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Churches urged to generate electricity

by **ANDREW FAGG**

CHURCHES are being urged to become mini power stations by the Government under new proposals to promote renewable energy. It comes amid warnings by President of the Conference the Rev Tom Stuckey that global warming presents Christians with a choice between "Apocalypse or Genesis".

Grants totalling £80 million are available from later this month for community groups and householders to install wind turbines, solar panels and other systems on their buildings to generate their own electricity and possibly even export it to the National Grid.

For some churches the scheme could herald an end to electricity bills because, if they generated more power than they consumed, then power companies would have to pay them for it.

Initiative

The Government is targeting visible buildings in communities – such as churches, schools and businesses – with the initiative. "We are very keen to get highly visible buildings involved so people can see this in action and think about their energy use – and churches are very visible in the community," said a Government spokesperson.

In his Easter message, the President makes an appeal for Christians to put the issue of global warming at the top of their agenda. Drawing on his experience of attending a European Parliament climate change debate in Strasbourg earlier in his Presidential year, he said:

"I felt shamed by the response given by our own Environment Secretary who in replying to the debate fudged the issues. Should not our Government be taking a more radical lead? It will only do so if Christians place 'global warming' near the top of their own agenda. This is the biggest moral issue of all – the choice before us is either Apocalypse or Genesis," he said (see Page 11).

In a world that is "becoming a polluted paradise lost", he said developing countries were most under threat and that the world's only superpower was ignoring it. "Again the poor in Africa and Asia are the first victims of climate



Photograph: Gill Wood.

'THEN LET US STAND BENEATH THE CROSS ...'

● ROMAN soldiers hoist aloft Jesus, played here by Dr Mark Jackson, as part of the Prestbury passion play, a collaborative effort of several local Gloucestershire churches performed at approximately three-year intervals.

Jesus' crucifixion will be dramatised in countless passion plays in Britain and the wider world this week. Elsewhere, walks of witness led by cross-bearers will process through cities, towns and villages and, by Easter Day, fasting will turn to feasting as Christians proclaim "He is risen".

At a time when the Church's voice sometimes struggles to be heard in an agnostic environment, the passion play brings a powerful immediacy to the last supper, the betrayal, the trial and the crucifixion. What believer cannot be filled with praise when reminded in such graphic fashion of their Saviour's sacrifice? As Charles Wesley wrote:

*"Then let us stand beneath the cross,
And feel his love a healing stream,
All things for him account but loss,
And give up all our hearts to him;
Of nothing think or speak beside:
My Lord, my Love is crucified."* (HP 175.)

● See Easter Recorder – Pages 11-14.

● Turn to Page Four.

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