

Tuesday 30th July

At Carpet Recycling UK's annual conference, the director of Leeds-based consultancy CO2 Sense said: "Material scarcity has brought about a radical change in thinking . . . New business models could include a move away from consumer purchasing to leasing. Do we actually need a fridge or do we just need the service that it provides? Why not lease the fridge, and that way the manufacturer owns, maintains and repairs that fridge. This encourages them to design a product that has easy maintenance and re-use."

Wednesday 31st July

Professor Dave Goulson of Stirling University in a paper published in the Journal of Applied Ecology shows that neonicotinoid pesticides, licensed in more than 120 countries, accumulate in the soil for many years, washing out into streams and ditches. "Any pesticide that can persist for many years, build up in soil, and leach into waterways, is likely to have effects far beyond the insect pests it intends to target." The collateral damage extends to soil organisms, aquatic insects and even birds. "The current 2-year ban is far too short a time to have any great effect – or even to show if it is working."

Sources:

Resurgence
"Sacred Economics" by
Charles Eisenstein
www.edie.net

Additional Prayers

If you would like to receive the prayer diary each month by email (free), please email prayer-guide@christian-ecology.org.uk

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Picture on front cover: Foxglove and bee by
Poppy Pickard

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Prayer guide for the care of creation

July 2013



"This is what the Lord says – I am the first and the last: apart from me there is no God . . .

All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless . . .

From the rest he makes a god, his idol: he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says 'Save me; you are my god.' They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so that they cannot see, and their minds are closed so that they cannot understand."
(Isaiah 44. 5,9,17-18)

"To clasp the hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the disorder of the world."
(Karl Barth)

Monday 1st July

The House of Commons narrowly failed to include in the Energy Bill a clause setting a legal target for decarbonising the energy sector by 2030. This has undermined confidence in the UK's commitment to our legally-binding climate goals and could delay investment in the low-carbon projects that we need to keep the lights on and reduce our emissions. The House of Lords will shortly debate the Energy Bill and have the opportunity to revise its provisions.

Tuesday 2nd July

"Fracking" to extract shale gas is now firmly on the government's agenda. To extract the gas, a well is drilled 1,000 – 4,000 metres below the surface and around 15 million litres of water containing 353 chemicals, some of them proved to be toxic to humans, are forced into the rock under pressure to split it apart and extract the gas. Up to 80% of the polluted waste stays underground where it cannot be prevented from affecting our water supplies. Up until April 2012 parts of the east and south-east were under water stress. "Fracking" is already licensed under parts of Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. How will water supplies be affected if "fracking" goes ahead?

Wednesday 3rd July

A report from the World Bank called "Turn Down the Heat: Climate Extremes, Regional Impacts and the Case for Resilience" highlights the effects of climate change on water availability. It is projected that, if global temperatures rise up to 2 degrees C., water availability will decline by 20% in many regions. Even without climate change, population growth is expected to put pressure on water resources in many regions. WaterAid expert Daniel Yeo comments: "This report confirms that exposure to unpredictable rainfall keeps millions in poverty. The World

Bank needs to prioritise the provision of basic services to the poor – like access to safe water and sanitation – and ensure that its work on water focuses on the eradication of poverty and supports communities to better manage their own water resources.

Thursday 4th July

Responding to a report from the International Energy Agency on climate change, WWF comments:

- 1) The IEA looks at fossil fuel subsidies in developing countries, but ignores the huge subsidies in developed nations. IMF research suggests that these global subsidies are 4 times higher than those assessed by the IEA.
- 2) Last year the IEA reported that, in order to keep climate temperatures below 2 degrees C. above pre-industrial levels, two-thirds of fossil fuels must be left in the ground. WWF believes that the only ways to fill the void in energy supplies are through clean renewables and energy efficiency.
- 3) Although it was important to phase out inefficient coal plants (mainly in developing countries), it would be even better to cut emissions by 20% from existing coal plants by 2020.

Friday 5th July

Permits for oil exploration in the Virunga National Park – a World Heritage site since 1979 – were granted to UK-based Soco International and to the French Total SA. The World Heritage Committee which manages UNESCO world Heritage sites is deeply concerned that oil concessions covering 85% of the park could be exploited. Oil exploration could imperil its status as a World Heritage site and endanger local livelihoods based on tourism

to a pre-determined lifespan, but the plastics can also be recycled. UK plastic firms will have to adopt oxo-biodegradable technology quickly if they want to retain their export market. The process adds less than 5% to the cost pf plastics.

Thursday 25th July

Bhutan plans to become the world's first country with 100% organic agriculture. It will ban the sale of pesticides and fertilisers, relying instead on the healthy ecosystems of its farms and the use of farm waste. It plans to increase its agricultural output, exporting high-quality niche foods to China. Bhutan is already the world's best example of sustainable development. 95% of the population has clean water and electricity, 80% of its land is forested and it is both carbon neutral and food secure.

Friday 26th July

Burning wood in Britain's coal-fired power stations requires almost 6 times as much wood as the UK produces each year. This fact alone shows how unsustainable wood-fired power stations are and how they spell disaster for the world's natural habitats, human rights and our hopes of combating climate change. Most UK wood pellets come from Canada and the US where highly biodiverse forests are being clear-felled to produce pellets. Across Russia, Scandinavia and the Mediterranean biodiverse forests are being destroyed and then turned into monoculture tree plantations for biomass. What can be done? First, we must address energy conservation and a reduction in energy consumption. We need also to invest in renewable energy schemes which are community-owned.

Saturday 27th July

Last September the Scottish Government launched a Register of Community Benefits from Renewables. Voluntary community benefits paid by Scottish wind farm operators have reached £5 million a year and will increase even more as new schemes become operational. The benefits include support for local museums, college bursaries and community transport schemes. WWF Scotland commented: "If Scotland is to meet its 100% renewable ambition, it is vital that local communities are given the opportunity to benefit too."

Sunday 28th July

Loving Father, we begin to see the challenges ahead of us as the end of cheap energy approaches. We remember with thankfulness how you protected us from hunger and tyranny seventy years ago. Give us now the same resilience, the same mutual trust as we enter the new age of scarce and expensive resources. Help us never to forget the poor, the old and the vulnerable as we together face a very different future.

Monday 29th July

A new label designed by the NGO Windmade will be the first consumer label for products that use at least 75% renewable energy in their use of electricity, with wind power representing the largest portion. The label will cover the entire power consumption for all product components from the extraction of raw materials to the product leaving the factory gate. Windmade comments: "Now it is time for consumers to speak out. We know they care, and we know they want to see more companies using wind power. Our 'Show You Care' campaign aims to demonstrate to leading brands that consumers around the world favour products manufactured with renewable energy."

Friday 19th July

Today at TCPA, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS, a course in the "Talk Action" series is designed to enable community groups and individuals to develop the skills and information to engage with their communities on climate change and low-carbon living.

Participants of the course will:

Learn the ways community engagement can deliver lasting change on climate and energy issues:

Understand why community engagement on climate change can be problematic:

Be clear on the best ways to start a dialogue around climate change and saving energy:

Learn to lead a discussion on the positive aspects of low-carbon living:

Be able to offer guidance to community groups on reducing their footprint:

Learn how to develop an action plan.

Facilitator: Chris Church, who has worked National Trust, BTCV, Defra, Groundwork and local councils. For info. and bookings ring Chetha Vagheia on 0207 324 4775 or email chetna@talkaction.org

Cost: £170 for smaller charities and individuals.

Concessionary rates for students, pensioners and the unemployed.

Saturday 20th July

Charles Eisenstein asks: "What is the purpose of technology on a healed planet? - - - I think it's something we can only discover on the other side of the healing journey. Today, painfully, we are becoming aware of the folly of the delusion that we can, with clever enough technological solutions, avoid the consequences of what we do to the world. The pretence of separation is increasingly difficult to maintain. We are learning that we are not separate from Nature, and that it bears a wholeness that we ignore at our peril."

Sunday 21st July

Father, we know that in all creation only the human family has strayed from the sacred way. We know that we are the ones who, working together, must come back to walk in the path you have set for us. Father, teach us love compassion and integrity, that we may heal the earth and heal each other.

Monday 22nd July

The latest UN negotiations on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation & Degradation (REDD+) have stalled on identifying and tackling the drivers of deforestation, and a decision has been postponed to the Conference of Parties at Warsaw this November. The problem lies with the possible effects on trade if the drivers of deforestation were to be tackled at source. Coordinated global action is needed to prevent the leakage of deforestation into other areas.

Tuesday 23rd July

Major UK clothing retailers, responsible for more than one-third of UK clothing sales, have signed a commitment to measure, report and lower their environmental footprint. The agreement covers the use of lower-impact textile fibres, extending the active life of clothing, recovering some of the 1 million tonnes of wasted materials which currently go to landfill, and providing more information for consumers.

Wednesday 24th July

At least 14 countries now compel all consumer plastics to be oxo-biodegradable by law, but not so far the UK. The term means that the plastics degrade by a combination of oxidation and biodegradation. Crucially, they do not generate methane, even in landfill. The process offers complete biodegradation on land or water

and rare species such as the mountain gorilla. Total SA has pledged to stay out of the park, but remains active just outside it. Soco International has made no such commitment. The WHC has urged member nations "to do their utmost to ensure that mining and oil companies established on their territories do not damage World Heritage properties."

Saturday 6th July

Another World Heritage site, Australia's Great Barrier Reef, is at risk from failure to implement WHC recommendations around the rapid industrialisation of the area. The WHC has set a deadline of June 2014 to avoid the site being placed on an "international list of shame" with its effects on Australia's Aus\$6 billion tourist industry. Meanwhile the Queensland Government continues to fast track large-scale port development on the Great Barrier Reef and the Australian Government is doing nothing to stop them.

Sunday 7th July

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centred. Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.
What you may spend years building, someone may destroy overnight. Build anyway.
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you have anyway.
(Mother Teresa)

Monday 8th July

Shoppers often find it hard to assess the environmental impact of products on the shelves. A £2.6 million study involving Nottingham University aims to develop an electronic system to provide shoppers with a

sustainability rating for each product. Using smartphones, the system will enable us to scan barcodes and instantly receive data on the carbon footprint, use of resources and health effects of each product before we buy it. Head of Advanced Design Professor Daizhong Su said: "Consumers can make a more environmentally-conscious decision about what to buy. The desired knock-on effect would be that manufacturers refocus their priorities and make their products and processes more sustainable, with luxury packaging for example becoming a thing of the past and being deemed distasteful by society." The system can be applied to any product or service, from groceries to travel tickets, using existing accounting systems in the same way as VAT is communicated.

Tuesday 9th July

Cities around the world are following the example of Bogota in Colombia and Curitiba in Brazil in taking over the city's energy supply and running it themselves. Berlin's council is working with the city's biggest energy cooperative to take over control of the electricity grid for the city's 3.5 million people. Citizens are invited to invest at least \$100 in the project, with a return of 4-5%. The new independent Mayor of Bristol, George Ferguson, is expected to visit Berlin and see how it's done. Last year Bristol came 2nd to Copenhagen in the Green Capital competition. This year the title could be Bristol's.

Wednesday 10th July

While the world produces more than enough food to feed its 7 billion people, one in eight people still go to bed hungry – the majority of them farmers or farm workers growing food for the supply chain that has failed them. Oxfam's new report "Behind the Brands" identifies the 10 biggest food and beverage companies which

control a global food supply chain worth \$6 trillion, and assesses each on whether it improves working conditions for farmers, promotes fair and sustainable access to land and water, helps farmers adapt to climate change and is transparent about its supply chains and corporate activities. While Unilever and Nestle score well, Kelloggs and Associated British Foods fall far short. Oxfam recommends these actions:

- Publicly commit to recognising and fixing the injustices;
- Identify high-risk areas and their impact on supply chains;
- Make clear their expectations of their suppliers and support them in helping to fix the injustices.

Thursday 11th July

Unilever, which makes and sells products under more than 400 brand names, is drawing up a series of “sustainability ambitions” to help drive social change on a global scale. “We expect all our brands to identify how they will contribute to the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan. Examples include Magnum ice cream which sources its cocoa through Rainforest Alliance certification, Knorr soups by driving sustainable agriculture through its Sustainability Partnership programme, and Domestos by providing basic sanitation through its Toilet Academy.” Unilever has developed metrics for:

- Greenhouse gas emissions over the full lifecycle;
- Water used by consumers in countries where water scarcity is an increasing problem;
- Waste which covers product leftovers and packaging that goes to landfill.

Friday 12th July

A study by New Zealand’s University of Canterbury reports that “a combination of non-

GM seeds and management practices used by Western Europe is increasing yields faster than the use of the GM-led package chosen by the US.”

Owen Paterson, the UK Environment Secretary, has nevertheless assured us that GM foods are safe, while ignoring the question of whether they increase yields. He was promptly attacked by a Lib. Dem. ally Lady Parmenter for “acting as cheerleader for an industry which has consistently promised much over the past 20 years and yet failed to deliver” while Mark Price, managing director of Waitrose, referring to Paterson’s claim that, without GM animal feed, meat would be more expensive, insisted that the price difference was negligible. Interestingly, the House of Commons has refused to supply GM foods to its members.

Saturday 13th July

Today Operation Noah holds its annual Supporters’ Meeting from 10.30 to 4.30 at St. Aloysius Church Hall, 20 Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA to launch its campaign to enable churches to disinvest from fossil fuels. Ann Pettifor will speak about ecological justice and the economic and financial context of climate change. David Atkinson, Assistant Bishop of Southwark, will follow with a talk on the theological rationale underlying the new campaign. Paul Bodenham will focus on helping supporters to communicate effectively on the campaign, and there will be time for action planning and networking to build a small community of ambassadors to take forward education and awareness-raising. Cost £10 to cover venue hire. Please bring own lunch. For bookings go to www.operationnoah.org/node/542

Sunday 14th July

Deliver us, dear Father, from the worship of power through money – power over nature and

power over our fellow-humans. Save us too from the worship of science so that, while acknowledging the God-given skills of scientists, we may be spared the abuse of their discoveries. Free us from false hopes and misplaced trust, so that in you alone we may find our hope and our salvation.

Monday 15th July

Charles Eisenstein, author of “Sacred Economic” explores the fallacy of the technological fix for solving global problems. “It is obvious that a new pesticide won’t finally eliminate the superweeds that evolved to resist the previous pesticide, that new and more powerful antibiotics won’t bring a final victory over the superbugs that evolved to resist previous antibiotics, and that massive geo-engineering projects – such as seeding the stratosphere with sulphuric acid or the oceans with iron to combat climate change – will likely cause horrific unanticipated consequences.” He asks: “Is technology a violation of Nature? Surely not, for we use our physical capacities to influence and co-create our environment. Then can we embrace technology while not rejecting this uniquely human gift?”

Tuesday 16th July

“Our problem isn’t that we have the power of technology. It is that we have not used it in the spirit of a gift. When considering a nuclear power plant, an incinerator or even a patio beside our house, we have not asked ‘How might this best serve the totality of life on earth?’ We imagine that some day we may become independent of Nature if only we perfect technological substitutes for Nature’s gifts. Some dream that we will synthesise foods, create artificial air, live in bubble cities, set up space colonies, even conquer death with bionic parts. Such dreams are still with us in the

ravings of nanotechnology and GM-engineering evangelists.”

Wednesday 17th July

“Conventional agriculture sees weeds as an outbreak of badness, similar to the way we see terrorism, or violence in schools or disease. Organic farmers on the other hand might see unwanted weeds or bugs not as interlopers but as symptoms of an imbalance in soil ecology, believing in the interconnectedness of all beings that make up soil. The technological fix addresses the symptoms while ignoring the illness because it cannot see the integral entity that can become ill. To understand this is to abandon the exclusive domain to which we have appointed ourselves: the sole intelligence of the world. It is to humble ourselves to something greater, and seek our place not as lords and possessors of Nature, but as contributors to an unfolding process.”

Thursday 18th July

Vast realms of technology, much neglected today, have been developing in the margins, awaiting their moment for full expression. Here are some:
Regenerative agriculture and permaculture to heal the soil, replenish the aquifers and sequester carbon – all while producing far more food than chemical monocropping and GMOs:
The use of fungi to detoxify PCBs and petrochemical waste:
by identifying and encouraging latent healing processes:
Conservation technologies that could reduce energy consumption to a fraction of what it is today without any sacrifice;
Waste-water treatment with reed beds, aquaculture and composting toilets.