

Welcome to *Green Christian!* And welcome to this edition's guest editor, Shilpita Mathews, who got in touch about writing an article, but responded with enthusiasm when asked to help with the whole issue. As a result, the energy and commitment of younger voices rings out from these pages, alongside the insights of those somewhat older – and long may this continue.

Young voices of hope

Shilpita Mathews

In the Springtime of 2021, we stand at the crossroads of hope and grief. Whilst we mourn in the midst of an ongoing pandemic we look forward to planetary renewal, as the UK hosts the COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow this November. Young people across the country are adding a distinctive perspective to calls for global leaders to seize this opportunity to facilitate a just transition that meets 1.5°C targets.

An editorial is perhaps too short to capture the zeitgeist of my generation. Is it the wonder of what the world will look like in 2050, when most of us will still be in our 50s? Or is it the care for our common home as we share our diverse experiences and perspectives? Or perhaps it is our readiness for change, our boldness to challenge authority and our ability to find strength in one another.

As I look to the future, I am drawn to Bishop James Jones' invitation to work with God's Spirit to steer us away from the "Earthing of Hell" to the "Earthing of Heaven". It is with this anchor that I reflect on the articles of my friends whose words and actions fill me with hope. Molly Clark shares how young Christians are seeking climate justice through the newly launched Young

Christian Climate Network (YCCN). She passionately reminds us that "the climate crisis arises from our abuse of God's creation, and our broken relationship with our neighbours worldwide who suffer most from its consequences".

Josh Tregale shares how he confronted these global inequalities, as an organiser of Mock COP26, a youth-led conference involving over 330 delegates representing over 140 countries. Together they challenged global leaders, demanding actions such as access to climate education. Jodie Bailey-Ho is spearheading this cause at "Teach the Future"; she describes how student volunteers and staff are "working towards education that reflects the severity of the climate crisis".

In the Local Groups and GCNews pages you can read of the many events, workshops and projects taking place (currently online), all contributing to a brighter future. In a similar vein, I ask whether young people can lead the way in "building back better" from the pandemic. Achieving a green recovery necessitates government ambition and Clare Redfern suggests that we need the CEE Bill to sharpen policy action. Similarly, Andrew Craig calls for realism

and commitment from leaders to meet net zero carbon targets. He calls younger generations to "make the leap in imagination and persuade politicians". Rachel Mander from Hope for the Future responds to this challenge, highlighting the need to raise our voices and demand change from our MPs.

So how would I summarise this Youth Activism Issue? In the words of Franklin Roosevelt, "we cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future". I want to thank *Green Christian* for taking this opportunity to engage with the leaders of tomorrow. In the following pages, you may snatch only glimpses of our generation's spirit but I hope it serves as a call to engage and unite as we achieve a sustainable future together. ■



Shilpita Mathews works as an environmental economist. She is a member of the Young Christian Climate Network (YCCN) and serves in the student ministry of her home church, All Souls, Langham Place in London.

Our front cover by Marisa Mann (www.sustainableart.co.uk) portrays young people: protesting, studying and tree-planting for a sustainable future. It also features a floating solar panel. Marisa writes: "I found several examples online of this development in PV solar which can produce electricity using non toxic magnesium chloride, instead of cadmium telluride in the PV cells. Holland, the Seycelles and China are building these, and some companies are recycling plastic waste to produce these structures."