



Rainbow over melting ice floes

Photo: Operation Noah



## Climate and creation: a theology of caring for the planet

Mark Dowd

Creation is good. For the Christian, all of creation comes under God's rule and any considerations of our right relation to the natural world flow from God's reign and lordship. The earth is not ours to dispose of as we wish: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.' (Psalm 24) The starting point, then, for any reflection on climate change has to be Genesis, Chapter One. Creation, even without humanity, is intrinsically good. By verse 3, 'God saw that the light was good' and this formula of goodness is repeated four more times before the creation of humanity. The trees, oceans, plants and animals have their own intrinsic merit independent of and wholly separate from humankind. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

The threat of climate change threatens not only millions of human beings, but thousands upon thousands of species of plants and animals. The era of climate stability which has so far been a characteristic of the Holocene period now threatens an unravelling of God's creation. Our response to this challenge is clear. Our behaviour is driven not by fear of consequences, but because we want our actions to be in total conformity to God's will for his magnificent creation. Engaging in activities which threaten the bounteous diversity of the natural world is nothing short of a blasphemy

against the Creator, through whom all life lives and moves and has its being. Adam, in Genesis 2:15, is instructed to 'till the land and to cultivate it.' The Hebrew words are *abad* and *shamar* and carry with them the sense of 'care and protect' or 'look after'. This passage is probably what most people have in mind when they invoke the word 'stewardship'. These early passages show an intimate relationship between the earth and humanity. Man is formed from the soil. But humankind also has a vocation to nurture the land and join in God's continuing work of creation. These



## Climate Change

On a global scale, despite cold winters in Europe and the USA, 2010 tied with 2005 as the warmest year on record. Glaciers and sea-ice are melting fast, cyclones are increasing in intensity, droughts and floods ravage the poorest nations of the world. What can be the response of Franciscans? Do we shrug off the news as simply variations in the weather, or take on board the wider implications for our consumerist lifestyle? This issue of *franciscan* describes a world in incipient crisis, and asks for a response.

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very specific Hebrew verbs, 'tilling' and 'nurturing' are only found on one other occasion in the whole of the Bible. After the giving of the Torah (law) to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Israelites are called upon to protect the scrolls of their holy statutes in the Ark of the Covenant which is to reside inside the Holy Temple. The protection and safeguarding invoked here, is the same as Adam's vocation to act as keeper of the land.

*Noah is the human who truly practices stewardship, in his obedient response to nurture the earth's biodiversity.*

Noah is the human who truly practices stewardship, in his obedient response to nurture the earth's biodiversity. First the symbolism of the Ark: often seen as a metaphor for the Church, or even the planet Earth. The forty days and nights of rain reveal that the fate of both humanity and the animals are all bound up together. Just as man in Genesis is formed from the same creative breath (*ruach*) as the rest of creation and made of dust, so we discover that humanity's fate is shared with that of our fellow creatures. Whether it is through our study of eco-systems or the complexity of food chains, the

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interdependency of our relationship to that of our surroundings cannot be denied. We are all part of a web of creation. Every time our lungs take in oxygen, we confirm the interdependency between ourselves and the God-created world. We do not observe nature from a distance: we are an integral part of that story. When we see the threats that global warming brings to large swathes of the natural world and the background extinction rates already occurring as a result of our plundering the planet for short term gain and profit, we have to ask ourselves: 'Is this unprecedented gamble with the earth's atmosphere that we are taking commensurate with the noble ethic of care, obedience and responsibility practised by Noah?'

Jesus teaches us much about how to live in right relation with creation. Jesus' relationships are non-exploitative and non-self-centred. His warnings are constantly about how the pursuit of material wealth and covetousness block the path to God, because they are idols that deflect us from our true goal. 'Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, for where your treasure is there also is your heart.' (Matt 6:20) When we're told that camels have better chances of passing through narrow gates than the rich entering heaven, Jesus is not being a puritan. The Creator has created a world in which humans can enjoy the abundance of riches provided: but it must be done justly (benefiting the marginalized) and in such a way that we don't lose sight of the big picture. This ethic of simplicity has a huge amount to



*Pier on Lake Mead, on the Colorado River*

Photo: James Hansen

say to a world which, in its bondage to consumption and debt, is losing sight of the overarching perspective and living beyond its environmental means.

Long before the advent of Jesus, the Old Testament laid down clear ethical principles about how God expects us to behave with regard to how we relate to his Creation and distribute its benefits among the human community. Jeremiah makes a link between humanity's greed and the environmental ruin that ensues using language that is eerily relevant to life in the twenty first century: 'They have become rich and powerful, fat and sleek and do not plead the case of the fatherless or the rights of the poor... The nobles send their servants for water, they go to the cisterns but find no water, the ground is cracked because there is no

rain in the land, the farmers are dismayed and cover their heads.' (Jer.5:27f; 14:3) In other words, care for the environment is also a matter of justice. When we despoil the earth, who is it that lives nearest to the landfill sites and the rotting dumps on the margins of our cities? The poor. Who are

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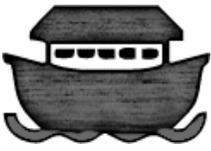
the peoples of the earth who stand to suffer the worst effects of the forecast droughts, floods and sea level rises predicted by the United Nations Panel on Climate Change? The answer should be unpalatable to a Christian or any person of a decent ethical standing: those who have polluted the least.

But all is not doom and despair. The Judaeo-Christian legacy is one that tells the story of a God who is always the God of the second chance. 'Come back to me with all your heart' (Hosea). 'Give me the heart of stone within you and I will give you a heart of flesh' (Ezekiel 36:26). This is a God who takes his people out of slavery in Egypt, who constantly sides with the weak and those without voice, and a God who snatches victory from the darkness of the tomb on the third day. His eternal love is undying, but he demands a transformation of heart, the true meaning of the word, 'repentance'.

The climate crisis is, as is frequently said, a uniquely menacing challenge that demands, in Al Gore's words, 'moral imagination'. We need to rediscover the Biblical tradition of a right relationship with creation, and ponder more the teachings of the wisdom literature. Humanity needs these age-old truths and insights into the unchanging human condition and our relation to the natural order more so now than ever before. *f*



*Mark Dowd was until recently director of education and communications at Operation Noah, a Christian organisation which provides focus and leadership in response to the growing threat of catastrophic climate change. (The full text of this article can be found at: [www.operationnoah.org/node/106](http://www.operationnoah.org/node/106).)*



# Cancun climate conference - diplomatic success, ethical failure?

Vanya Walker-Leigh TSSF

## December's 193-nation 16th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Cancun Mexico was widely hailed as a 'success'. Was it?

Flattering comparisons were drawn with Cancun's predecessor (Copenhagen, December 2009) whose acrimonious end saw 120 attending heads of state and government failing to adopt a legally binding, wide-ranging post-2012 climate change regime as mandated by the 13th conference in 2007.

No such regime from Cancun. Instead, decisions on institutional issues 'The Cancun Agreements' shunting off difficult topics to the next conference (Durban, 29 November-9 December) - not widely expected to generate a new regime either.

The ever-rising alarm of scientists and environmentalists is well expressed below.

"They may have saved the UN process, but they haven't saved the planet. World leaders must significantly raise their game... Time is running out... the atmosphere doesn't negotiate with politicians," Alden Meyer, Director of Strategy and Policy of the Union of Concerned Scientists, USA.

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"From the standpoint of the twenty-year negotiations, Cancun was ... an ethical failure of those nations most responsible for climate change. The commitments made (in) Cancun... are not environmentally sufficient, distributively just, nor provide for just adaptation responses for vulnerable developing countries." Dan Brown, Associate Professor, Environmental Ethics, Science, and Law, Penn State University, USA

Yet governments of such responsible (i.e. developed) nations are well aware of the stakes.

In 2007 the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 4th Assessment Report urged that industrialised nations' greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2015 and by 2020 be cut by 25 to 40% below 1990 levels. Industrialising developing countries (like China, India) should achieve substantial deviations from business as usual trends. Such reductions would give a 50/50 chance to

limit by mid-century or later the increase in global average temperature to +2°C over pre-industrial levels, beyond which catastrophic runaway climate change would occur.

Global temperature is already 0.75°C over the pre-industrial level, another +1.0°C thought to be 'built in' to the climate system.

However, pledges registered in Cancun would cut emissions only 11-16% below 1990 levels - leading to a devastating +3-5°C within this century. And threatening by 2020 a dramatic decline in output of key African food crops.

The lowest pledge - the USA's, the world's second biggest emitter after China - is now gravely compromised by the 'climate sceptic' House of Representatives' Republican majority emerging from November's mid-term elections.

Since the IPCC Report, new scientific findings warn that +2°C seems far too risky, +1.5°C is urged instead - strenuously advocated since Copenhagen by 112 of the world's most vulnerable developing countries. However, +2°C was confirmed in Cancun accompanied by a hard-won undertaking for review between 2013 and 2015.

In a speech this February, UNFCCC's executive secretary, Christiana Figueres admitted "a 2 degree increase is in fact no guarantee for the survival of small island states or the limitation of water stress in Africa."

Meanwhile, surveys worldwide show how much still needs doing to mobilise public opinion sufficiently to bring governments to take adequate, timely action.

The Archbishop of Canterbury in his lecture 'Renewing the Face of the Earth: Human Responsibility and the Environment' (March 2009) set the issue in its spiritual context. "Climate change has been characterised as a matter of justice both to those who now have no part in decision-making at the global level yet bear the heaviest burdens as a consequence of the irresponsibility of wealthier nations, and to those who will succeed us on this planet. God's faithfulness will not be a safety net that guarantees a happy ending... The earth remains the Lord's... it would be dangerously illusory to imagine that this material environment will adjust itself at all costs so as to maintain our relationship to it."

In contrast to the ever more media-savvy and politically sophisticated year round climate change advocacy by environmental movements and their global networks, and by such high-profile Christian NGOs as Christian Aid and Caritas, the churches have been slow to effectively rise to this challenge to creation.

Some recent statements from the Pope have included passing mentions of climate change, but no encyclical or homily has focused on it to date. The Nuncio (and staff) accredited to the country hosting each UNFCCC conference has usually represented the Holy See; its delegation, sometimes flanked by one expert, is thus not endowed with the continuity and expertise of other delegations. A part-time layman carries the issue at the Vatican. The Anglican Communion UN Observer Office is not represented at all.

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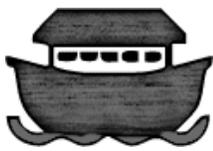
The long-standing World Council of Churches Change Programme and its delegations to conferences are not widely perceived as having had much impact, any more than the Church of Sweden's Uppsala Interfaith Climate Manifesto, 2008.

The charismatic public appearances in downtown Copenhagen of the Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop Tutu,

*Continued on page 5*



*Vanya Walker-Leigh is a British economist, journalist and environmental campaigner based in Malta and was professed as member of TSSF in 2004. She has reported from ten UN climate change conferences between 1997 and 2010.*



# Counting CO<sub>2</sub>

*Hugh SSF*

**Our whole way of life - our food, clothes, houses, transport, entertainment and even religion as we practice it - all are based on fossil fuels. Without them and the CO<sub>2</sub> they emit, only a billion of us humans would exist - not 7 billion. Fossil fuels emit other gasses, but for simplicity I'll use CO<sub>2</sub> for them all. CO<sub>2</sub> is warming us so rapidly that our very future is threatened. I believe that continuing to emit more than a tiny amount of CO<sub>2</sub> is something to be avoided as soon as possible.**

Filling a couple of garden water butts with petrol and lighting it releases about a tonne (1000kg) of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere. All measurements of CO<sub>2</sub> - or carbon as it is often called - are given in kilogrammes or tonnes(t).

Chris Goodall in *How to live a low carbon life*, says that whereas the average developing world inhabitant creates less than a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per annum, a European creates 10 - 15t. In the UK 2.5t comes from heating and lighting our badly insulated houses, 2.5 from transport, 2 from food, 1 from clothing. Further tonnes are embedded in the things we buy, often imported and made in coal powered factories. Our NHS, government and army produce more on our behalf. In time these figures will become more accurate. Perhaps children will soon count carbon along with pennies.

www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org is just one of many websites with tools for measuring our carbon footprint.

David MacKay's *Sustainable energy without the hot air* describes how we could each survive on 1 or 2t under international agreements. If we don't like too many more wind turbines, we can have more nuclear power or a Severn barrage. Mike Berners-Lee in *How bad are bananas* points out that almost everything we buy adds to our personal 15t carbon footprint. Drilling and refining



*Brother Hugh SSF lives in the Hilfield Friary where he has encouraged the use of energy-saving ways.*

petrol emits CO<sub>2</sub> even before we use it, so adds even more quickly to our personal footprint. Even recycled products create CO<sub>2</sub> in remanufacture. Tristan Stuart (*Waste: uncovering the global food scandal*) says that the west wastes half its food, emitting another tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> through deforestation, transport and fertilizer production.

*Culture changes when enough early adapters set the trend. Let's show that we are as happy living as low a carbon lifestyle as we can manage, as others are by consuming much.*

Culture changes when enough early adapters set the trend. Let's show that we are as happy living as low a carbon lifestyle as we can manage, as others are by consuming much. Let's rejoice in wearing second-hand clothes. Let's tell others that we'd love to join their pilgrimage to Assisi, but not by plane. Eating meat adds an extra tonne to what a vegan eats - and sorry, vegetarians, cheese is carbon intensive. By eating less popular types like liver we stretch meat.

Let's resist the advertisers - everything they want us to buy causes CO<sub>2</sub>, as well as deforestation, species extinction or war in mineral-rich nations. Let's challenge those who question the point of living more simply if the Chinese eat more meat, and buy their first cars and if population continues to rise. A Franciscan understanding of poverty could see CO<sub>2</sub> as today's gold. How can we ask the poor to forgo its benefits if we're not prepared to ourselves?

Living simply ourselves helps us to press government to act, to reduce flying and driving, to subsidize new technology, and to push for international agreement. Last year ten of us went on The Wave. Christian Aid supporters are meeting their MP at Hilfield. Many politicians want to encourage low carbon lifestyles but fear reluctant voters. Seeing us voluntarily shrinking our footprint empowers them. Some think that bio fuel, hydrogen cars or

the latest 'techno fix' will let us continue as before. Palm oil bio fuel destroys rain forest, but recycled cooking oil from the Hilfield chip fryer is really useful in our tractor. Technology is vital; so is conversion of life. Greater energy efficiency can lead to even greater profligacy. Hilfield's new diesel car goes an amazing 80 mpg at leisurely pace - so we are tempted to drive further.

A carrier bag (3 grams CO<sub>2</sub> per week, 150g CO<sub>2</sub> pa) is one hundred thousandth of an annual 15t footprint, almost insignificant. Electrical equipment on standby, using a few watts, also emits a tiny proportion. It's good practice to do without bags and turn off power, but even better to understand our much bigger emissions. If we must eat unseasonable crops, Kenyan beans may well create less CO<sub>2</sub> in plane fuel than those from local greenhouses. Not all food miles are bad - the sums show they can sometimes be the least bad option. (*How bad are bananas* explains these often surprising figures.)

Vital as green energy is, let's start by reducing what we use. SSF houses have more insulation than before, saving each tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> more cheaply than by generating renewable energy. After the easy savings of energy efficiency, we'll need lots of renewables too, on our roofs or via Ecotricity. Since the 1970's we've got used to central heating, so at Hilfield we encourage people to dress warmly in order to reduce the level of central heating.

A year's supply of UK tap water per person for drinking, cooking, and washing emits 14kg CO<sub>2</sub>, equal to driving an average car 20 miles. Tap water is a tiny part of a 15t lifestyle but a typical bottle of water emits 160g, mostly for the plastic bottle and transport, 1000 times more CO<sub>2</sub> intensive than tap water.

*Insulating our homes saves CO<sub>2</sub> more cheaply than by generating renewable energy.*

Nylon jeans - 3kg CO<sub>2</sub>; cotton jeans - 6kg. In terms of emissions, nylon is surprisingly better than cotton over a whole lifecycle, including being thrown away at the end. Cotton (unless organic) uses much oil-based fertilizer. Even organic cotton gives off methane in landfill. Manmade fibres last longer, emitting nothing when disposed of. A pair of plastic shoes emits 8kg whereas a leather pair 15kg. Leather may be natural, but the cattle grass grown with coal-based fertilizer is not. If we are serious about climate change, we need to start doing carbon calculations like this. London to Glasgow return by coach 66kg,

*Continued on page 5*



*Hugh at the Christian Aid supporters' day at Westminster, November 2010, where attention was drawn to the way in which international companies avoid paying tax, often thereby defrauding the economy of poorer countries out of billions of pounds per year. Christian Aid is also campaigning for a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>.*

by train 120, by small car (driver only) 330, by plane 500. High Speed trains are heavy and speed creates wind resistance. Coaches are lighter, pack in more passengers and, although less safe than trains, may well be the greenest option. A full car can sometimes be as efficient as a train. Planes emit CO<sub>2</sub> at altitude, multiplying the damage, in a way not yet fully understood. At any rate not flying is one of the most important first steps in living a low carbon life - not only do we avoid creating more CO<sub>2</sub> in a few hours than any other activity we ever do, but everybody seems to notice.

I write for Europeans. But we share a planet with people we know, such as our Pacific brothers. Our emissions affect their climate. They burn little fossil fuel, but logging going on around them, although difficult to measure, also creates CO<sub>2</sub>. Our government wants to sell off national forests, so we must all protect trees that soak up some emissions. Let's encourage each other across the planet to find new ways of living, appropriate to wherever we are. *f*



*Floods and climate change - not Bangladesh or Louisiana this time, but Brisbane, Australia. The Church Warden of St Philip's, Annerley, points to his flooded house in the parish where Br Donald Campbell is the rector. The friary remained dry, but only a few yards above the water line. The brothers in Brisbane pitched in to help those affected by the floods in that city. **Bart** is shown shovelling silt into a wheelbarrow, assisted in the clean-up by other volunteers.*

## Hilfield Friary 2011

14 & 15 May

**Open Garden weekend**

*Entrance fee in support of local charities*

★

27 - 29 May

**Take a detour** - exploring our relationships with the physical world led by Br Samuel SSF and others. Weekend or day visitors welcome

1 June

**Rogation Day festival**

18 June

**Friary Open Day**  
10.30 am - 5 pm

★

19 - 25 July

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*If you are interested in attending, please contact the friary for more information*

★

17 September

**Stigmata Festival**

12 noon sung Eucharist.

*Bring your own picnic lunch, afternoon tea provided by the friary*

★

**To book, for further information and for other weekend and day events, please visit**

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## Franciscan International Lectures, 2011

Lectures in Franciscanism and Islam in the 21st Century, given by Fr. Elias Mallon, S.A,

**21 May: Hilfield Friary,**

**23 May: Greyfriars, (Capuchins) Oxford**

**27 & 28 May: Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury**



respectively at a packed ecumenical service in the Lutheran Cathedral and a massive outdoor rally contrasted with their non-appearance, for reasons unknown, and unlike the Prince of Wales before the thousands of delegates (and media) at the UN conference venue.

*We need a ringing call to action by all peoples of every faith.*

There have been two recent developments, however. Last October the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace convened a meeting in Rome of Bishops from the South (i.e. developing continents) which drafted the still confidential but nonetheless leaked "Climate Change: a call to justice" (Rome: South-South Dialogue Declaration). Apparently the support of developed nation Bishops' Conferences is being sought for the document to be issued shortly before the Durban conference.

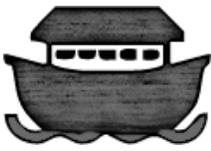
On 31 January, the Anglican Primates' meeting in Dublin adopted a 'Statement on Climate Change'.

The lofty sentiments expressed in both documents are impeccable but lack a ringing call to action by *all* peoples of every faith. Both miss the chance to focus with the same clarity as the UN secretariat, the environmental NGOs and scientists on the key unresolved UNFCCC negotiating issues or to challenge the responsible nations as forcefully as Messrs. Meyer and Brown. Sadly, some of these documents' technical vocabulary and even use of proper names are not those currently in use elsewhere. Bad for credibility.

Between now and Durban two opportunities arise for launching new, effective and truly collaborative and multi-level interfaith climate change campaigning. First, the series of activities leading up to (also at) the Durban conference, including an ecumenical conference in June planned by the All African Council of Churches (not mentioned in either of the above documents!).

Second, the interreligious 'peace summit' in Assisi on 25 October chaired by the Pope. Its current focus on peace as meaning an end to armed conflict and to the persecution of religious believers must surely be broadened to include 'peace with Creation' and within that, a commitment to proactive, enduring global interfaith advocacy and action on the terrifying prospect of runaway climate change.

This would surely be an extended focus of which their 'saintly host' St. Francis would greatly approve and which could hopefully inspire the Franciscan family (1.3 million) to find its own climate change advocacy pathway. *f*



# Come the Anthropocene

*John Smith TSSF*

**It is too late. Humanity cannot cut the carbon accumulation in time. This is my conclusion having read the latest climate change publications. Catastrophes are increasing in number and intensity year by year. Although we cannot ascribe such events directly to global warming they mirror the prophecies of the scientists about the disasters of drought, floods, hurricanes and fires. We are in a new uncomfortable age, the Anthropocene.**

CO<sub>2</sub> exists naturally in the atmosphere at about 280 parts per million (ppmv) Currently with humanity burning fossil fuels we are at about 390ppmv. The UK Government's maximum is 450ppmv and the Stern Report sees 550ppmv as the minimum possible. Some scientists see 650ppmv as inevitable. 450 is a 2°C rise in global temperature, 550; 3°C and 650; 4°C.

One author to have summarised the consequences of the above is Mark Lynas, *Six Degrees*, 2007. These peer reviewed scenarios should be treated with scepticism, despite the sophisticated computer effort that has gone into them. Some regard these futures before 2100 as too conservative; others, the doubters, as too sensational.

Summarising Mark Lynas's research to 4°C +:

❖ 2°C At less than this the Arctic icecap disappears in summer leaving polar bears homeless and changing the Earth's energy balance; ice reflects the sun's heat whilst the open sea absorbs it. Expected 2015-30. Tropical coral reefs suffer severe bleaching killing most of the coral and making extinct many marine life forms. Droughts increase in the sub tropics with heat waves and wild fires. Worst hit are Mediterranean areas, South West USA, South Africa and Australia. The continental interior of Russia is also threatened.

❖ +2-3°C. Summer heat waves in Europe become annual events reaching 40°C in

Northern Europe. Amazon rainforest becomes unviable and burns, replaced by desert and savannah. Dissolved CO<sub>2</sub> turns the oceans increasingly acidic, destroying coral reefs and wiping out many species of plankton. Several metres of sea rise becomes inevitable as the Greenland ice sheet melts.

❖ +3-4°C. Glacier snow melts in the Himalayas, Andes, Rockies and elsewhere, depleting freshwater flows in the major and minor rivers. Most affected are California, Peru, Pakistan, India and China. Heat waves deplete grain production with major food shortages. The Gulf Stream Atlantic Conveyor declines significantly with the cooling of Northern Europe. Major ocean changes, disruptive weather patterns with higher sea levels.

Beyond this the planet will release clathrates (gas hydrates as crystals frozen in water) and methane frozen into the Siberian and Canadian permafrost; Southern Europe and North Africa become uninhabitable deserts. The human population moves north and is reduced to 500 million from 7-8 billion. This is where we must not go for it leads to the 6<sup>th</sup> great extinction of our planet with 90% of all species extinct. The cause: homo-sapiens.

However the UK is only 2% of the carbon pollution. China is 24%, USA 22% India 8% Europe 12% Russia 6%, rest 28%. An international agreement before 2050, and a cut of 80% in the carbon waste, is now an imperative if runaway global warming is to be avoided.

The ideal solution is to stop burning carbon, especially that most dangerous and dirty of fuels, coal. CO<sub>2</sub> accumulates in the atmosphere for hundreds of years and humanity needs to ration our use of oil until carbon free alternatives are more available.

Solutions proposed are to develop technologies; space mirrors that reflect sunlight back out into space, scrubbing CO<sub>2</sub> from the smoke stacks or from the atmosphere, and then burying it in non leak geological seams, scattering the seas with iron so they absorb the carbon. These extreme technologies will have to be maintained, they are unnatural. Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is heralded as a solution. So far unproved, but liquid, poisonous CO<sub>2</sub>, stored in leaky geology is much more dangerous than radioactive waste.

A solution proposed by The Club of Rome Report *Limits to Growth the Thirty year Update*, 2005, is a sustainability revolution, 'permitting the best of human nature rather than the worst', a reversal of the principles and norms we see as essential, replacing growth with new spiritual and ethical motivations, filling our lives with love, friendship, sacrifice and conviviality. Could there be enough time, energy, material and enough money to make a much better world, an integrated global society, a sustainability revolution? There is no other way of knowing than to 'try it'.

Greenwash efforts are not enough. There is a need for international agreements as 'agreed' in the Millennium Goals, but the individual and the UK must play their part. Humanity must....

❖ Move as quickly as possible to the carbon free generation of electricity, leaving that most dangerous of fuels, coal, in the ground. This can be done through conservation and renewable generation, including wind and tidal barrages on estuaries like the Severn. All backed up by nuclear power. Modern 'fast' nuclear reactors are 99% efficient and the waste becomes inconsequential after a few hundred years, not ten thousand. Nuclear warheads and waste can supply enough fuel to last a thousand years.

❖ Limit or ration our use of oil. For flight, oil is not replaceable, but in cars and public transport, efficiencies can be made by using carbon free fuels.

❖ Localise our economies, food growing and manufacturing. The Transition Town movement is showing the way. Local mixed farms selling to local communities are the most efficient way of using the land. In the post oil economy agriculture could return to more labour intensive methods.

❖ Limit meat consumption and stock rearing, reducing animal flatulence and making it possible to feed everyone. Stop felling the Amazon which absorbs CO<sub>2</sub>. Plant more trees.

❖ Encourage community and simplicity, a partnership between human beings and the planet, not the competition which destroys the social fabric we leave to future generations. Already researched by the Sustainable Development Commission report, *Prosperity Without Growth*, 2009.

So far I have tried to be practical and scientific, but we also need spirituality.

✿ God is the creator and is concerned with the whole of creation. This is both a threat and a promise.

✿ Christ came to share his life with ours. The teaching of the incarnation is sharing and serving all creation.

✿ The Eucharist is an act of worship with political and ecological connotations.

✿ Seek a social ecumenism where Christians join with others of different



*John Smith is a retired non stipendiary priest. He was chairman of the Churches Together in Cumbria Environment Group founded in 1990. Before retiring he was County Librarian of Cumbria, 1974-94.*

*Continued on page 7*

# Minister's Letter

Sister Helen Julian,

Minister Provincial of the Community of St Francis  
in the European Province, writes:

Dear Friends,

As I write, there are floods in Queensland, Sri Lanka, and Brazil. Many hundreds have lost their lives; and thousands upon thousands have had their normal lives disrupted at best, destroyed at worst. Weather patterns with their origin in the eastern Pacific have swept around the globe, bringing torrential rain. Rivers have burst their banks, and mudslides have swept away shanty towns and their inhabitants. The same weather patterns may even have caused the unusually early and severe winter weather here in the UK, where heavy snow and freezing temperatures held the country in their grip for much of December.

This is Mother Nature showing her less benign side; and whatever you believe about climate change, and how much any such change is a consequence of human action (or inaction), it is something we have to live with and find ways of dealing with.

Of course floods and drought, snow and ice have always happened. But perhaps one of the differences now is that we, at least we in the 'west', expect to be in control of our lives. We expect that we will be able to travel when we want and where we want, and not find the airports closed and the roads impassable. We expect that the shelves in our shops will always be full, and that we'll be able to choose from a global range of foodstuffs, all the year round. We expect that when we turn on the tap water will flow. We

expect to be safe in our homes, ourselves, our families, and our possessions. We expect that there will be a cure for any illness we develop.

But of course this is not how life has been for most of history, and it is still not how it is for most of the world's population. Uncertainty and lack of control are the basenotes of human life, and the recent events show the illusory nature of our belief that we have control of our lives.

That is of course a hard thing to cope with. But our faith does have within it resources and stories which we can use. One of my favourites is that of Abram, leaving Haran at God's command and setting out 'not knowing where he was going'. No GPS, no carefully plotted AA route, not even a battered road atlas. An American poet, Bonnie Thurston, says that she remembers Abram 'when happen-stance/pries my fingers loose/from the grasping illusion/of control over life.'

Mostly we don't give up the illusion easily; something, some 'happenstance' does need to pry our fingers loose. My time as Minister Provincial is coming to a close; this will be my final letter in that role. So naturally I'm looking back over the last nearly 10 years for this province of CSF, and one of the things I notice is a lot of prying loose! Of course we've made plans - and some of them have even worked - but we've also had to deal with major changes brought about by other people's decisions, or a recognition of a new reality. We've had to move from



a couple of houses which we would have been happy to continue in; and we've had to realise we could no longer continue to sustain life at Compton Durville, and so made a decision to leave without entirely knowing where we were going. There's now only one house in the province which we had in 2002, when I became Minister.

When it's been hard going I've reminded myself that Franciscans are not meant to have settled bases, and that our only real security is in God. But if I'm honest my fingers have still had to be pri76ed from the illusion of control more often than not. Perhaps I, and we, all need to reflect on Abram's example of faith, and the daily lives of many of our brothers and sisters in the world, living with uncertainty and the overturning of their plans.

Pax et Bonum

*Helen Julian CSF*

*Continued from page 6*

faiths and none to work for the common good.

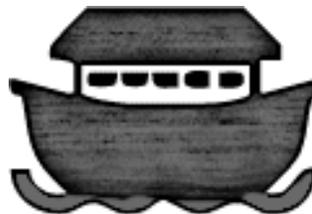
\* Climate change will cause hopeless despair, with the eventual acceptance of the trials of the Anthropocene. A new meaning for life will be found followed by action for sustainability. These emotions are mirrored in the events of the crucifixion. Jesus and his disciples have already been there.

My granddaughter will be 91 in 2101. It will be a different world. If she survives the horrors of global warming she and her children could live well in a sustainable economy without economic growth. This is already seen as the future if humanity learns to share creation not exploit it. Surely this is what the creator intended for the species he made in his own image.

The Garden, post 2100, could be as good as God intended. *f*

**Editor's note:** The Anthropocene is a geological era characterised by human influence. Some say it began with the industrial revolution, others with the nuclear age.

## Theme Prayer



God of creation,  
you have opened our eyes at this time of gradual awakening  
to the ways in which we imperil our planet earth;  
open our hearts and minds  
that we may learn to nurture in love  
rather than destroy in ignorance;  
this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.  
Amen.

(Adapted from *The Daily Office SSF*, 2010)

# The Franciscan Friars

This centrefold celebrates the first life professions of two Korean brothers in SSF, following on from the life professions of Sisters Frances and Jemma in September 2009, which featured in the January 2010 issue of *franciscan*.

The brothers live at Gangchon, east and slightly north of Seoul, in a northern province of South Korea. (1) The friary is beside the diocesan retreat house, which is run by the brothers. (2) The simple chapel looks out onto the woods and in (3) Lawrence presides at the Eucharist. (4) Stephen and Lawrence working in the garden; and (5) making their profession for life as members of the Society of St Francis, while (6) the life professed present indicate their support. (7) After the ceremony, the First Order brothers and sisters who attended, with the Bishop of Seoul who had presided: (left to right) front row - Nicholas Alan, Stephen, Bishop Paul Kim, Lawrence, Frances, Christopher John; middle row - Alfred BoonKong, Jennifer Chan, Jemma, Donald Campbell, Bruce-Paul, Cyril (postulant); back row - James Andrew, Raphael-Suh, Clark Berge.

(8) Giles with Jemma and Frances when on a visit to Gumi, some way to the south of the brothers. They are pictured at the after school club which Frances runs. (9) Frances preaching at St John's Anglican Church, Gumi. (10) A house eucharist in Gumi. (11) Jemma makes vestments and also traditional style clothing, such as modelled here by a pleased customer.



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# First Order in Korea



# Community Routes



*A Franciscans International facilitator encouraging the members of the four religious communities in social justice advocacy; Clark Berge with members of his small group reporting back after a discussion.*

## ◆◆ Social justice in the Solomon Islands

At the instigation of Br **Clark Berge** SSF, as a result of his visit to Franciscans International (FI) in Geneva a couple of years ago, four facilitators from FI provided training in social justice and human rights advocacy to over 150 members of the four Anglican religious communities in the Church of Melanesia in the Solomon Islands:- the Melanesian Brotherhood, the Sisters of Melanesia, the Society of St Francis, and the Community of the Sisters of the Church. Meeting at Tabalia, West Guadalcanal, the headquarters of the Melanesian Brotherhood, from 21-28 November 2010, they worked on the biblical and theological roots of human rights, social justice, gender and environmental issues and good governance. They also looked at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and various United Nations Conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Financial backing for the project came from the SSF Legacy Fund, and from FI, and the communities had prepared in advance by planting extra crops to feed those attending.

In the light of the documents studied, the meeting examined human rights abuses in the Solomon Islands and how the religious communities might address them. They recognised that family violence, particularly violence against women and children, remains a widespread practice in the Solomon Islands. In a statement issued at the end of the week-long training, they said, "We reject any cultural defence of this practice. We believe that the root causes of family violence (cultural beliefs, poverty, forced and/or very early

marriages, lack of Christian teaching about marriage, poor communication in marriage, misuse of alcohol, etc.) must be addressed."

Other issues arising included the sexual exploitation of children in the logging camps; environmental destruction through logging, fishing and mining; also corruption, whether in the villages or at national level, as well as problems in the electoral process.

As a result of the workshop religious communities were enabled to assist local communities to work at advocacy for social justice. The meeting prepared action plans for some of the issues they identified and pledged to continue to support one another and to work with other religious, government and non-government agencies across a raft of social justice issues. They also asked for the solidarity of church partners overseas.

The event concluded with the formulation and circulating of a communique and plan of action, and the awarding of certificates at the Saturday feast, and finally the closing Eucharist on the Sunday morning.

## ◆◆ A Mission to Anuta and Tikopia

*Also from the Solomon Islands, Br Ellison Sero SSF writes:*

I have long dreamed of going to Anuta and Tikopia, two small islands in a remote part of the Eastern part of the Solomon Islands, in the Diocese of Temotu. After many months of anticipation and planning, former Brother Peter Haga SSF, and I went on a mission there.

We left on 12 February 2010, on the Anglican Church of

Melanesia's ship, "The Southern Cross". We travelled three days to Anuta. Later it was another eight hours to Tikopia. During our mission we were able to be deeply involved with the people of these two Polynesian islands. Not only did we preach and teach them about St. Francis and encourage them in their Christian life, we were able to experience many things from their culture. We tasted all kinds of traditional food served according to their culture. Peter and I admired their strong commitment to their cultural ways, particularly their chiefly system.

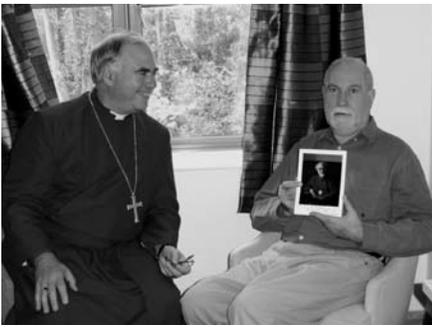
The brothers of the Solomon Islands Province are very active in travelling to different islands and visiting people in their villages.

## ◆◆ Raphael SSF

A Pastoral visit was made to Br **Raphael** SSF on 4 November last year by the Bishop of Sherborne, the Rt. Revd. Dr. Graham Kings. The visit was arranged by Raphael's friend John Coleman, an icon writer. The bishop visited Raphael at the nursing home near Dorchester where Raphael lives, and during the visit he hallowed a small icon which John had



*Getting ready to go on mission: Ellison Sero sits on a canoe on Dai Beach in Santa Cruz, Solomon Islands.*



written of St. Raphael the Archangel, and then presented it to Raphael. The Bishop also presented to Raphael a personal greeting from the Archbishop of Canterbury in the form of a signed photograph. Various members of the nursing home staff were also involved in the arrangements.

## ◆◆ Assisi companions

Clive and Florence Morton are 'regulars' in the Anglican congregation at St



Leonard's, Assisi, where **Thomas Anthony** is chaplain. They run a small active holiday retreat each September, mainly in Umbria, and Thomas Anthony enjoys meeting the participants and giving of his wisdom on St Francis, gleaned over the years of living in Assisi. For more information on the project, see [www.umbrianretreats.com](http://www.umbrianretreats.com)

## ◆◆ Westminster at Hilfield

Christian Aid supporters and members of the Hilfield Community (below, left) lobbied Oliver Letwin on tax avoidance. With concerns about corporate tax



dodging in the UK meaning ordinary taxpayers foot higher bills, local campaigners highlighted the impact that international tax dodging by multinational corporations has on the plight of the world's poorest people. In many countries this leads to basic health services being denied, and can be a matter of life and death.

Thirty West Dorset constituents added their voices to Christian Aid's call for a change in International Accounting Standards, meaning that companies are forced to report their business activities and tax bill for each country in which they operate. This transparency will then shine a light on which companies are dodging their basic responsibilities in developing countries.

The initiative is also backed by companies like Coca-Cola and Standard Chartered Bank.

Oliver Letwin responded positively to the idea, and will take up an invitation to meet with Christian Aid's new director, Loretta Minghella.

Speaking after the meeting, Br **Damian** from the Hilfield Community said "it is crucial for local people to engage positively with their MP about issues of international importance, as well as more local concerns."

In the photograph to the left are **Damian**, Rt Hon. Oliver Letwin MP, Charlotte Smith (a Christian Aid trustee) and **Hugh**.

## ◆◆ New ministries

**Alan Michael** (below, right) was inducted as vicar of St Peter's, Cowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, on 18 November and he is enjoying ministering in the parish. **Benedict** has since joined him and the new SSF house (in the vicarage) will provide a place for novices to experience living in an urban friary, complementary to their periods at



*The Bishop of Lincoln blessing the chapel - **Maureen, Helen Julian and Liz** are also in the frame, **Joyce** is hidden behind the bishop.*

Alnmouth and Glasshampton.

At San Damiano in Metheringham, Lincolnshire, Bishop John Saxbee blessed the house and commissioned the sisters for their ministry there. About 70 people attended the event, from all over the diocese and beyond.

## ◆◆ Round up

On 15 January, Chris Boden and Colin Dickson were admitted to the noviciate taking the names respectively of **Christopher Martin** and **Joseph Emmanuel**. Daniel Hughes was also admitted but has since withdrawn. **Benedict** moved to Cowgate in early March. **Barnabas Francis** is to move to Bentley from Glasshampton at the end of April. **Gerardo** will move to Canning Town at the end of April following a short period at Bentley prior to Barnabas Francis' move. **Matthew** (Callow) has withdrawn from the noviciate.

**Paschal** and **Maximilian** have felt unable to continue as members of the Church of England and so have withdrawn from SSF. A farewell service was held for them at Walsingham on 28 March. They will pursue their Franciscan calling in the Order of Friars Minor (Conventuals). The SSF house at Walsingham has closed.

The Australia - New Zealand Provincial Chapter, at its meeting at Gancheon Friary in November last year, elected **Bart** to Life Profession. The Bishop Protector of the ANZ Province will receive his life vows in Brisbane on 5 May, 2011. Bart began his journey in SSF in the UK and transferred to the ANZ Province after a visit to Australia several years ago.

In Zimbabwe, the **Community of the Divine Compassion**, to which SSF had given much encouragement, has been dissolved.

**Sister Michaela** of the Community of St Clare died on 19 December 2010. She had been a member of the community since 1978. Her funeral eucharist was held at Freeland on 29 December. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. *f*

# SSF in Korea

*Nicholas Alan SSF*

**On Sunday, 31 October 2010, more than 300 supporters came to Seoul Cathedral to witness the profession in life vows of Brothers Lawrence and Stephen SSF. Bishop Paul Kim, Bishop of Seoul and the SSF brothers' Deputy Protector for Korea, received their life vows on behalf of the Church and presided at the Eucharist.**

The Anglican Church of Korea has, ever since its inception in 1889, wanted to have a men's religious community. It has had sisters since 1925 - the Society of the Holy Cross, established by the Community of St Peter, Woking. Members of the Society of the Sacred Mission were in Korea in the early days of the Mission, but never firmly established themselves as a community, being scattered by the demands of ministry. Later there were two priests of the Society of St John the Evangelist active in Korea, but again not as a community.

In 1987, two Korean men, Andrew and Barnabas, travelled to the Parnell friary in Auckland, New Zealand, in order to experience Franciscan religious life. The aim was that they might be able to establish a community on their return to Korea after three years, but things didn't work out as hoped and no community was formed. The next stage was that Brother Brian, on a visit to Korea in 1993, admitted four men as postulants in a trial form of community life. These men made their home west of Seoul in the port city of Incheon in a house generously lent by the Sisters of the Society of the Holy Cross. Stephen and Lawrence were part of this early group. Brother Christopher John, from the Australia/New Zealand (ANZ) Province, was able to move to Korea in 1995 to help with their formation as novices.



*Beverley, Frances, Jemma, Stephen and Lawrence, with the friary dog, Francis.*

By now the community was established as a core group of Lawrence and Stephen with Christopher John as mentor brother. All three visited the UK in the winter of 1999-2000 to visit a range of SSF houses as well as other communities. This experience was very useful as it confirmed for the Korean brothers their desire to be Franciscan. Both persevered and on October 4th, 2001, Stephen and Lawrence made their profession of first vows in Nedong Church, Incheon. The community was still called the "Korean Franciscan Brotherhood" (KFB) and was not part of SSF, although linked to SSF through the loan of Christopher John and in other ways. From that time a covenant of mutual support and encouragement was signed between SSF and KFB. Shortly afterwards the community moved east of Seoul to its present location in the mountains near Gangchon where it runs the diocesan retreat house as well as offering hospitality to individual retreatants and engaging in ministries in the nearby city of Chuncheon.

In April 2010 KFB formally applied to ANZ SSF Provincial Chapter for full SSF membership, which was granted, and Lawrence and Stephen were elected to life profession. From then KFB as a separate community ceased to exist and Lawrence, Stephen and their novice Raphael Suh became members of the ANZ Province of SSF, and arrangements for the life profession ceremony were made. The brothers in Gangchon now have their newly life professed members, Lawrence and Stephen, and two novices, Raphael Suh and Cyril. Christopher John returned to Australia in early 2011 although he will continue to visit Korea regularly in the future.

Parallel to the development of the brothers' community was the establishment of the "Korean Franciscan Sisterhood" in a similar way, although without a resident mentor sister. Sisters Frances and Jemma were originally members of the Society of the Holy Cross in Seoul, but felt called to leave that community and found a new Franciscan community for women in the Anglican Church of Korea. After a number of years in covenant with CSF, these two

sisters were received into the Community of St Francis in 2008, and the following year made their life professions as members of the CSF European Province in Gumi, where their convent is situated. Pamela Clare and then Beverley had acted as mentor sister, and visited whenever possible. Together, the main ministry of the Korean sisters has been to help the development of a worshipping community at the John Daly Mission Centre, otherwise known as Gumi Anglican Church. There they support the priest-in-charge Father Jonathan, and say the Daily Office together with a number of church members. Individually, Frances has been managing an after-school club for local children, while Jemma has established a business for making church vestments and traditional Korean clothing. Jemma also assists at West Taegu Church in the neighbouring city. An issue close to their heart is the protection of the environment, and the sisters have shared in a number of ecumenical acts of witness over ecological issues. It has been a tremendous boost to the brothers to have



*Lawrence, Christopher John, Stephen and friends.*

Korean First Order sisters and they have a number of regular joint activities such as retreats, meetings, visits and fellowship.

The brothers and sisters are glad to be part of the worldwide Anglican Church and the Community and Society of Saint Francis, and value the prayers and support of all their friends in the UK. *f*

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## AMERICAS

Little Portion Friary, PO Box 399, 48 Old Post Road,  
**Mt Sinai, NY 11766/0399, USA**

☎ (631) 473 0553 fax: (631) 473 5093  
✉ [mtsinaifriary@s-s-f.org](mailto:mtsinaifriary@s-s-f.org)  
Minister General SSF: ✉ [clark.berge@s-s-f.org](mailto:clark.berge@s-s-f.org)

San Damiano Friary, 573 Dolores Street, **San Francisco, CA 94110, USA** ☎ (415) 861 1372;  
fax: (415) 861 7952 ✉ [judehillssf@aol.com](mailto:judehillssf@aol.com)  
✉ Minister Provincial SSF: [judehillssf@aol.com](mailto:judehillssf@aol.com)

St Clare's House, 1601 Oxford Street, **Berkeley, CA 94709-4316, USA** ☎ (510) 705 1591

St Francis Friary, 2449 Sichel Street, **Los Angeles, CA 90031-2315, USA** ☎ (323) 222 7495

Saint Francis House, 3743 Cesar Chavez Street,  
**San Francisco, CA 94110, USA** ✉ [csfsfo@aol.com](mailto:csfsfo@aol.com)  
☎ (415) 824 0288; fax: (415) 826 7569  
✉ Minister Provincial CSF: [pamelaclarecsf@aol.com](mailto:pamelaclarecsf@aol.com)

## AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND

The Friary, Saint Philip's Rectory, 115 Cornwall Street, **Annerley**; postal address: PO Box 6134,  
**Buranda, Brisbane, Qld 4102, Australia**  
☎ (07) 3391 3915; fax: 3391 3916  
✉ [brdonald@franciscan.org.au](mailto:brdonald@franciscan.org.au)

Hermitage of Saint Bernadine, PO Box 46, **Stroud, NSW 2425, Australia**  
☎ (02) 4994 5372; fax 4994 5527  
✉ [ssfstrd@bigpond.com](mailto:ssfstrd@bigpond.com)  
✉ Minister Provincial: [bralfred@franciscan.org.au](mailto:bralfred@franciscan.org.au)

The Friary of the Divine Compassion, PO Box 13-117,  
Hillcrest, **Hamilton 2034, New Zealand**  
☎ (07) 856 6701 ✉ [friary@franciscan.org.nz](mailto:friary@franciscan.org.nz)

St Francis Friary, 156 Balsan-ri, Nam-myeon,  
**Chuncheon, Gangwondo 200-922, Republic of Korea**  
☎ (033) 263 4662; fax (033) 263 4048  
✉ [kfb1993@komet.net](mailto:kfb1993@komet.net)

## EUROPE

The Friary, **Alnmouth**, Alnwick, Northumberland  
NE66 3NJ ☎ (01665) 830213; fax: (01665)  
830580 ✉ [alnmouthssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:alnmouthssf@franciscans.org.uk)

Anglican Chaplaincy, Via San Gabriele  
dell'Addolorata 12, 06081 **Assisi** (PG), Italy.  
☎ (+39) 075 816 887  
✉ [thomasanthonyssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:thomasanthonyssf@franciscans.org.uk)

Saint Francis House, 113 Gillott Road, **Birmingham B16 0ET**  
☎ (0121) 454 8302  
✉ [birminghamcsf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:birminghamcsf@franciscans.org.uk)

Saint Matthias' Vicarage, 45 Mafeking Road,  
**Canning Town, London E16 4NS**

## Addresses

☎ (020) 7511 7848-2  
[canningtownssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:canningtownssf@franciscans.org.uk)

The Master's Lodge, 58 St. Peter's Street,  
**Canterbury, Kent CT1 2BE** ☎ (01227) 479364  
✉ [canterburyssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:canterburyssf@franciscans.org.uk)

St Peter's Vicarage, Druridge Drive, **Cowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 3LP** ☎ (0191) 286 9913

Bentley Vicarage, 3a High Street, Bentley,  
**Doncaster DN5 0AA** ☎ (01302) 872240

Saint Mary's Convent, 178 Wroslyn Road, **Freeland, Witney, Oxon OX29 8AJ**  
☎ (01993) 881225; fax: 882434  
✉ [community@oscfreeland.co.uk](mailto:community@oscfreeland.co.uk)

The Old Parsonage, 168 Wroslyn Road, **Freeland, Witney, Oxon OX29 8AQ** ☎ (01993) 881227

Saint Mary-at-the-Cross, **Glasshampton**, Shrawley,  
Worcester WR6 6TQ ☎ (01299) 896345; fax 896083  
✉ [glasshamptonssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:glasshamptonssf@franciscans.org.uk)

The Friary, **Hilfield**, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7BE  
☎ (01300) 341345; fax: 341293  
✉ [hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk)  
Minister Provincial SSF: ✉ [ministrssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:ministrssf@franciscans.org.uk)  
Provincial Bursar SSF:  
✉ [bursarssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:bursarssf@franciscans.org.uk)

25 Karnac Road, **Leeds LS8 5BL**  
☎ (0113) 2260647

Saint Matthew's House, 25 Kamloops Crescent,  
**Leicester LE1 2HX** ☎ (0116) 253 9158  
✉ [leicesterssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:leicesterssf@franciscans.org.uk)  
Provincial Bursar CSF: ✉ [bursarcsf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:bursarcsf@franciscans.org.uk)

San Damiano, 38 Drury Street, **Metheringham, Lincolnshire LN4 3EZ**  
☎ (01526) 321 115  
✉ [metheringhamcsf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:metheringhamcsf@franciscans.org.uk)

House of the Divine Compassion, 42 Balaam Street,  
**Plaistow, London E13 8AQ** ☎ (020) 7476 5189  
✉ [plaistowssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:plaistowssf@franciscans.org.uk)

The Vicarage, 11 St Mary's Road, **Plaistow, London E13 9AE**  
☎ (020) 8552 4019  
✉ [stmaryscssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:stmaryscssf@franciscans.org.uk)

St Alphege Clergy House, Pocock Street,  
**Southwark, London SE1 0BJ**  
☎ (020) 7928 8912  
✉ [southwarkcsf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:southwarkcsf@franciscans.org.uk)  
Minister General CSF:  
✉ [ministergeneralcsf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:ministergeneralcsf@franciscans.org.uk)

PO Box 1003, Gumi Post Office, **Gumi, Gyeongbukdo, 730-021, Republic of Korea**  
☎ 054 451 2317 ✉ [koreanfs@hotmail.com](mailto:koreanfs@hotmail.com)

**Minister Provincial CSF**  
✉ [ministrssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:ministrssf@franciscans.org.uk)

**First Order Gift Aid Secretary:** 25 Karnac Road,  
**Leeds LS8 5BL** ☎ (0113) 2260 647

**Minister Provincial TSSF:** Joanna Coney, 4  
Rowland Close, Lower Wolvercote, Oxford  
OX2 8PW ☎ (01865) 556456  
✉ [ministertssf@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:ministertssf@franciscans.org.uk)

**Franciscan Aid TSSF:** The Treasurer, Philippa Bird  
TSSF 42 Ridley Ave, London W13 9XW  
✉ [franciscanaid@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:franciscanaid@franciscans.org.uk)

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Saint Mary of the Angels Friary, **Hanuro, PO Box 78, Popondetta 241, Oro Province**  
☎ PNG 329 7060

Geoffrey's Friary, **Katerada, PO Box 78, Popondetta 241, Oro Province**

Saint Francis Friary, **Koki, PO Box 1103, Port Moresby, NCD** ☎ & fax: PNG 320 1499  
✉ [ssfpng@daltron.com.pg](mailto:ssfpng@daltron.com.pg)  
✉ Minister Provincial: [lhauje@gmail.com](mailto:lhauje@gmail.com)

Martyrs' House, PO Box 35, **Popondetta, Oro Province** ☎ PNG 3297 491

Philip Beawa Friary, **Ukaka, PO Box 22, Alotau, Milne Bay Province**

## SOLOMON ISLANDS

St Francis Friary, PO Box 7, **Auki, Malaita Province**  
☎ 40054

La Verna Friary / Little Portion, **Hautambu, PO Box 519, Honiara, Guadalcanal**

Patteson House, PO Box 519, **Honiara, Guadalcanal**  
☎ Honiara 22386 Regional Office: ☎ & fax 25810

San Damiano Friary, Diocese of Hanuato'o, **Kira Kira, Makira Ulawa Province**

St Bonaventure Friary, **Kohimarama** Theological  
College, PO Box 519, Honiara, Guadalcanal  
☎ 50128

**Michael Davis** Friary, PO Box 519, Honiara,  
Guadalcanal

Holy Martyrs Friary, Luisalo, PO Box 50, Lata,  
**Temotu Province**

## WEBSITES

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All editorial correspondence should be addressed to:  
*franciscan* Editor, San Damiano,  
38 Drury Street, Metheringham, Lincolnshire LN4 3EZ  
or email: [franciscan@franciscans.org.uk](mailto:franciscan@franciscans.org.uk)

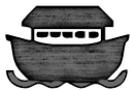
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## Book Reviews



### An annotated booklist on Climate Change

James Lovelock is one of the most well known writers on earth science. His book 'Gaia: a new look at life on earth' (1979, OUP) is a classic on seeing the earth as an integrated system, not so much a living entity in its own right, but with the evolution of life as an entwined system. Later he wrote 'The Revenge of Gaia' (2006, Allen Lane) describing how earth's self-regulation is putting humanity in peril, only nuclear energy providing any hope of reducing carbon emissions sufficiently to regulate the climate. Most recently, 'The Vanishing Face of Gaia: a final warning' (2009, Allen Lane) suggests that it is now too late to save human civilisation as we know it: head for the poles and take a good book!

Another Englishman, Mark Lynas, has written popular digests of scholarly research into climate change. 'High Tide: How climate crisis is engulfing our planet' (2004/5, Harper Perennial) tours the worldwide signs of climate change from glaciers to deserts. 'Six Degrees: Our future on a hotter planet' (2008, Harper Perennial) is as engaging as a thriller with a core of solid scientific research, plotting the future for each degree rise of average temperature between 1 and 6°C. Another recent study is: Elizabeth Kolbert, 'Field Notes from a Catastrophe: A frontline report on climate change' (2007, Bloomsbury).

From America you could try Robert Kunzig and Wallace Broecker, 'Fixing Climate: The story of climate science - and how to stop global warming' (2008, Green Profile) which is a more optimistic view of how we can stop global warming by scrubbing the CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere. James Hansen, 'Storms of my Grandchildren: The truth about the coming climate catastrophe and our last chance to save humanity' (2009, Bloomsbury) is by one of the main sources for Al Gore's campaigning trail, full of graphs and reports of meetings between this NASA scientist and the heads of US governments, and is highly critical of the 'cap-and-trade' attempts to provide a political solution to the crisis.

Practical steps to combat climate change are outlined in Robert Henson, 'The Rough Guide to Climate Change: The symptoms, the science, the solutions' (2006, Penguin), including lots of pictures, graphs and text boxes. Natalia Marshall, 'Save the Planet: 52 brilliant ideas for rescuing our world' (2007, The Infinite Ideas Company Ltd) is similarly upbeat. George Monbiot, 'Heat: How we can stop the planet burning' (2007, Penguin), and Leo Hickman, 'A Good Life: The guide to ethical living' (2008, Eden Project Books) also have many good practical suggestions.

For a more reflective approach you could try the works of cultural historian / eco-theologian Thomas Berry, such as 'The Great Work: our way into the future' (1999, Bell Tower) or 'Evening Thoughts: Reflecting on Earth as Sacred Community' (2006, Sierra Club Books). Michael S. Northcott brings together ecology, ethics and economics in 'A Moral Climate: The ethics of global warming' (2007, DLT), and 'Cuttle Fish, Clones and Cluster Bombs: Preaching, Politics & Ecology' (2010, DLT).

Most recently, a look at possible political futures in a warmer world is found in Gwynne Dyer, 'Climate Wars: The fight for survival as the world overheats' (2010, Oneworld). Clive Hamilton, 'Requiem for a Species: Why we resist the truth about climate change' (2010, Earthscan) is a study of the attempts to ignore the changes already happening in climate, written from an Australian perspective.

In all these and the other books on the market, works even 10 years old are now likely to be superseded as research continues. Why not order them from your local library to save carbon? A word of warning: just a look at the subtitles is enough to keep a light sleeper awake at night.

*Nicholas Alan SSF*

Kate Tristram

### *Columbanus - The earliest voice of Christian Ireland*

ISBN 978-1-85607-686-9

*The Columba Press, £14.99, 141 pp*

&

Carol Richards

### *Columbanus - Poet, Preacher, Statesman, Saint*

ISBN 9781 8454 0190 0

*Imprint Academic, £14.95, 217 pp*

It is extraordinary to have two books published almost simultaneously about this late sixth and early seventh century Christian saint about whom very little had been readily available. Fortunately, these two accounts are very different. Both are worth reading!

Our tertiary Kate Tristram writes to share one whom she clearly admires, who was a historically important leader and whose significance for us is reflected in his writings and life as an Irish monk. This is supplemented by her other major source, the life written by Jonas of Susa, a monk who had joined Columbanus' monastery in Bobbio, in Northern Italy, only three years after the saint's death. Kate's concern is to draw out the influence Columbanus had in carrying the Gospel from Bangor to Luxeuil and through Milan to Bobbio. She describes his rule, his austerities, and she clearly enjoys his literary qualities and scholarship - having taken the trouble personally to learn the language of Early Irish. It is a praiseworthy effort based on the fruits of her own life's study of the influence of the Irish Church throughout Europe, including on ourselves.

Carol Richards writes with a greater

emphasis on the historical and political history that surrounded Columbanus in Gaul. She also explores the possible roots and motivations for Columbanus' strong stand for the Celtic position, citing both Druid and Egyptian philosophies which influenced those who held out against the Roman position in the formation of Christian thinking. She enjoys investigating, in fairly lengthy accounts, Columbanus' influence on the local kingdoms with their customs, laws and political attachments which brought about such turbulence in that dark period of history.

Both books are written with passion for their subject. Kate provides a clearer analysis of the saintly monk's mind and purpose. Carol offers a wider perspective, fascinating theories, a more secular read. Both utterly held my attention.

*Damian SSF*

Sister Wendy Beckett

**Real Presence:**

### *In Search of the Earliest Icons*

ISBN 9781 4411 5887 1

*Continuum, 2010, £12.99, 140 pp*

This is a short, readable, but not at all superficial book. Sister Wendy is well known as a self-taught art expert who has shared her enthusiasm through many books and television appearances. Her subject this time however is specific, and of particular relevance to all concerned with the spiritual life. It is not those regulated icons from the era that followed the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy'. Rather, it is the rare early images which somehow survived the two centuries of destruction, the 'Iconoclasm' which began in the year 726. Sister Wendy had previously gone on pilgrimage to seek out eight particular 'Virgins' from this era (Encounters with God, Continuum, 2009), but as she did so she became aware of other icons that deserved our attention. She found them across the world, but principally in the great treasure house that is St Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.

Her almost continuous prose, broken up by just a few headings, speeds us along from image to image, explaining something of the history and context, making the connections, leading us around the corner to something new on

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every page, with the icons themselves, though uncaptioned, usually appearing on cue as the text mentions them.

In the end, Sister Wendy is self-effacing about what she has achieved: she might be able to teach us something about the Old Masters but there is no way of 'opening icons up to a viewer'. An icon is 'as functional as a pen or a bicycle', only working when put to personal use, and that use is prayer. Yet she has succeeded in bringing to life not only the vivid faith of the early Christians who made and prayed with these icons but also the possibility today of an encounter with a kind of Real Presence of Christ through these images.

*Desmond Alban SSF*

**Rowan Williams & Joan Chittister OSB**

*For all that has been, Thanks*

*Growing a sense of gratitude*

**ISBN 9781 8482 5017 8**

*Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2011,*

*pbk £9.99, hbk £14.99, 193pp*

"Alleluia" is the key word that encapsulates the sense of gratitude with praise and thanksgiving to God which is explored in this book. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the leader of a Catholic Benedictine order both write in an informal and engaging style, offering their wisdom distilled from their own experience and from thinking theologically. There is no triteness at any point, and although I think the book is probably better read in a consecutive way initially, it is one to dip into when seeking another perspective on one's own experience or on events in other parts of the world. Joan Chittister writes in the Introduction, "...Alleluia is not a substitute for reality. It is simply the awareness of another kind of reality - beyond the immediate, beyond the delusional, beyond the instant perception of things....it says that God is Good - and we know it."

The three main sections are divided into 23 sub-chapter headings, some of which are: faith, doubt, differences, divisions, conflict, sinners, saints, life, unity, otherness, death, darkness, God. Significant world events of the last ten or so years are mentioned more than once, such as the destruction of the World Trade Center, the treatment by foreign armies of prisoners in Iraq, Afghanistan under Taliban rule, the tsunami of December 2004. Throughout, as one would expect from these authors, biblical themes are intertwined, expressing God's love through creation and in the covenants made with people, God's identification with humankind in Jesus Christ and the love that gave itself in the costly redemption of the world, and (not so well named) the Holy Spirit enabling people to begin again, to be thankful for what has been but not cling on to what might have been, to look at situations another way and continue to grow into the fullness of being for which we were

created. The subtitle expresses it well: 'growing a sense of gratitude'.

*Maureen CSF*

Simon Cocksedge

**Francis of Assisi - Living Prayer Today**

ISBN 0262 799 X

*Grove Books, 2010, £3.95*

How can we live a life of prayer in the midst of all our other commitments? Simon Cocksedge, a member of the Third Order and also a GP doctor, a teacher and a priest, gives us an answer by showing how St Francis' activity in preaching the gospel, caring for creation, proclaiming peace and living as the Poverello flowed essentially from his life of prayer, from a heart focussed intently on God.

This succinct booklet, just 25 pages, is one in the Grove Series on Spirituality. It may be short but this is definitely not Franciscanism dumbed down; it's full of quotations from the Franciscan sources and it has a real grasp of what made Francis tick. After a first chapter on the life of Francis, Simon moves on to 'Francis on Prayer' with examples of how scripture, solitude, creation and constancy were all elements of the way he prayed, and then explains how that prayer was lived out through interaction with the world around him.

The last part of the book gives examples of Franciscan prayer being lived in our world today: the Hilfield Peace and Environment Initiative, Br Mychal Judge OFM (the New York Fire Department Chaplain who was a victim of the 9/11 atrocity), the prophetic theologian Leonardo Boff, the UN-based Franciscans International, Franciscans in the three orders, and the growing number of contemporary Franciscan hermits. He shows us that following Francis in the way of the gospel is never about being either a person with a deep commitment to prayer or someone who lives radically in the world, but about being both/and. Prayer and action go together - they are essential to each other. This little book is a gift to all of us who are struggling to find that balance.

*Samuel SSF*

Dennis Woodbridge TSSF

**Franciscan Gold**

ISBN 9780 6465 1315 7

*Published by The Third Order, Society of St Francis, Province of Australia, Papua New Guinea and East Asia, 2009, 124 pp, \$A 35.00 incl p&p*

This is a fascinating account of the story of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Australia, Papua New Guinea and East Asia over the past fifty years. It begins with the admitting in 1959 of Betty Hay, the first Tertiary in the Province, by Brother Geoffrey, and describes how the Order has grown to a membership of over 250 in Australia and 80 in Papua New Guinea today. There is a brief description of the origins of the Franciscan family and of the development of Franciscan orders in

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the Anglican Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Bishop Strong of New Guinea met Br Algy Robertson in Cambridge in 1947 which led, some ten years later, to the foundation of the friaries in Port Moresby and Popendetta. The Third Order soon followed especially when the author became chaplain at the Martyrs Memorial School. The inspirational visits of Br Charles and Br Michael to Australia, in the fifties and sixties, are outlined, and the consequent beginnings of the First Order at Brookfield.

The Third Order grew through some decisive encounters, throughout Australia, with members of the First Order, and later, as the Third Order began to become more independent, through personal influences, which are well described. It also reveals the tension between the original spirit and spontaneous joy in the movement, and the need for more organization as the Order grew in numbers. For most of the time the Order is a "community in dispersion", because the tyranny of distance makes it impossible to meet. However every three years or so they meet for a General Chapter and Conference where they experience a heightened sense of what the Order is about. There are some interesting accounts of the outcomes of these gatherings. There are also accounts given of the development of the order in different States of Australia.

The final chapters outline the development of the Order in Papua New Guinea, where there have been encouraging signs of new growth. There is as well an account of the Order in South East Asia. There are also references made to the relationship between the Third Order and Roman Catholic Orders, where at many points there is a warm friendship developing. This is a well researched account of fifty years, with a useful list of internet and other sources. It is indeed Franciscan Gold emphasizing the distinctive features of a Franciscan lifestyle. Those interested in the growth of the Third Order throughout the world will find this a good read and a valuable resource book.

*John Hall-Matthews TSSF*

*(Available from [www.tssf.org.au/Resources2](http://www.tssf.org.au/Resources2))*

# Paul Anthony SSF

*Samuel SSF*

**Religion, religious practice, that is, can change people - and it's not always for the better. It can make a person sanctimonious, self righteous and artificial. It's a lovely thing that this never happened with our brother Paul Anthony.**

Paul King was born and grew up in the Derbyshire village of South Normanton - and he never lost his Derbyshire roots, nor his close connection with his family, nor his northern plain speaking. He first joined the Society of St Francis when he was 21 so he had been a brother for nearly 30 years, yet he never conformed to people's expectations of what a friar should be like: he was never a very religious religious - thank God!

There's a story which he used to tell of when he was a novice on a parish mission team. As is the custom on these events, he was farmed out each day for meals in the homes of parishioners and on one occasion he and another brother went to the house of a lady who had a little dog to whom she was devoted, but the dog was seriously sick. Since they were Franciscans, the lady asked them to give the dog a blessing. Well, Paul gave a blessing, but he can't have done it very well because the dog promptly keeled over and died. The brothers never got their dinner!

Paul was a great collector - among other things of fridge magnets. He had a magnificent display on the fridge in the vicarage kitchen. But some of them were on the edge, or even beyond the edge of good taste - so much so that one brother felt it necessary, when the bishop visited the house, to take them down and hide them!

So we give thanks today for Paul - a person whom religion didn't spoil. On the contrary, I believe that the following of Jesus Christ in the way of blessed Francis made Paul more who he was.

In that lovely passage from the Gospel of John, Jesus tells his disciples that in his Father's house are many dwelling places - or as the KJV has it, many mansions. What I think Jesus is saying is that in the Kingdom of God, in the fullness of life with God, there's spaciousness; there's room for the whole diverse range of human personality and of human culture.

Certainly, following Christ involves repentance, sacrifice and dying to self, but that should lead to us becoming more who we truly are, not less. As St Thomas Aquinas put it, grace doesn't change nature, it transforms it. And I think we've seen that happening in the life of our brother Paul Anthony - a gradual revealing of glory, an un-covering of the image of God in him, a true coming out.

Paul was an amazingly gifted person. He was an accomplished artist and an icon painter. He was an enthusiastic gardener. He was a skilled home maker

with an eye for the right thing in the right place. At Balsall Heath in Birmingham he very successfully ran a day centre for the elderly. He would certainly never have classed himself as a theologian, but he was a good preacher, giving a clear and direct message; and a pastor too - I wonder how many funerals he had taken in the parish church over the past seven

*Paul Anthony died on  
24 December 2010,  
and his funeral mass  
was held at St Peter's  
Church, Bentley  
He was aged fifty-one years  
and in the twenty-fourth  
year of his profession  
in vows.*

years. Life as a Franciscan brother, far from suppressing Paul's gifts, allowed them to flourish.

I want to mention three of Paul's characteristics for which I think we should especially give thanks to God today. The first of them is kindness. Behind that bluntness, that telling it as it is, there was a very kind person - lots of small acts of kindness for the people whom he met and amongst whom he lived; and some large kindnesses, too - he lived with and cared for his mother though her long last illness. I think that the kindness flowed (although Paul himself wouldn't have expressed it like this) from the recognition in his own depths of the deep-down kindness and compassion of God. Because he knew that God treated him kindly he could show that kindness with others.

The second of Paul's characteristics which I would mention is his generosity. It came out in a number of ways, particularly in his shopping and in the meals he prepared. Of course this didn't exactly conform to the pattern of Franciscan poverty but it was very him. It can be easy for those of us who've known and grown up with plenty to choose a life of simple living. But if you haven't experienced comparative affluence, to insist on what may seem like austerity and penny-pinching can be a kind of blasphemy. For Paul there had to be abundance, over-flowing from the abundance of God in all things. When Paul cooked a meal you knew that there

was going to be enough - and to spare. He didn't serve wine in thimblefuls, praise God; he was a full bottles person.

And the last characteristic of which I would remind you was his courage, particularly since the aneurism started to develop in his brain five or six years ago. It was a hugely difficult illness for him, and let's thank God for all those who helped him and supported him through it all: for Benjamin and Malcolm and Benedict; for his brother Andrew; for friends in the parish; for his wonderful consultant, Dr Patel; for the staff at the Sheffield Hallamshire Hospital and Magnolia Lodge in Doncaster. For Paul it was a very long struggle, but throughout he never complained. He knew that the final operation was going to be high risk and that he might well die as a consequence, yet he kept a sense of trust in those around him - and in God. The knowledge that Jesus lives never left him.

Paul, at 51, has died comparatively young - for an age in which the average life expectancy is pushing 80 plus. There's a real sadness in that for us and a sense of incompleteness. The work of the Spirit, the work of uncovering the glorious image of God in him had yet to be finished; but actually that is as it must be whenever we die - still more healing, more restoration work to be accomplished, still more glory to be revealed. We are always in the position of standing before God crying, 'Lord, have mercy', as sinners knowing our need of forgiveness. But I believe that we've seen enough of that uncovering of the glory in the life of our brother Paul Anthony to have confidence that the task, through Christ, is complete. As St Paul puts it in the Letter to the Romans:

Neither death nor life,  
nor angels, nor rulers,  
nor things present, nor things to come,  
nor power, nor height, nor depth,  
nor anything in all creation  
will be able to separate us from the  
love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. *f*



*Paul Anthony in St Peter's Church*







