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# THE·JOHN·RAY·INITIATIVE

promoting·environmental·sustainability

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## Newsletter number 5 – June 2000

Dear Friend,

Some of the main priorities for JRI are to spread the message of environmental sustainability: by providing information through the JRI website, publishing briefing papers, building a team of JRI Associates, speaking at national and local events, and setting up workshops and seminars.

### Resources Directory for the Web

If you want to find out about an environmental issue, find a creation-aware bible study or material for class teaching or inspiration from how Christians around the world have been practically caring for creation, where would you go? JRI has begun to build a one-stop-shop service on the web, selecting and reviewing appropriate and authoritative resources. You can see a draft at [www.jri.org.uk/hub/index.htm](http://www.jri.org.uk/hub/index.htm) - each sub-topic such as Solar Power, Deuteronomy, Church heating or Poetry needs a reviewer with appropriate expertise. Non-experts can also help build the gateway; this is explained online. Please contact us if you can help.

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## Resources Gateway

### [Environmental issues](#)

- introductions to science and ethics

### [Biblical perspectives](#)

- on humanity, living creatures and all things

### [Faith leading to action](#)

- church communities caring for God's creation

### [Praises to the creator](#)

- hymns, songs, drama, prayers, music, poetry, literature, visual arts, film and other media.

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Main menu in prototype of JRI resources directory.

### Theological Education

John McKeown was in Oxford from 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> February for the Global Consultation on Distance Theological Education at the Oxford Centre for

Mission Studies. JRI aims to supply an ecological dimension for established core theology courses, mainly through web-based supplements. We intend to pursue a pilot project in collaboration with the Open Theological College's 2<sup>nd</sup> year course on Deuteronomy, which contains a unit touching on the themes of 'Land' and ethics.

### Two new JRI Briefing Papers

"Global Pollution and Climate Change" and "Creation's Destiny in Jesus Christ" were published this April. Others near completion include Biodiversity, two on Genetic Engineering, and two on theology.

### Reith Lectures and a JRI response

This year's BBC Reith Lectures explored 6 aspects of sustainable development. The last talk, by the Prince of Wales, created considerable interest and debate as it explicitly referred to the Creator, and to 'a sense of the sacred in our natural world'. JRI has drafted a pamphlet which picks up the themes and extends the biblical dimension, and aims to publish it later this summer to coincide with a BBC book.

### Building the JRI Associates team

The Anglican Chaplaincy at Bradford University and College provided a real feeling of community for the fifth JRI Introductory Seminar on 13<sup>th</sup> May. Participants explored practical issues in business ethics and energy saving for young parents. We are very grateful to Rev Andii Bowsher, the Anglican Chaplain, for all his help.

### JRI at national and local events

JRI directors Sir John Houghton, Dr John Sale and Prof Colin Russell have given talks on the Christian imperative of care for creation at various events, with the JRI display and literature table in support.

GWEINI (a joint venture by CARE and the Evangelical Alliance) held a conference in Cardiff on 17<sup>th</sup> March to provide input to the Welsh Assembly consultation on Sustainable Development. The keynote speaker was Sir John Houghton.

Word Alive (Spring Harvest) in Skegness included a talk on 17<sup>th</sup> April to about 300 people, and a late night session attracted another 30. An audio tape of the talk is available from Spring Harvest, 14 Horsted Square, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1QL.

**Easter People** held over the weekend 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> April at Bournemouth is an annual Christian event. Sir John Houghton was a panelist for an evening 'Chat Show' and also gave a talk on the following day.

**Christian Resources Exhibition** 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May. The Eco-Congregations project of 'Going for Green' kindly carried JRI literature on their stall at this major event.

**Pentecost 2000** events were held around the country and JRI directors gave talks at two of these:

**Gloucestershire:** JRI was at Cheltenham race-course on 10<sup>th</sup> June. Dr John Sale spoke on "The Christian Imperative of Caring for Creation" and the JRI stand was in the local "Community Exhibition".

**Buckinghamshire:** Professor Colin Russell spoke about a Christian approach to Environmental issues.

### **Stewardship event, 15-17 Sept 2000**

Canon Barry Thompson has invited a JRI consultation on *Stewardship* at St. George's House, Windsor Castle on 15-17 September 2000. Speakers will include Prof Calvin DeWitt, Prof Robin Atfield (University of Cardiff), Prof Jim Lovelock FRS, and Dr Murray Rae (King's College London). Invitations have been sent out. We plan to publish the proceedings.

### **Church of England conference 25<sup>th</sup> May**

Social Responsibility officers, and others, from many English dioceses met to consider how parishes can put the Lambeth statements into action. An inspiring address was given by the Bishop of London. JRI and other groups had display stands and gave short presentations. JRI collaborates with complementary groups and for readers who might not be aware of them there are descriptions below:

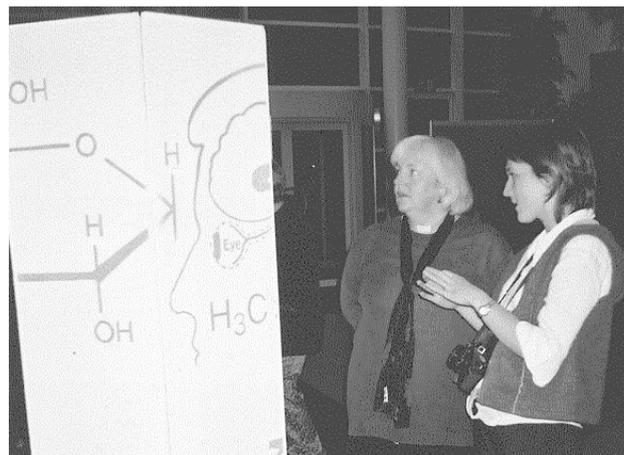
**A Rocha** (Christians in Conservation) emphases include community, ornithology and wetlands. It runs field study centres in Portugal and Lebanon, and growing projects in Kenya, France and Canada. A Rocha UK plans a field centre on 'wasteland' at Southall in London.

**CEL** (Christian Ecology Link) encourages churches toward practical creation care through its Millennium Certificate scheme. CEL's conference this October has a strong line-up of speakers, and a flyer is enclosed.

**Eco-Congregation** - has completed a pilot study with 22 churches encouraging practical corporate action. It is a project of 'Going for Green'.

### **CGCHE Environment Week, 3-7 April**

JRI is based at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education. In the main campus foyer through Environment Week was a multimedia display on 'The Seven Days of Creation' by the Chaplaincy and a local church. Dr Peter Scott of the Theology department spoke on "Social Ecology", and Prof Gordon Wenham gave the first 'Annual Chaplaincy Lecture', exploring biblical teaching on land, water, plants and animals.



Chaplaincy assistant Sue Kirkbride (left) with designer Chantal Freeman and one of the 'seven days' exhibits.

### **New member of Management Board**

Mr Paul Houghton, a Lecturer at Newbury College, has become the new JRI Treasurer. We are grateful to the outgoing treasurer, Mr Peter Clark, for all his help in the foundation and development of JRI.

### **Financial support for JRI**

We are grateful for donations received over recent months. JRI continues to need financial support to take its work forward. A gift aid form is enclosed.

*With best wishes,*

John Houghton  
Chairman, *The John Ray Initiative*

#### **For more information about JRI:**

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