

## FURTHER INFORMATION

*Ethical Consumer* (Unit 21, 41 Old Birley Street, Manchester M15 5RF. 0161 226 2929) considers several products each issue [e.g. food, hi fi equipment] and awards marks to the manufacturers for pollution, environmental policy, animal testing, workers rights etc.  
www.ethicalconsumer.org  
Living Green, the magazine of the Lifestyle Movement helping you to live simply. (Address below.)

Natural Collection, mail order catalogue specialising in products selected with the environment in mind.  
PO Box 135 Southampton SO14 0AF.  
0870 331 33 33. www.naturalcollection.com

Shoppers' guide to Green Labels.  
DEFRA pocket guide explaining the meaning of green labels and logos found on UK products. Tel 08459 556000 for a copy of this government guide.

## ORGANISATIONS

Buy Nothing Day, 22 Downview Road, Yapton, Arundel, West Sussex BN18 0HJ.  
www.buynothingday.co.uk  
Global Action Plan, 8 Fulwood Place, London WC1V 6HG. 020 7405 5633.  
www.globalactionplan.org.uk  
Life Style Movement, 78 Filton Grove, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0AL. 0117 951 4509.  
www.lifestyle-movement.org.uk  
RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, West Sussex RH13 9RS. 0870 333 5999.  
www.rspca.org.uk

Sustain, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. 020 7837 1228 www.sustainweb.org  
Soil Association, Bristol House, 40-56 Victoria Street, Bristol BS1 6BY. 0117 929 0661. www.soilassociation.org  
Traidcraft, Kingsway North, Gateshead, NE11 0NE. 0191 491 0591.  
www.traidcraft.co.uk  
Women's Environmental Network, PO Box 30626, London E1 1TZ. 020 7481 9004. www.wen.org.uk  
World Development Movement, 25 Beehive Place, London SW9 7QR. 020 7737 6215. www.wdm.org.uk

## BOOKS

Duncan Clark, *The Rough Guide to Ethical Shopping*, Rough Guides, 2004.  
David A. Crocker, Tony Linden (eds), *Ethics of Consumption*, Rowman & Littlefield, 1997.  
John Lane, *Timeless Simplicity, Creating Living in a Consumer Society*, Green Books, 20001.  
Clive Litchfield, ed., *The Organic Directory*, Green Books, 2004.  
Charlotte Mulvey, *The Good Shopping Guide*, Ethical Marketing Group, 2004.  
Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, W. Publishing Group, 2005.  
William Young & Richard Welford, *Ethical Shopping, Where to shop, what to buy and how to make a difference*, Fusion Press, 2002.

## JOIN CHRISTIAN ECOLOGY LINK

Send £18 standard (low income £10) or £28 family/corporate, or a donation for church membership (recommended amount £25) to CEL FREEPOST, SE 8672, 9 Nuthatch Drive, Earley, Reading RG6 5ZZ. Cheques payable to CEL. For more information contact: CEL, 3 Bond Street, Lancaster LA1 3ER. Tel. 01524 33858. Email. Info@christian-ecology.org.uk

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**CHRISTIAN  
ECOLOGY LINK**



# 'GREEN' SHOPPING...

## A responsibility for Christians?

Shopping is fun for many people, a popular leisure activity. For others shopping is hard work. Money, time and energy are limited. To turn shopping into a moral problem may seem to be the last straw!

As you fill your shopping bag, or push your supermarket trolley, do you make time to think about the impact of your purchasing decisions on other people and the rest of God's creation? Do you bring your love for God and God's Earth into your shopping basket?

Everyday actions and decisions are important if our Christian faith is to influence our lives. This leaflet has ideas to help connect shopping with Christian discipleship.



## THE CHRISTIAN CONSUMER

When we go shopping to buy products to care for our family and home we can extend this care to include God's wider creation by the choices we make. Christians have been given a command to cultivate and care for the earth (Gen. 2.15).

Our concerns are therefore for the earthly world as well as the spiritual. The scale of our consumption contributes to the destruction of the environment which is God's world! (Psalm 24.1). Yet the Bible is full of warnings about affluence (Matt. 19.23; Luke 12.15).

Caring for the earth includes avoiding products and activities which cause pollution, waste energy and other resources, contribute to problems in the developing world, or cause pain and distress to animals. The products we choose to buy can affect the working conditions, wages and lives of the world's poor. It is important that as Christians we live — and shop — with integrity.

### Thought .....

What would be the biblical argument for fair trade?



We may already be avoiding certain products, but does our Christian faith influence every aspect of our shopping? St Paul urged us to think critically about our way of living when he wrote 'Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Rom. 12:2).

Bread and wine are central Christian symbols. Do we ever stop to consider how they are produced? Organic flour and grapes are grown by farming methods which allow other plants and animals to flourish. Organic bread and

wine are free of pesticides and genetically modified organisms.

## CONSUMPTION CONCERNS

- Consumption in industrialized countries has increased sevenfold since 1950.
- 25% of the world's population consume 80% of the world's resources.
- Global oil reserves are sufficient to last only 35 years at current rates of consumption.
- The average hourly wage for workers in the garments industry in Bangladesh is less than one hundredth of that in the USA.
- We pay more for a top brand doll than a toy worker in Indonesia earns in a week.
- Over 400 million chickens in Britain are at any one time being reared in intensive farming systems.
- Six million electrical items are discarded in Britain each year.
- Packaging accounts for around one third of all household waste in industrial countries.

## HOW CAN WE HONOUR AND OBEY GOD WHEN SHOPPING?

'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth' (Matt. 6.19).

Shop as caringly as you can. You can't meet all the criteria all the time, but every time you buy something, be aware that you can make a choice which says 'I'm on the side of a peaceful, just, sustainable way of life for God's world.' You could try saying a prayer before shopping in way many people say grace before a meal.



## PRACTICAL STEPS

### REJECT

- Unnecessary purchases.
- Aggressively advertized products.
- Toxic chemicals for home or garden and all aerosol cans.
- Over-packaged products.
- Disposable carrier bags.
- Cosmetics and other products which have involved cruelty to animals.

### REDUCE THE USE OF

- Drinks in cartons and disposable cups.
- Items containing tropical hardwoods from non-sustainable sources. (Look for the Forestry Stewardship Council logo.)
- Cash crops from developing countries grown on land needed for local communities.
- Disposable products such as nappies, razors and biro.



### CHOOSE

- Organically grown food. Is there a fixed price 'Box' scheme for seasonal organic vegetables locally? The Soil Association can tell you. If money is a problem, buy a small amount of organic produce occasionally. Every little bit helps!
- Fairly traded coffee like Cafe Direct and tea marked with the Fair Trade logo.
- Free range eggs and meat — but check claims are genuine! Look for the RSPCA 'Freedom Food' labels.
- Cleaning products that are biodegradable or less polluting.
- Recycled products, including paper, envelopes and envelope re-use labels.



- Re-usable nappies. The Womens Environmental Network can advise on alternatives to disposable nappies.
- Products that have travelled the shortest distance (to cut down on pollution from road and air freight).
- Products designed for long life.
- Energy efficient light bulbs and appliances. (Send for CEL's leaflet 'Energy Use in Church Buildings'.)
- Products with clear labelling about content, origin and environmental quality.

### SUPPORT

- Traidcraft Stalls.
- Boycotts of undesirable products and producers.
- Small local shops — but if using supermarkets concentrate on buying fairly traded, organic and free range products and lobby them to extend and promote these ranges.
- Public transport, or walk or cycle to shop. If you need to drive, use lead-free petrol, fit a catalytic converter and offer someone else a lift.
- Charity shops and jumble sales.
- "Out of this World" consumer co-operative shops and wholefood shops elsewhere.
- National 'Buy Nothing Day'.
- The World Development Movement's campaign for just working conditions worldwide.
- Designated periods of restraint e.g. Lent.

**Thought.....**How carefully is your church using the precious resources of God's earth? Send for CEL's leaflet 'An Environmental Audit for Churches'.