

Good Morning,

August used to be known as the silly season for news. No longer. War in Europe and global food shortages are hitting home as well as the headlines. The energy crisis is forcing us to think both about how much we can afford to use and about how we might have to live differently into the future. It's impacting the campaign for the next leader of the Conservative Party.

For a political movement with 'conserv(e)' at the heart of its name I welcome any debate about how best to conserve our sources of energy. The Earth is not a limitless larder and, although history has proved the inexhaustibility of human genius, the planet's resources are not infinite.

A book review I read recently talked about the two birth places of the modern oil industry - Pennsylvania in America and Baku which was then part of the Soviet Union. The present stand-off between the West and Russia mirrors the 19<sup>th</sup> Century battle between the Americans and the Russians to control the global oil market.

The battle was won in part by the wily John D Rockefeller who built the Standard Oil Company. He was a person of faith who once said the best thing he had done was to make Jesus his Saviour and Laura Spelman his wife! Although some of his business dealings were contentious he was also a philanthropist who gave away over 550 million dollars. He also said, "we are refining oil for the poor man, and he must have it cheap and good".

In the Bible 'energy' is literally the word used to describe how God works in the world. It talks about how the Spirit of God 'energises' human beings. For people of faith energy is a sacred gift; not just a commodity to be valued monetarily but a life force to be revered. Conserving it adds a fresh angle to our stewardship of the earth; and how to share it with the poor is a continuing matter of justice.

A later President of Standard Oil was once asked about Rockefeller's leadership.

"In business we all try to look ahead as far as possible," said the President, "But Rockefeller sees a little further ahead than any of us – and then he sees around the corner"!

Perhaps, just the sort of quality we need in a future Prime Minister.

The Right Reverend James Jones KBE

The book review was in the August edition of the Literary Review:

Drills and Spills by Barnaby Crowcroft – 'A Pipeline Runs Through It: The Story of Oil from Ancient Times to the First World War'.

'Justice for Christ's Sake' by James Jones (SPCK)