



"Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not the shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you did not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak, or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally." (Ezekiel 34:2-4)

No, you haven't clicked onto Bible Gateway by mistake. That quote from the Old Testament is a damning indictment of the way people can treat what is put into their care. The consequences, according to the prophet Ezekiel, were devastating for the tribes of Israel. Those same verses were also quoted in a book on environmentalism in the church by long-established ecclesiastical heating specialist Christopher Dunphy. I picked up a copy at the Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) North in Manchester last week.

How Green is Your Church? is a handbook for carrying out an environmental audit of a church building, as well as an explanation of global warming. It goes on to suggest ways in which churches can encourage their members to act as pioneers in environmentally friendly behaviour. It is a kind of localised version of the C of E's Shrinking the Footprint campaign. And of course, as Chris points out, he has the highest authority for advocating such action.

Christopher Dunphy has been installing heating systems in churches for over 30 years, having been attracted to ecclesiastical buildings by masses at St John's in Rochdale – a wonderful piece of Victorian neo-Byzantine architecture. In the wider community, however, he is best known as chairman of Rochdale Football Club. He presided over the club's promotion for the first time in over 40 years, so could be hailed as a bit of a miracle worker himself. Rochdale's last promotion, in 1969, was witnessed by Yours Truly, who can be spotted with a horde of other kids on the pitch at Spotland in the *Observer's* 40th-anniversary picture.

The principal that 'the polluter pays' is one that has been bandied about extensively since the 1990s. The idea that the person or organisation responsible for creating pollution should be responsible for the costs of cleaning it up is admirable – and wholly illusory.

I was reminded of that fact when returning from visiting the sick the other week and subsequently surfing for environmental news stories. The news story referred to the compensation being paid by BP to those affected by the oil spill in the Gulf of Texas. The people who will eventually pay the price for that clean up are...us, everybody.

That is the fallacy of the whole so-called principal. Tony Hayward, who resigned as CEO of the company following the fiasco, walked away with a multimillion-dollar payout and a new job. You and I, on the other hand, get to pay extra for our fuel and, by extension, our food and everything else that has been moved around at some stage.

That was why a visit to a sick relative reminded me of that fact. Having driven away from a supermarket petrol station because of the long queue, I pulled in at one adjoining the motorway junction I needed to use. It was quite a bit dearer; and it sported the well-known yellow and green logo.

Chris Stokes