

News Items from UNEP and Other Sources

Dear Forum Colleagues,

Greetings! Below you will find the latest news items from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other news sources. For your convenience, I have included short introductions to each story and provide URLs for the full story. I have grouped articles together that pertain to a common topic, but a number of articles belong within multiple sections.

Within this email, you will find articles related to the following topics:

- Catholicism and Climate Change
- Evangelical Christianity and Climate Change
- More Articles on Christianity and Climate Change
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- Conservation
- China and Ecology
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I hope you will find these news items informative and useful in your work.

For the archive of past news items, visit: <http://fore.research.yale.edu/publications/massmedia>

Sincerely,
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Catholicism and Climate Change

Can a Pope Help Sustain Humanity and Ecology?

By Andrew C. Revkin

Dot Earth
May 6, 2014

VATICAN CITY — For four long days, several dozen physical, environmental and social scientists hunkered here with theologians, philosophers, economists and a poverty campaigner to explore ways to balance human ambitions with the planet's limits. The rare joint meeting of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences — “Sustainable Humanity, Sustainable Nature, Our Responsibility” — helped demarcate where science leaves off and the rest of society, including organized religion, plays a role in shaping the quality of human life and environmental conditions in this century.

http://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/05/06/can-a-pope-help-sustain-humanity-and-ecology/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&_php=true&_type=blogs&src=rec_hp&r=2

Vatican hosts five-day sustainability summit

By Brian Roewe
National Catholic Reporter
May 2, 2014

A Vatican conference kicking off Friday has brought together academics and experts from across the globe to address sustainability issues related to both people and the planet.

The conference -- “Sustainable Humanity, Sustainable Nature, Our Responsibility” -- is a joint venture of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences. It runs through the weekend and concludes Tuesday.

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/vatican-hosts-five-day-sustainability-summit>

Remarks by Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director at the 2014 Joint Workshop of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences

Towards an Inclusive "Green Economy": Rethinking Ethics and Economy in the Age of the Anthropocene

United Nations Environment Programme
May 6, 2014

Rome - Sometimes, to look afresh at the problems of today, we need to take a wider view. Not just decades, or centuries. Not even millennia.

Geologists divide the Earth's existence into periods called epochs. These can be tens of millions of years long. Each is marked by a radically different climate, and most culminate in some kind of mass extinction. The Holocene, for example, started some twelve thousand years ago, when the glaciers started to retreat from the temperate lands we know today, and mammoths and sabretoothed tigers disappeared from our planet.

<http://www.unep.org/newscentre/Default.aspx?DocumentID=2788&ArticleID=10844&l=en>

Pope Francis wants to save the planet

By Michael Trimmer
Christian Today
May 9, 2014

Pope Francis is reported to be wanting to galvanise Catholic Church's response to climate change.

Christiana Figueres, head of the UN's climate change secretariat, told an audience at St Paul's Cathedral that a new encyclical on the environment was forthcoming.

A Papal encyclical, a letter explaining the Catholic Church's views on a subject, sent out to the approximately 5,100 Catholic bishops worldwide, is an indication that a particular issue has become of great importance to the Church.

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/pope.francis.wants.to.save.the.planet/37321.htm>

UN to back Pope Francis statement on 'human ecology'

By Sophie Yeo
Responding to Climate Change (RTCC)
May 8, 2014

The UN will back a letter from the Pope on man's relationship with the environment, its climate chief Christiana Figueres said on Wednesday.

The Vatican confirmed in January that Pope Francis was preparing a statement on "human ecology" describing how man must defend nature. The UN's support is likely to bestow further

influence on his comments, which will already be observed by the 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide.

<http://www.rtcc.org/2014/05/08/un-to-back-pope-francis-statement-on-human-ecology/>

Pope Francis urged to back fossil fuel divestment campaign

Letter from religious groups in Australia and North America says it is 'immoral' to profit from fossil fuels

By Graham Readfearn
The Guardian
April 16, 2014

Religious groups have urged Pope Francis to back a campaign to encourage millions of people, organisations and investors to pull their money out of the fossil fuel industry.

Multi-faith groups in Australia and North America have sent a letter to the pope saying it is "immoral" to profit from fossil fuels.

The letter, shown exclusively to the Guardian, says 80% of global fossil fuel reserves must "stay in the ground" if dangerous climate change is to be avoided.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/apr/16/pope-francis-back-fossil-fuel-divestment-campaign-religions-groups>

Lent a reflection pool for diving into water usage issues

By Sharon Abercrombie
National Catholic Reporter
March 4, 2014

Diving deeply into prayer and making sacrifices are the primal stuff of Lent.

For many U.S. Catholics, participating in weekly parish faith sharing gatherings around Scriptural themes, foregoing those luscious squares of 72 percent dark chocolate, eating simple, meatless meals, donating the resulting grocery savings to Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl program to feed hungry people in 100 countries -- all these have become the spiritual staples of this penitential season.

For ecologically minded parish coordinators searching for materials relevant to their midweekly Lenten and Advent gatherings, Sr. Terri MacKenzie's ongoing creativity has proven to be a real gift.

<http://ncronline.org/blogs/eco-catholic/lent--reflection-pool-diving-water-usage-issues>

Evangelical Christianity and Climate Change

Why Should Evangelical Christians Care About Climate Change?

Here are five reasons from an evangelical Christian climate scientist.

By Chris Mooney
Slate
May 3, 2014

Climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe, an evangelical Christian, has had quite a run lately. A few weeks back, she was featured in the first episode of the Showtime series *The Years of Living Dangerously*, meeting with actor Don Cheadle in her home state of Texas to explain to him why faith and a warming planet aren't in conflict. (You can watch that episode for free on YouTube; Hayhoe is a science adviser for the show.) Then *Time* magazine named her one of the 100 most influential people of 2014. Cheadle wrote the entry. "There's something fascinating about a smart person who defies stereotype," Cheadle observed.

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/climate_desk/2014/05/conservative_christians_and_climate_change_five_arguments_for_why_one_should.html

Climate Change Threats To 'The Least Of These' Compel Evangelical Christians To Act

By Lynne Peeples
Huffington Post
April 5, 2014

"Climate change is a really bad reason to get divorced."

Katharine Hayhoe, a leading climate scientist, recalled the trial she and her husband Andrew, an evangelical Christian pastor, faced when they discovered they weren't on the same page about global warming.

After a number of intense discussions, mediated by shared values and beliefs, their marriage persevered. Andrew accepted the overwhelming scientific evidence, and they even went on to co-write a book for Christians on climate change. But in evangelical churches across the U.S., a faith community to which Hayhoe herself belongs, many pastors and parishioners continue to perceive an incompatibility between their faith and the climate science.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/05/climate-change-evangelicals-poverty-health_n_5088537.html

Evangelicals Organize 'Day of Prayer,' Call for Action on Climate Change

Young Evangelicals for Climate Action is highlighting the effects of global warming.

By Alan Neuhauser
USA Today
April 4, 2014

Hundreds of evangelical Christians gathered across the country Thursday for a “Day of Prayer and Action” on climate change.

The event, made up of vigils, speeches and discussions, was part of a weeklong series being held on 20 Christian college campuses this week, all geared toward spurring churches and local communities to reduce harmful carbon emissions, educate local residents about the effects of climate change, and fight the rise of temperatures and greenhouse gases worldwide.

<http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/04/03/evangelicals-organize-day-of-prayer-call-for-action-on-climate-change>

More Articles on Christianity and Climate Change

Come with Me into the Fields: Inspiring Creation Ministry among Faith Communities

By Erin Lothes Biviano
New Theology Review Vol. 26, No. 2 (2014)

Climate change is a dominant reality of our time, a series of physical changes to earth’s systems that will impact human wellbeing, social stability, biodiversity, and the familiar patterns of

harvest and storms on God's green earth. The Fifth Assessment Report clearly states that climate change is already having an impact on our planet and will worsen the lot of the poor in particular. A critical link between this scientific assessment of the state of the planet and Christian faith is thereby found in the gospel invitation to care for the poor. Yet arguably many Christians have not internalized this reality, and the central symbols of Christian faith are not yet consciously intertwined with the reality of climate change in the ways needed to summon strong action. Therefore, the critical question addressed here is how ministers can help lead their communities to understand the links between climate change and faith -- and then inspire them to act.

<http://newtheologyreview.org/index.php/ntr/article/view/998>

Archbishop of Wales: Fundamental action needed to combat climate change

By Aled Blake
Wales Online
April 20, 2014

Climate change disaster can be combated by people living by the values of Jesus Christ, the Archbishop of Wales has said.

In his Easter sermon at Llandaff Cathedral, Dr Barry Morgan called on worshippers to make fundamental changes to their way of life in order to protect the planet for future generations.

He said the increasing extreme weather patterns in the UK and abroad meant Christians needed to take climate change and its effects seriously and respond, not bury their heads in the sand.

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/archbishop-wales-fundamental-action-needed-7010852>

Former archbishop of Canterbury reveals global climate change fears

Rowan Williams blames western lifestyle for 'pushing environment towards crisis' ahead of IPCC report

The Guardian
March 30, 2014

Rowan Williams has spoken of his fears for the global climate, saying the winter flooding was a portent of what is to come.

Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, the former archbishop of Canterbury blamed the lifestyle of western countries, which he said was "pushing the environment towards crisis".

He said the floods in Britain and similar weather-related catastrophes around the world are the clearest indications yet that predictions of "accelerated warming of the Earth caused by the uncontrolled burning of fossil fuels... are coming true."

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/mar/30/archbishop-canterbury-rowan-williams-climate-change-fears/print>

Young people seek an earth restored

If the church wants to remain relevant for students and the youth generation, it should increase and amplify its call to action on climate change, says a young Christian leader.

By Emily Wirzba
Faith and Leadership
April 8, 2014

As a 22-year-old politically engaged Christian woman, I want to be a part of a church that takes seriously its mandate to protect God's creation and the vulnerable. For me, one of the most important ways to fulfill this mandate is to address climate change.

I take seriously Numbers 35:33-34, which says, "You shall not pollute the land in which you live. ... You shall not defile the land in which you live, in which I also dwell" (NRSV).

<http://www.faithandleadership.com/content/emily-wirzba-young-people-seek-earth-restored?page=full>

Giving up carbon for Lent

Can the Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast help reverse climate change and revitalize the church at the same time?

By Joshua Eaton
Faith and Leadership
April 8, 2014

Katharina Wilkins still passes on things like alcohol and Facebook during the season of Lent, but what's really important to her is giving up needless car rides and investment in fossil fuels. That's because, for the third year in a row, Wilkins is participating in the annual Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast.

"I have done Lent before, but in comparison, there's so much more sense of purpose now," said Wilkins, a member of the Congregational Church of Weston, Mass. "It certainly is still an exercise in self-discipline in many ways, but somehow it fits better into a bigger picture."

<http://www.faithandleadership.com/features/articles/giving-carbon-for-lent>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

IPCC Report: A changing climate creates pervasive risks but opportunities exist for effective responses

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Press Release
March 31, 2014

Responses will face challenges with high warming of the climate

YOKOHAMA, Japan, 31 March – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a report today that says the effects of climate change are already occurring on all continents and across the oceans. The world, in many cases, is ill-prepared for risks from a changing climate. The report also concludes that there are opportunities to respond to such risks, though the risks will be difficult to manage with high levels of warming.

http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/pr_wg2/140330_pr_wgII_spm_en.pdf

IPCC Presents Assessment on Measures to Mitigate Climate Change

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
April 13, 2014

Berlin, Germany – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the group of the world's leading climate change scientists established by the UN General Assembly and working under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World

Meteorological Organization, has just released in Berlin, after 6 years of intensive work reviewing all available science, its 2014 assessment on measures to mitigate climate change.

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/news/item/ipcc-presents-assessment-on-measures-to-mitigate-climate-change/>

Desmond Tutu and Climate Change

Desmond Tutu: Opposition to pipelines is a moral choice

By Desmond Tutu
Ottawa Citizen
May 9, 2014

As I travel the globe – witnessing first-hand the vulnerability of communities most affected by climate change, from South Africa to Canada – the urgency of our responsibility to take action has never been clearer. Every single day hundreds of millions of lives and livelihoods are affected by global warming, a trend that will inevitably and dramatically reduce the quality of life for future generations.

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/business/energy/Desmond+Tutu+Opposition+pipelines+moral+choice/9823193/story.html>

We need an apartheid-style boycott to save the planet

We must stop climate change. And we can, if we use the tactics that worked in South Africa against the worst carbon emitters

By Desmond Tutu
The Guardian
April 10, 2014

Twenty-five years ago people could be excused for not knowing much, or doing much, about climate change. Today we have no excuse. No more can it be dismissed as science fiction; we are already feeling the effects.

This is why, no matter where you live, it is appalling that the US is debating whether to approve a massive pipeline transporting 830,000 barrels of the world's dirtiest oil from Canada to the

Gulf of Mexico. Producing and transporting this quantity of oil, via the Keystone XL pipeline, could increase Canada's carbon emissions by over 30%.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/10/divest-fossil-fuels-climate-change-keystone-xl>

More Articles on Climate Change

Faith leaders need to find their voice on climate change

By Christiana Figueres
The Guardian
May 7, 2014

Religious institutions need to find their voice and set their moral compass on one of the great humanitarian issues of our time

Saving the Earth and its peoples from dangerous climate change is an economic, social and environmental issue – and a moral and ethical one too that goes to the core of many if not all of the world's great faiths.

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/07/faith-leaders-voice-climate-change>

HASC lauds the White House on Unveiling Dire Warning - Climate Change Is Here

Action Needed Now - EcoDharmic Justice!

Hindu American Seva Communities Press Release
May 6, 2014

Washington, D.C.: Hindu American Seva Communities (HASC) supports and complements efforts elaborated in the President's Climate Action Plan. Today, delivering on a major commitment in the Climate Action Plan, the White House unveiled the third U.S. National Climate Assessment—the most comprehensive scientific assessment ever generated of climate change and its impacts across every region of America and major sectors of the U.S. economy. A “game changer”, this Assessment lays out, at an unprecedented level of comprehensiveness, clarity, and detail, how climate change is affecting every region in our country and key sectors of

our national economy. A single bottom line is crystal clear: climate change is not a distant threat; it is affecting the American people now in important ways.

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/news/item/hasc-lauds-the-white-house-on-unveiling-dire-warning-climate-change-is-here/>

Youths sue U.S. government over climate inaction

An unprecedented massive legal campaign led by young Americans is playing out in courtrooms across the nation

By Amel Ahmed
Aljazeera America
May 4, 2014

Young people across the country are suing several government agencies for failing to develop a climate change recovery plan, conduct that amounts to a violation of their constitutional rights, says their lawyer Julia Olson.

Their futures are at stake, say the young plaintiffs.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/5/4/youth-sue-governmentforclimateinaction.html>

Celebrate Mother's Day by Honoring Mother Earth

Climate Change Film Debuts in NYC May 11

Press Release
April 15, 2014

“You can’t talk about it. Mainstream society doesn’t want to hear about our sorrow for life on Earth.” Author Joanna Macy’s soft voice delivers the heartfelt message of *The Wisdom to Survive: Climate Change, Capitalism and Community*. The new documentary is one of the few to face the impending climate catastrophe head on.

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/news/item/celebrate-mothers-day-by-honoring-mother-earth-climate-change-film-debuts-i/>

More Articles on Catholicism and Ecology

Pope to UN: Resist the economy of exclusion, serve the poor

Vatican Radio
May 9, 2014

Pope Francis met with executives from the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes on Friday, led by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. Emer McCarthy reports:

Speaking to the men and women who manage the UN's vast network of humanitarian offices, he urged them to challenge "all forms of injustice" and resist the "economy of exclusion", the "throwaway culture" and the "culture of death" which nowadays – he said – "sadly risk becoming passively accepted".

Read the full text of Pope Francis' address to the UN delegation and listen to the audio recording of this report:

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2014/05/09/pope_to_un:_resist_the_economy_of_exclusion,_serve_the_poor/en1-797707

'The fragile world': Church teaching on ecology before and by Pope Francis

By Donal Dorr
Thinking Faith
February 26, 2014

It is reported that Pope Francis is preparing a text on the environment, and Donal Dorr expects that the resulting document will develop the links that Francis has already and repeatedly made between 'concern for the exploited earth and concern for marginalised and exploited people'. How does Pope Francis' thinking about the environment compare with that of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI?

http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20140226_1.htm

National Energy Efficiency Network event series to launch in Canberra, April 30th

Catholic Earthcare Australia Press Release
April 17, 2014

Energy efficiency is high on the agenda for many households and businesses across Australia, with electricity and gas prices rising sharply over recent years. For the not-for-profit, community sector in particular, identifying cost-effective and practical ways to become more energy efficient is especially critical, as these rising energy costs divert much needed funds away from important programs and operational budgets. It is into this setting, that Catholic Earthcare Australia, in partnership with the Uniting Church, is launching the National Energy Efficiency Network (NEEN).

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/news/item/national-energy-efficiency-network-event-series-to-launch-in-canberra-april/>

Slow down

By Abbot Stanislaus Gumula
Post and Courier
February 2, 2014

The Brothers at Mepkin Abbey have followed the discussion about the fate of Cainhoy Plantation over the past three months. We are hopeful that a positive outcome can be achieved for this important property, and with that in mind offer a message of patience and hope.

Mepkin Abbey, a Trappist monastery at the confluence of the two forks of the Cooper River, played a role in the conservation of the historic Cooper River corridor.

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20140202/PC1002/140209912>

Islam and Ecology

First Ever Fatwa Issued Against Wildlife Trafficking

Invoking the Koran, Indonesia's top clerical body declares wildlife trafficking to be forbidden.

By Bryan Christy

National Geographic
March 4, 2014

Indonesia's top Muslim clerical body has issued a fatwa, or edict, against illegal wildlife trafficking.

This unprecedented step by the Indonesian Council of Ulama, in the country with the world's largest Muslim population, declares illegal hunting or illegal trading of endangered species to be *haram* (forbidden).

For many the word "fatwa" took on ominous tones in 1989 when Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini issued a death threat against Salman Rushdie for blasphemy in his novel *The Satanic Verses*.

But the fatwa itself is merely a call to action. Invoking passages from the Koran, the fatwa (which you can read in full below) is believed to be the first of its kind in the world.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/03/140304-fatwa-indonesia-wildlife-trafficking-koran-world/?now=2014-03-04-00%3A01>

Indonesia's fatwa shows religious duty can be a route to sustainable behaviour

The edict on wildlife trafficking is leading secular organisations to recognise that environmentalism is embedded in most scripture

By Kathryn Werntz
The Guardian
March 24, 2014

In January, a holy voice rang out across Indonesia's archipelago of lush, tropical forests and teeming mangroves. It came in the form of a fatwa, an Islamic edict, which instructed Muslims to stop the illegal trafficking of wildlife.

Believed to be the first fatwa broadly covering ecosystem conservation, it seeks to make people do what the law could not. As the head of the fatwa-issuing council said: "People can escape government regulation, but they cannot escape the word of God." This notion is being recognised more and more by secular organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations, which partner religious-based environmental sustainability programmes.

<http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/religion-environment-wildlife-trafficking-indonesia-fatwa-sustainable>

Conservation

Religion and Conservation Do Mix

By Bradnee Chambers
Inter Press Service News Agency
March 16, 2014

Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Environment Programme's Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals, believes wildlife conservation is a goal that religions must take on.

BONN - They say religion doesn't mix well with certain subjects, but in the case of conservation and religion this old rule of thumb doesn't seem to apply.

Conservationists have been increasingly aligning with different religious groups to further their work, either by promoting conservation projects on the ground, or by working with religious groups to promote good conservation principles to their flocks of followers.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2014/03/religion-conservation-mix/>

Member Spotlight: A field course in the mountains of Usambara led Stephen Awoyemi to make conservation his purpose in life

Society for Conservation Biology
February 2014

Stephen Awoyemi's passion for conservation was ignited in the Usambara Mountains in Tanzania in 2002 where he was participating in a field course sponsored by the Tropical Biology Association.

The mountains are a biodiversity hotspot and it was there, engaged in on-the-ground conservation projects and learning about the scale of humanity's impact on the environment, that Stephen realized that conservation is the cause to which he would dedicate his career.

Since then he has "not turned back. Not even once."

Today Stephen is a Miriam Rothschild Scholar at the Conservation Leadership Program (MPhil) at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

<http://www.conbio.org/membership/members-spotlight/awoyemi>

China and Ecology

Why China will solve the world's environmental problems

By James Miller
Sustainable China
May 12, 2014

Quick! Picture China's biggest environmental problem.

I bet you saw in your mind the polluted skies of Beijing and its citizens wearing face masks as they go to work. The western news media have been filled with alarming stories of China's poor air quality, especially in the north, where China relies more heavily on coal-fired power stations.

But a recent Toronto Star story entitled China Wakes Up to its Water Crisis gets to the heart of an even more serious problem: China has only 7% of the world's fresh water, but 20% of its population. While electricity can, in the long run, be produced by more renewable means, water cannot be manufactured out of nowhere.

<http://www.sustainablechina.info/2014/05/12/why-china-will-solve-the-worlds/>

Newsletters

Green Church Newsletter

http://egliseverte-greenchurch.ca/green/index.php?option=com_acymailing&ctrl=archive&task=view&mailid=48&key=8a30399f5d38ee0ef1eff2bbae4c5297&subid=189-dbe0c9b642707e4c37fc810b1cf1134f

Sacred Sites Research Newsletter (SSIREN)

http://sacrednaturalsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/SSIREN_April_2014.pdf

SAFCEI - South African Faith Communities Institute Newsletter

<http://us6.campaign-archive1.com/home/?u=887c3de8b0&id=e86d980456>

Forum on Religion and Ecology Newsletter

<http://fore.research.yale.edu/publications/newsletters/>
