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Energy from the Sun *by Alan Misson*

We seem to be heading into a period of problems with our energy supplies - rising costs and risks of shortages. Coupled with the current crisis in transportation affecting anything from potatoes to petrol some commentators think we may be heading for a winter of discontent. The transport problem is probably short term whereas the issues with energy are likely to be with us for a long time.

Energy demand in all its forms has grown and grown in the last 50 years and now the pressures of acting to reduce the effects of climate change mean that our sources of energy must change too. Non-renewable sources like coal and gas have to be reduced with renewable sources like wind, wave, and solar taking their place. And then there is the role of nuclear power with all its attendant problems of long-term radioactivity.

Scientists can tell us that about 200,000 terawatts



(trillions of watts) of solar energy strike the earth continuously. This is of course completely renewable, at least for the lifetime of the sun, and currently equates to more than 10,000 times the world's total energy usage. But the problem is finding the most efficient and most economic way of using this freely available source of energy.

Fortunately great strides have been made in the development of solar panels with efficiencies continuing to grow and costs

continuing to decline. Look around our communities and you will see many examples of solar panels on the roofs of houses and businesses. And in some cases you will see solar 'farms' - very large installations of solar panels covering many acres of ground. There is a good example that can be seen on the left of the northbound M25 just before the junction with the A127.

But solar panels on earth are subject to the filtering effect of the atmosphere, clouds and the inevitability of night and day. So serious consideration is now being given into how to construct very large arrays of solar panels in orbit around the earth that would be continuously in the sunshine and which would transmit the energy produced to the earth using microwave or laser technology. So space-based solar power may one day eclipse all forms of energy generation on earth and provide an unending source of energy from the Sun.

New Church Teachings can show us that the Divine Love and Divine Wisdom of the Lord appear in the spiritual world as the sun and that from that sun spiritual warmth and light emanate. So the Lord, as the sun of the spiritual world, is the source of all the love that warms our hearts and the source of all the wisdom that enlightens our minds. But are we making the most of all the energy that comes to us from the Lord, the spiritual sun? Are we properly tuned in and turned on to this everlasting renewable source of spiritual energy?

Our problem is that we often forget the Lord and turn our backs on him - imagine placing solar panels in the wrong direction! Or if we are vaguely aware that he is there we still crowd our lives with all sorts of things and activities that can get in the way of

his warmth and light - imagine covering solar panels in rubbish and dirt! The Lord, as the sun of the spiritual world, provides an unending and uninterrupted source of spiritual energy available universally to all people. But the sad fact is that we often make poor use of the Lord's spiritual energy and often block our reception of it by going our own way in life rather than seeking to go in his way.

Instead we should perhaps follow the advice given in Jeremiah 29:13

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

And in Psalm 27:4

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple.