inward peace, so that we may move among our fellow-humans as those whose values are firmly based on your love for mankind and on the sure foundation of your throne.

### **Christmas Day**

Loving Father, as we ponder the coming of the Child of Bethlehem, we rejoice that you, the Almighty Creator of the universe, whose being is utterly beyond our loftiest thought and most daring imagination, can speak to us in a little human Child. Help us to see you in simple things, a child’s love, birdsong, the quiet loveliness of dawn, human friendship and the peace of our homes. We bow in worship before the majesty of heaven revealed in a human life. Accept our worship and make us more like your dear Son, who gave himself, not counting the cost.

(Leslie Weatherhead)

### **Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December**

Lord God, as we settle again to the normal routine of our lives, help us to understand that we are all instruments in your hand to do your



### **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December.**

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Janet Street-Porter are among the celebrities who back a campaign to feed pigs with food waste. Tristram Stuart, organiser of the campaign, points out that supermarkets are already allowed to divert bakery, confectionery, dairy, fruit and vegetable products to livestock feed, but most of them do not do this. Stuart argues that, where food is unfit for human consumption, feeding it to livestock is the next best option and is far more economically and environmentally beneficial than anaerobic digestion and composting. "This avoids the environmental cost of growing commercial pig feed, much of which is imported from South America, where it causes deforestation and destruction of the Cerrado."

### **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December**

The Happy City Initiative, founded by Liz and Mike Zeidler, asks why, after 60 years of economic growth, measures of happiness and well-being have hardly improved. In surveys conducted in Glasgow, Botswana, Palestine, Poland and

Bristol, answers to the question "What makes you happy?" have been remarkably similar. Family, friends and community are near the top. A sense of belonging, purpose and value are high on the list. Also important are being in a clean environment, being active, learning and growing, helping others and being helped. None of these things need much 'stuff'. They all show that a long-term, happy lifestyle is both low carbon and relatively low cost.

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who was once a homeless refugee, we pray for the millions who today are homeless and refugees. We pray for all who are working to provide them with food, water and shelter, and for all striving to remove the root causes of displacement – war, poverty, racial violence, religious intolerance and environmental disorder. Help us never to forget their plight, but to work actively to support relief organisations and the many individuals who devote their lives to helping refugees.

companies found that most of them were unaware of their exposure to deforestation in their supply chains for products such as palm oil, biofuels, timber and cattle products. A senior adviser to Unilever said: "Deforestation does not need to happen. We can meet even the most optimistic estimates of future demand for palm, soy and beef without chopping down another tree. More and more companies are coming to realise this and taking the necessary action to eliminate deforestation from their value chains."

### **Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

A report published in the British Medical Journal underlines the health risks from climate change. Trends outlined in the latest IPCC report suggest that the risks from food insecurity, water scarcity, epidemics of emerging infections and human conflict resulting from competition for resources, population growth and migration all present an unacceptably high risk to public health. "We cannot escape our responsibility to reduce carbon emissions any more than that for alleviating poverty or reducing

tobacco use. Carbon taxes, renewable energy and technological innovation are all part of the solution. Taxation should reward investment in new technologies and subsidies for fossil fuels should be reduced."

### **Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December**

World population continues to grow at about 80 million a year – equivalent to the population of Egypt or Germany – or an extra city of 1.5 million arriving each week, with every new individual necessarily implicated in new greenhouse gas emissions. Dr. John Guillebaud has spent his working life in showing how success in limiting population growth invariably follows the removal of barriers to women, so that they can have free access to voluntary family planning. It means education for women, and also for men, who sadly often treat their partners badly. These interventions also save women's and infants' lives, as Melinda Gates, a committed Catholic, fully recognises in her involvement with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

### **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December**

A report from 41 environmental organisations called “Nature Check 2013” finds that the Government is failing to deliver one-third of its commitment on the natural environment. Areas where it has fallen short include protection of the Green Belt, farm animal welfare, and reversing wildlife declines. Its Biodiversity Strategy was meant to protect the environment within the planning system and provide holistic flood control. It does neither. A survey of over 2,000 adults found that 83% believe the natural environment should be protected at all costs, while only 25% thought the Government was doing enough to protect landscapes and wildlife. 91% agreed that the natural environment must be improved for future generations, while 85% said that the natural environment improved their quality of life.

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December**

Loving Father, you sent your Son to be a light to those that wait in darkness. Help us, who have brought your creation to the edge of darkness, to see the new path

we must follow if we are to fulfil your purposes for us. Help us to seek your Kingdom above all else – above money, power and all selfish ambition. Help us to repent and turn to you, who alone can restore us to the place in your family that was granted through your dear Son, Jesus Christ.

### **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December**

Last month the Government announced the designation of 27 Marine Conservation Zones out of the 31 in the consultation, with two further tranches to be announced in 2015 and 2016. WWF commented: “Our seas have been in serious decline for decades due to mismanagement. This announcement is a welcome step towards reversing this, but more needs to be done. The sites need to be accompanied by appropriate management measures and resources to protect our best-loved marine wildlife such as cetaceans, basking sharks and birds.”

### **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December**

WWF is cooperating with Fijian tuna-fishing company Sea Quest to install satellite transmitters on its vessels to demonstrate the transparency of its fishing operations. Since June these transmitters have been operating round the clock to ensure that protected areas and no-take zones are respected. Sea Quest employs 200 people in its long-line tuna fishing vessels and exports tuna mainly to the US and Japan. Sea Quest says: “We want to show that monitoring and control measures are essential to make fishing sustainable. Governments everywhere should make satellite transmitters mandatory for every commercial fishing vessel to increase safety and transparency.”

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

London Underground generates large amounts of heat which, under a ground-breaking scheme, is being captured from a Northern Line vent and piped into the heat network, which warms local homes. The Bunhill Heat & Power network already supplied more than 700 homes in Islington by this means and

the new expansion will see a further 500-plus homes connected. The Mayor of London has issued an assessment of new opportunities called “The Secondary Heat Report.” His senior adviser said: “By supporting locally-sourced energy and heat networks which can reduce bills and lower carbon emissions, we can both save money and drive innovation, jobs and growth in this burgeoning sector.”

### **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December**

IKEA is installing fast charging points for electric vehicles across all its UK stores by the end of this month. Its research shows that 1 in 6 motorists would be encouraged to switch to an electric car if more charging points were available. The fast charger units developed by Nissan can recharge an EV from empty to 80% full in 30 minutes. The charging points are free and there is no charge for the sustainably-produced electricity provided by Ecotricity. Nissan has already installed 97 fast chargers, mainly at motorway service stations and plans to extend its “Electric Highway” across the whole country