

Prayer guide for the care of creation

December 2015



“The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Romans 8,19-21)

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.” (Luke 2 v.8)

“Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young” (1 Timothy 4 v12)

Tuesday 1st December

Pray and Fast for the Climate meetings take place today at St Marks Church, Wimbledon, St. Laurences Church Stretton, St Johns Hartley Wintney, Cumbria University Chapel, Lancaster, various churches in Tring and throughout the Diocese of Capetown. For timings, please go to

www.prayandfastfortheclimate.org.uk/events

Wednesday 2nd December

According to Deuteronomy 11 and 28, the blessings of obedience to God include: many children, seasonable rain, good crops and livestock, and economic prosperity. The curses for disobedience include: defective children, failing crops, diseases, mental confusion, disaster in war and climate catastrophe. Human disobedience has consequences for the whole of nature (Isaiah 24). Revelation 11.12 declares God's judgement against those who destroy the earth. What should our response be to increasing evidence of a sickness in our planet brought about by human activities?

Thursday 3rd December

According to the US Census Bureau, there will be 2.5 billion additional people on earth by 2050. Christians believe that every child is made in the image of God, yet scientific evidence points to the conclusion that earth's

resources of food, water, fuel and space are insufficient to support an extra 2.5 billion people. In the words of Sir David Attenborough: “Every environmental problem becomes ever more difficult to solve with ever more people.”

Friday 4th December

How can Christians respond? Should we simply say that every life is precious and ignore the human need for adequate food, water etc.?

Andy Lester of A Rocha believes we need strategies to slow population growth and to increase food resources – for example, shifting from producing food to feed domestic animals to producing food for people. We need to increase incentives for charities and aid agencies working for women's education and empowerment. “Access to family planning can go hand in hand with teaching on family values.”

Saturday 5th December

Speaking at Pakistan's National Population Summit last month, the Minister for National Health Services said that the problem of population growth was as critical as polio. “Pakistan's population is increasing by 3.5 million each year. This growth rate is like a bomb that can explode any time. All our problems are because of the increased population, be it unemployment, health issues or education.” Although family planning does not

accord with traditional Islam, religious leaders have assured the Minister that they will disseminate religiously- acceptable messages on birth spacing.

Sunday 6th December

Dear Father, we pray for all scientists, that they may combine zeal in research with care for the consequences for the world and its creatures. For all politicians, that they may be delivered from self-seeking and the short-term view, and may recognise that they hold the world in trust. For all who feel helpless as they see the dangers to our world that they seem unable to influence. Help each one of us to see more clearly the part we are called upon to play.

Monday 7th

Fires that have been raging in Indonesia since September have produced more CO2 emissions than the whole of the US economy. More than 500,000 people have sought treatment for respiratory problems and at least 21 people have died, mainly babies. FoE Indonesia (WALH) has set up evacuation centres, distributed face masks and oxygen, and organised free medical check-ups. It is preparing lawsuits against the companies responsible for starting the fires to clear the land for palm oil cultivation and is lobbying the government to deal with the issue.

Tuesday 8th December

A report from the Environmental Audit Committee, issued in response to the Supreme Court's ruling that the Government should take action on air pollution, recommends a national diesel car scrappage scheme to provide a clean-up of air in our cities. Ministers should revise the road tax (VED) to encourage motorists to buy cleaner cars such as hybrid and electric cars. The EAC welcomed a government proposal to create a nationwide framework of Clean Air Zones which would enable councils to ban or limit diesel cars in cities. "But we are concerned that central government is trying to shift responsibility for meeting air quality targets to local authorities just when they are facing severe financial cuts."

Wednesday 9th December

The Commission of Antarctic Marine Living Resources has for the 5th time failed to reach agreement on the need for Marine Protection Areas in the Southern Ocean [WWF's](#) Polar Programme Manager said: "MPAs have proved to be a success in protecting wildlife and boosting the productivity of oceans around the world.

Although we are disappointed that CCAMLR has again been unable to reach a consensus on the protection of the Ross Sea and East Antarctica this year, WWF is encouraged that progress was made towards agreement on MPAs at next year's meeting.

Thursday 10th December

The Virunga National Park, a World Heritage site, is again under threat from drilling licenses for oil on land bordering the Park and Lake Edward. According to David Nussbaum, CEO of WWF, "More and more extractive companies are recognising the business risk involved in activities that could threaten World Heritage sites." Oil exploitation here would negatively impact over 50,000 people who depend on Lake Edward for their livelihoods. It could also disrupt the fragile economy of DRC's North Kivu province which is connected closely to the Park. Pollution from an oil spill on either side of Lake Edward would have devastating effects on Virunga. Impact-free oil extraction is nearly impossible to guarantee, particularly in a seismically active area such as this

Friday 11th December

Eleven proposed mega-dams along the Mekong River threaten the survival of the Mekong dolphin, whose numbers have dropped from 200 in 1997 to 85 in 2010. The dams could irrevocably disrupt fish migration, endangering the world's largest inland fishery and the main source of protein for 60 million people. The Don Sahong Dam in Laos, due to be built next year, will according WWF Cambodia have negative impacts on the entire Mekong ecosystem all the way to its delta in Vietnam.

Saturday 12th December

The High Court has refused an application for a judicial review of the Government's decision in July to allow neonicotinoid pesticides to coat oilseed rape seeds, despite growing evidence that neonicotinoids are a significant threat to bees and other pollinators. According to FoE, too much credibility was given to evidence from the pesticide industry in support of the use of its own products. FoE is considering taking the case to the Court of Appeal.

Sunday 13th December

Dear Father, we cannot bring about justice worldwide, but help us to begin where we are. Make us honest and just in all our dealings, true in our words and actions.

We cannot alter the course of a suffering and unjust world, but help us to light candles in the darkness, in the Name of Jesus Christ, who will bring the dawn of righteousness and peace at his glorious Day of Justice and Judgement. Amen.

Monday 14th December

The Pope's Encyclical entitled *Laudato Si'* has provoked much debate. Subjects covered include pollution and climate change, biodiversity loss, societal breakdown, global inequality, biblical wisdom, the harmony of creation, technology and globalisation, the effects of anthropocentric views, ecology and ecosystems, principles of justice and the common good, practical action, faith, hope and love, concluding with some wise words on prayer. It does not shy away from controversial issues, but equally offers gentle and wise exhortation. It points to a common way forward for all Christians.

Tuesday 15th December

Mary Colwell, the award-winning TV and radio producer, speaking from a Catholic viewpoint, writes on population: "This is the one issue which the Pope really ducked. The environment crisis is about both consumption and population. It would have been wonderful if he had addressed it. As the population grows to 10 billion . . . can the planet allow that without us all taking a step back? . . . It will take some humongous shock to the Western world and may mean casualties caused by huge storms, flooding and heat waves. This is where the Pope is right: we are the ones demanding all this 'stuff', and until we make that connection on a day-to-day basis, we won't stop climate change."

Wednesday 16th December

Martin and Margot Hodson, in "The Ethics of Climate Scepticism" ask "What motivates climate sceptics? The prime suspects, they believe, are financial and commercial interests. "The problem comes when an overwhelming scientific consensus has major political and economic implications. Powerful institutions, whose economic and political interests are threatened, may seek to challenge this consensus view. If politicians could accept the scientific consensus on anthropogenic global warming, they could move forward to consider the best ways to respond."

Thursday 17th December

According to Cambridge University's Institute for Sustainability Leadership, global fossil fuel subsidies cost \$5,3 trillion a year. They cost the average UK family £1,000 a year. Renewable energy, by contrast, costs each family £100 a year and produces 25% of UK power. Cutting subsidies for fossil fuels could result in an "immediate boost" of a 12% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. "We believe that Europe is at a crossroads. Either we create a competitive system that responds to energy security and to climate concerns, or we become increasingly uncompetitive. Fossil fuel subsidy reform is absolutely critical to creating a level playing field."

Friday 18th December

A report called "Offshore Wind Vision" finds that the UK could get more than one-third of its electricity from offshore wind by 2030 while supporting 50,000 skilled jobs. From the first offshore wind farm, which began operating in 2000, the industry has become a world leader in the technology and could readily build another 30 gigawatts of capacity by 2030. "The industry has shown it can deliver large energy projects to time and budget, but continued momentum is important to build investor confidence. Costs are falling rapidly thanks to investment in new technology and increased competition. We need to see a clear pathway for offshore wind to 2025. This will give the UK its best opportunity for cost-effective decarbonisation and ensure we maximise the export opportunities."

Saturday 19th December

Over a million refugees have now fled from war and persecution in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea and other countries. Many are now facing the northern winter without proper shelter or health facilities. Pray for peace and security in their home countries, and for the nations to unite in restoring stability to the Middle East.

Sunday 20th December

Father God, whose Son Jesus was himself homeless and a refugee, we pray for the world's displaced persons, whose numbers have increased dramatically this year. We pray for all who are working to alleviate the root causes of their displacement – poverty, racial violence, religious intolerance, social and environmental disorder. Be close to all who have given up the comforts of an affluent society to minister to their needs, and help us all to support them according to our means.

Monday 21st December

The 3rd London Planning for Climate Change conference takes place today at the South Bank University, London. 15 speakers and 100 delegates will discuss a range of issues around Adaptation to Climate Change, with policies to mitigate its effects. The conference will look at innovative case studies to promote sustainable communities and economies. Details of the agenda, the speakers and how to book can be found at

<http://www.planforclimatechange.co.uk/london-dec-2015/4587746571>

Tuesday 22nd December

A UN report finds that 20 million tonnes of plastic end up in the world's oceans each year. Moreover, many products labelled as biodegradable are unlikely ever to break down in the ocean. "Once in the ocean, plastic does not go away, but breaks down into microplastic particles. This report shows that there are no quick fixes, and a more responsible approach to managing the lifecycle of plastics will be needed to reduce their impacts on our oceans."

Wednesday 23rd December

The world's biggest offshore wind farm is to be built in the Irish Sea with a total of 87 turbines capable of delivering clean electricity to more than 460,000 UK homes. The Walney Extension wind farm is due to be fully commissioned in 2018.

Thursday 24th December

Christmas Eve

Dear Lord,
there sit apart in lonely places
On this the gladdest night of all the year
Some stricken ones, with sad and weary faces
To whom the thought of Christmas brings no cheer.
For these, dear Father, our petition hear,
And send the pitying Christ Child very near.
(Anon)

Christmas Day

Loving Father, you have sent your Son as your gift to all human life in this your soiled and suffering world. Deepen our compassion for all who are bearing the consequences of careless and greedy lifestyles. Plant in us a new determination to put right what has gone amiss, to look anew at the way we live our lives, and to strive for justice and peace throughout your world. Amen.

Saturday 26th December

A survey by WaterAid of 2,000 British adults found that the top priority for foreign aid should be health and water/sanitation in equal proportions, followed by food/nutrition, humanitarian disasters and education. Current UK aid spending allocates just 2% to water and sanitation, 20% to health and 13% to education. Nearly 2.4 billion people around the world remain without access to a safe toilet and over 663 million are without clean water. The resulting diarrhoeal illnesses kill some 500,000 children each year and cause up to 50% of world malnutrition. One of the new Sustainable Development Goals, to be achieved by 2030, is: "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all."

Sunday 27th December

Lord God, teach us to value our possessions aright. Help us never to think more of them than of people. Make us ready to use them freely for the good of others and to share them generously without grudging. Thank you for the beautiful things that we enjoy possessing. May our enjoyment be wholesome and right, and may we hold lightly to all that we own. This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ, who became poor that we might become rich for ever.

Monday 28th December

According to a Chatham House report entitled "Heat, Light and Power for Refugees", the 60 million forcibly-displaced people living across the globe use 3.5 million tonnes of oil equivalent a year – mainly in the form of firewood and charcoal for heating and cooking. These inefficient fuels generate about 13 million tonnes of CO₂ a year, and the subsequent air pollution could be killing 20,000 a year. Neither the UN Sustainable Development Goals nor the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative mention the 2.9 million people living in fuel poverty. The report recommends private-sector and politically-orientated humanitarian funding to implement solar grids and more permanent energy infrastructure in every refugee camp, along with the expertise to use them.

Tuesday 29th December

The Wildlife and Countryside Link Alliance, representing more than 8 million people through 46 voluntary organisations concerned with conservation and wildlife, has produced a report entitled "Farming Fit for the Future." The Government is developing separate plans for nature's recovery and for food and farming. "These plans must be

united around an ambition to protect and enhance the ecosystems that underpin sustainable farming – our soils, freshwater and natural habitats.” “Good environmental management of the farmed landscape is the only economically-sustainable way forward for farming. It is critical to the health of the country's natural environment and to the health and wellbeing of its people.” The report sets forth a vision for farming that will deliver multiple benefits for farming communities and businesses, for nature and for the nation.”

www.wcl.org.uk/farmingforthefuture.asp

Wednesday 30th December

A conference, organised by the John Ray Initiative, A Rocha, Micah Network and For Mission College, to consider the new UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) takes place on Saturday 5th March from 9.30 to 4.30 at the Hollymoor Centre, Manor Park Grove, Birmingham B31 5ER. Keynote speakers from Christian Aid and Micah Network will look at what the SDGs promise for biodiversity and what an appropriate Christian response should be. A range of seminars will cover topics including food, energy, fisheries and cities. Bookings are available online at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-sustainable-future-tickets-18117423729> or go to: www.jri.org.uk Booking before Jan. 31st is £25 for under-25s and £40 for others.

Thursday 31st December

Eternal God, before whose face the generations rise and pass away, to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday, as we meditate on the solemn passing of time and turn our minds to the contemplation of eternity, save us from being enslaved to the temporal and the transient. Help us to look forward with hope and determination. Let our sinfulness teach us our utter dependence on you. So, marching forward into this New Year, make us brave, serene and strong, so that, even in a world so full of suffering and grief, we may be as lamps shining in the darkness, helping to light the path that humanity must now tread in its return to sustainable living, until at last our feet are guided into the way of peace between each other and peace with all creation, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

(Leslie Weatherhead – adapted)

Sources:

WWF News
Countryside Voice
Environment (CIWEM)
Root & Branch (A Rocha)
www.edie.net

For more information and requests for prayer, please contact:

Philip Clarkson Webb,
15 Valley View
Southborough
Tunbridge Wells TN4 0SY

Email: pcw@greenchristian.org.uk

Website: www.greenchristian.org.uk

Picture on front cover:

Hawthorn berries with Ingleborough far left by Judith Allinson

Green Christian is a Trading name of Christian Ecology Link Ltd.

Correspondence Office:

97 Plumpton Avenue, Hornchurch, RM12 6BB

Company Registration No. 2445198

Registered Charity No. 328744.

tel: +44 (0) 845 4598460

info@greenchristian.org.uk