

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

January 2014



“There is no faithfulness or love, no acknowledgement of God in the land. . . . Because of this the land dries up, and all who live in it waste away; the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea are swept away.”
(Hosea 4.1-3)

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subject to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.”
(Romans 8.18-21)

“If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next Aim at heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’. Aim at earth and you will get neither.”
(C.S. Lewis)

Wednesday 1st January

A team from the University of Colorado, using DNA technology, has compared soil microbes from farmed land in the prairies with those found in undisturbed soils in cemeteries. Their findings, published in *Science*, state that crop agriculture has drastically altered the biology of the land and that “soils throughout the region bear little resemblance to their pre-industrial state.” An analysis in *Science* by Witwatersrand University argues that the erosion of soil fertility has been masked by a “soup of nutrients” giving us a false sense of security. Chemicals can keep crop yields high for a while, but the complex biology beneath is being abused further. Yields have already fallen 6% across Africa. 1% (12 million hectares) of global land is being degraded each year, defined as a 70% loss of topsoil.

Thursday 2nd January

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UN-CCD) finds that land degradation will cut global food output by 12% over the next 25 years, so requiring over 200 million hectares of fresh land to meet the demands of a global population projected to grow by more than a quarter by 2050. “We know what to do to restore degraded

land (mostly by replanting forests), but it takes time, money and political will, and there is not a lot of political will.”

Friday 3rd January

The Land Matrix Global Observatory has tracked recent land purchases amounting to 48 million hectares – an area the size of Spain. The top investors came from the US, Malaysia, the Emirates and the UK. In September China struck a deal to lease 5% of Ukraine’s land surface for 50 years. The top targets for investors are Papua New Guinea (where foreign firms now own 1/3rd of the land surface), Indonesia, Sudan, the Congo and Mozambique. Mrs Vanderwerde of the UN-CCD says that global industrial companies are moving into new frontiers, stripping land for quick profit more akin to mining than farming “They can’t just come in, take the resources and then walk away. The big companies need to change their behaviour, and they won’t do it unless they are made to.”

Saturday 4th January

Deforestation in Indonesia is largely driven by the palm oil industry. In November, Unilever pledged to buy all its palm oil from known and traceable sources by the end of 2014 and from

prosperity is the ability to participate freely in the life of society.”

Thursday 30th January

Tim Jackson suggests that the material success that has kept our economies going is now completely unsustainable and is now undermining conditions for our shared prosperity. “The idea of an economy whose task is to provide capabilities for flourishing within ecological limits offers the most credible vision to put in its place. But this can only happen through changes that support social behaviours and reduce the incentives to unproductive status competition. The rewards from these changes are significant. A less materialistic society will be a happier one. A more equal society will be a less anxious one. Greater attention to community and to participation in the life of society will reduce the loneliness that has undermined wellbeing in the modern economy. Enhanced investment in public goods will provide lasting returns to the nation’s prosperity.”

Friday 31st January

“Joy in Enough: Awakening to the New Economics” is a CEL Day Conference on Saturday 29th March from 11 to 5 at Carrs Lane Centre, Birmingham – near New Street station – when the keynote speaker Dan O’Neill, co-author of “Enough is Enough” will outline his view of a sustainable economy. We shall seek answers to the questions “What might a genuinely sustainable economy look like? And how can the Churches make it happen?” For more information contact Tony Emerson on 020 8769 4078 or email tony.emerson12@btopenworld.com

Sources:

“Prosperity without Growth” by Professor Tim Jackson

“Hope in an Age of Despair” by Jonathan Moo & Robert White

www.edie.net

Monday 27th January

The Prince of Wales has set up a new Chief Financial Officer Leadership Network aimed at embedding environmental and social issues in company financial management. CFOs from BUPA, Burberry, Danone, M & S, Sainsbury's and Unilever attended the launch. Prince Charles said: "CFOs have a vital role in making sure their businesses thrive into the future. The bottom line is that sustainable business equals good business. I'm delighted that the CFO Leadership Network will play a key role in communicating why sustainability makes business sense and how to start accounting for it. Our children and grandchildren are depending on it." The Network will be extended globally during 2014.

Tuesday 28th January

Professor Tim Jackson in his report "Prosperity without Growth" explains why the addiction to consumerism is so hard to resist: "Urging people to insulate their homes, turn down the thermostat, put on a jumper, drive less, walk a little more, holiday at home, buy locally-produced food etc. will either go unheard or be rejected as manipulation for as long as

messages about high street consumption point in the other direction.

Therefore structural change must lie at the heart of any strategy to address the logic of consumerism. The first strategy is to dismantle the perverse incentives for unproductive status competition. The second is to establish new structures that provide capabilities for people to flourish – and in particular to participate creatively in the life of society – in less materialistic ways."

Wednesday 29th January

"Since 2008 the prevailing vision of prosperity as a continually expanding economic paradise has unravelled. Perhaps it worked better when economies were smaller and the world was less populated, but if it was ever fit for purpose, it certainly isn't now . . . Since the time of Aristotle, it's been clear that something more than material security is needed for humans to flourish. Prosperity has vital social and psychological dimensions. To do well is in part to give and receive love, to enjoy the respect of your peers, to contribute useful work and to have a sense of belonging and trust in the community. In short, an important component of

certified sources by 2020. Now, under pressure from Greenpeace, Wilmar International, which controls almost half the world's palm oil market including Procter & Gamble and Reckitt Benckiser, has adopted a policy called "No Deforestation, No Peat, No Exploitation" to ensure that its own plantations and those of its suppliers will only provide products that are free from links to deforestation or abuse of human rights and local communities. Consultancy Climate Advisers commented: "Given its central role in the palm oil industry, Wilmar's commitment could truly transform agricultural production to a responsible basis. Wilmar and Unilever's efforts can be a model for other companies wanting to grow their businesses consistently with the urgent need to address deforestation and climate change."

Sunday 5th January

Father God, help us to change:
To change ourselves and to change our world,
To know the need for it, to deal with the pain of it, to feel the joy of it;
To undertake the journey without understanding the destination.
The art of gentle revolution.
(Michael Leunig)

Monday 6th January

Phosphorus is one of three major nutrients required for plant growth (nitrogen and potassium are the others), most of which is obtained by mining phosphate rock. The Chinese used to recycle it by returning human and animal wastes to the soil, but today vast amounts are flushed down waterways and deposited at river mouths. A report from the Soil Association noted that when in 2007/8 demand for phosphate fertiliser outstripped supply, the price of rock phosphate rose 800%. 158 million tonnes are mined each year, but supplies of this essential nutrient are becoming harder to access. In Denmark, where phosphorus has formed deposits in waste pipes, causing blockages, Aarhus Water and Grundfos, with backing from the government, have a pilot project to extract phosphorus from wastewater and to open up commercial opportunities to recycle this increasingly scarce mineral. Environment Minister Ida Auken said: "This is what green transition is all about. Phosphorus discharge into the aquatic environment is not only a challenge in Denmark. It is a global problem, so there are great benefits in finding a method to solve it."

Tuesday 7th January

In El Salvador, the most densely populated country in Central America, around 90% of surface water is contaminated, largely due to agricultural runoff and lack of sewage treatment. According to the World Bank, a fifth of its rural population lacks access to safe drinking water. Gold-mining operations near the San Sebastian River showed 9 times the accepted level of cyanide and 1000 times that of iron. 62% of Salvadoreans backed a bill to ban the mining of gold, but mining companies Commerce Group and Pacific Rim are suing the government for over \$400 million through the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, a tribunal funded by the World Bank. This is a key issue in the presidential elections this March.

Wednesday 8th January

A report from the Institute of Mechanical Engineers called "Waste Not, Want Not" finds that 30% of food harvested from the field never reaches the marketplace. Tesco admits that from January to June 2013 it generated 30,000 tonnes of food waste. Waitrose has introduced cheaper bags of 'ugly' fruit and

vegetables to reduce the food going to waste, but it's up to us to encourage supermarkets to accept more gnarled parsnips etc. rather than leaving them in the field. "Vision 2020" is campaigning for producers, retailers, restaurants and consumers to secure a ban on all food waste going to landfill by 2020. The aim is a universal collection of food waste by local councils, ensuring that it is used as a resource to provide energy, heat and benefits for agriculture.

www.vision2020.info

Thursday 9th January

Each year, Sheffield residents are mobilised in a project called "Abundance" to collect fruit previously left to rot from 3,000 trees. No money passes, but participants are invited to contribute ideas, recipes, music and stories at an annual celebration.

In South London a community-led veggie box scheme run by Local Greens provides residents with 100% UK-produced food and has agreed planting plans with local producers to guarantee them a steady income in exchange for a reliable supply of organic produce throughout the year. Money, though important, is not the driving force. Ecological food systems

reality of Christ's victory. Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke of 'costly grace' which sends people back into the world to follow Christ. "We are called to engage with the world, with the land and the environment, as caring for the land is part of our discipleship. In the face of climate change and its effects, we must act on a robust hope that may demand costly grace to make a difference."

Friday 24th January

Martin Goldsmith, author and theologian at All Nations Christian College, reviewed the Jewish law (Torah) in relation to land. "The land belongs to God and we are stewards of it. Land was divided equally between families, provision was made for the poor, the land was given periods of rest and tithing was incorporated into its working." Today we can be generous to others less fortunate in our communities through the harvest. Welcoming others onto the land to share in its blessings through dinners, country walks and family days out can have a significant place in living out New Testament fellowship."

Saturday 25th January

Good harvests in 2013 have doubled global stocks of cereals. However, it takes 2 kg. of grain to produce 1 kg. of poultry meat and up to 10 kg. of cereal-based feed to produce 1 kg. of beef. China is buying more meat than ever before, with imports rising by 3% annually. Beef deliveries alone are growing at around 7% a year and dairy products by 20%. To protect its supplies, China has bought US pork producer Smithfield Foods for £2.9 billion plus a controlling interest in Weetabix. It has added to its extensive overseas landholdings by buying 7 million acres of prime agricultural land in Ukraine. According to the head of agriculture at HSBC, demand from China will give British farmers great opportunities for exports, but consumers may see the share of disposable income spent on food rise from the present 10% to about 15%.

Sunday 26th January

Lord, give us ears to hear your word in the prophets of today, the wisdom to understand your message and the courage to respond. Amen.

and those who don't, we ask this in your loving Name.

Monday 20th January

A conference on Land Ownership and Faith took place last summer sponsored by A Rocha and the Wiston Estate in Sussex. The summary says: "The land belongs to God, and we belong to the land. We are to bear God's image in how we relate to the land in the kind of rule that was exemplified in Christ as 'the Servant King' . . . There are many examples in the Old Testament which show that it is not only poor stewardship but also failure to keep God's moral law that causes the land to suffer. However, the land and our relationship to it can be healed. Ultimately, all true healing comes from Christ, the one by whom and for whom all things were made."

Tuesday 21st January

Professor Michael Northcott of Edinburgh University, speaking on "Loving God and the Landless Poor" asked: "With over half of rural land held by less than 1% of the population, what implications does a Christian ethic have for those who control land use today concerning

those who do not own land? ... One of the challenges is how we live out Old Testament principles and New Testament redemption in a secularised world. In times of restrictions and criticisms, there can be an opportunity for God's vision and innovation in agriculture, architecture and development. Christians should be at the forefront in looking at issues and finding solutions, no matter how small, where we are."

Wednesday 22nd January

Dr. Martin Hodson from the John Ray Institute outlined the climate science, projected temperature changes and their impacts on land management, with warmer average temperatures, wetter winters, drier summers and a significant rise in sea levels. "There is no debate among the younger generations about the reality of climate change. They are taught in school and they do not argue it. At the political level, however, it seems to be ignored."

Thursday 23rd January

Revd Margot Hodson, vicar of Haddenham, spoke of hope – the robust hope that is based on the

depend primarily on good relationships, trust and generosity, but most of all on healthy and respectful relationships with the land itself.

www.growsheffield.com and www.localgreens.org.uk

Friday 10th January

"Farming in the City" edited by Francesca Miazzo and Mark Monkjam showcases 35 urban farming projects around the world which aim to re-connect city dwellers with food production. As more people move to an urban life, there's a desperate need to bring nature and food production into our cities. Schoolchildren visiting Hackney City Farm, volunteers working at Cultivate London (which uses derelict land) and the squatters who created Kew Bridge Eco-Village all talk of reconnecting with our food system and experiencing something quite different from the world of celebrities, I-Pads and shopping. The 'leave it to Tesco' approach is being ditched in favour of a new vision for food. "What would happen" asks Carolyn Steel in the introduction "if, rather than letting the market shape our lives through food, we were to use food as a tool to shape the world in better ways?" The book contains

practical ways of lobbying local politicians.

Saturday 11th January

The entire farmland of Britain is owned by less than 1% of the population and, as land prices escalate, access to land becomes ever more difficult. The average age of farmers is between 60 and 70, yet a growing number of younger people want to work the land in ethical, sustainable ways. The Land Workers Alliance is working with Via Campesina to facilitate access to land for younger people. It also campaigns for reform of the CAP, which currently favours large-scale industrial farming over small artisanal producers. www.landworkersalliance.org.uk

Sunday 12th January

Father, we thank you for the good earth that provides us with our food; for the skills that enable us to harvest the earth's resources, and for all whose vision and work enable your gifts to be channelled into areas of need. We pray that you will raise up a new generation of farmers willing and eager to share your gifts for the benefit of all.

Monday 13th January

In his 2008 review of rural housing, Lord Taylor found that rural areas have largely become the domain of the wealthy and retired. No new entrant to rural agriculture or horticulture could afford the 3-bedroomed bungalow with 15 acres recently advertised in mi-Devon at £495,000. The Ecological Land Co-operative is a social enterprise that has recently sold three residential smallholdings in mid-Devon for £75,000 each on a 150-year lease in a move to provide affordable rural livelihoods for those willing to work the land. Tenants must follow a management plan which prohibits use of agro-chemicals and requires electricity to be generated on-site. If sold, the sale price is linked to inflation rather than to the current market. This month further investment is invited to develop another twelve holdings.

www.ecologicalland.coop

Tuesday 14th January

Germany now produces a quarter of its electricity from solar PV and wind turbines, employing 370,000 people in their construction and maintenance.

15% of its renewable power is owned in community schemes. There are nearly 600 energy co-ops. One of them is seeking to take over Berlin's electricity supply and run the electricity grid.

The contrast with Britain is stark. Here the Government is making it ever harder to invest in wind and solar, while committing taxpayers to paying Chinese and French investors double the current price of electricity for new nuclear plants, which are unlikely to become available before 2020 at the earliest.

Wednesday 15th January

The John Lewis Partnership has signed a deal with SmartestEnergy to supply more than 380 Waitrose and John Lewis stores with 100% renewable electricity. This will come from the growing number of independent generators and will give a major boost to renewable energy projects owned by communities, farmers and small businesses across the UK. The director of property services at John Lewis said: "This agreement provides full transparency over where our energy is coming from. Working with SmartestEnergy means we can support independent

renewable generators and help progress towards the UK target for 15% of energy demand to be met from renewable sources by 2020."

Thursday 16th January

The EU is locked in controversy over proposals to limit the use of biofuels in transport. The Council of Ministers proposes that 7% of transport fuel should come from crops. NGOs including FoE want penalties introduced for the use of palm oil, which is causing so much deforestation. They also want to phase out the use of agricultural crops as competition with the use of land for food production is driving up food prices and encouraging land grabs in many countries, Greece, the new president of the EU Council, now has to find agreement on a solution.

Friday 17th January

Work has started on a £81 million biomass power plant in Northern Ireland funded by the UK Green Investment Bank. On completion in 2015 it will supply enough electricity for 25,000 homes and save around 3.7 million tonnes of CO2 emissions over its 20-year lifespan – the same

amount as taking 77,000 cars off the road. It will generate 15 MW. of clean, green energy by the use of 2 million tonnes of waste wood each year of operation.

Saturday 18th January

CEL is running an Ecocell workshop from 11 to 4.30 today at St. George's Church, Little Russell Street, London WC1A 2HR. The subject is Food. The keynote speaker is Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University. The workshop is free to everyone interested in discussing food within an environmental and faith-inspired context. For bookings, phone Tony Emerson on 020 8769 4078 or email

tony.emerson12@btopenworld.com

Sunday 19th January

Lord Jesus, our teacher and inspirer, lift up and enlighten the fallen minds of humankind. Help us to assess the benefits of technology in relation to its inseparable risks. Let us not plan on earth what we would not wish to admit in heaven. Let not neglect, or the blindness of the busy, threaten the degradation of this beautiful world. For the sake of all who care,