

Be the Hope!

Clare Redfern, Editor

In preparing this issue, it has been poignant to peruse the gallery of cloth panels created by crafty stitchers for the Loving Earth project. There's more about this Quaker-led initiative on page 18 and the organisers have generously allowed Green Christian to use images of the contributions they have received over the past months.

Each cloth panel is a personal expression, be it simple or elaborate, of love and concern. They encompass both lament, even despair, for the ravages inflicted by climate chaos, pollution and habitat loss– but also joy at the Earth's beauty in its colourful abundance, grandeur and inter-connectedness.

The panels can all be viewed online (lovingearth-project.uk), each linked with a short explanation and a pledge from the panel's maker to take some kind of action. One square filled with hearts contains the challenge: "Be the Hope", and its maker draws attention to the words of George Fox, the founder of the Quakers:

"...Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one."
George Fox 1656

This speaks volumes to me about wisdom for living, even in 2021 – especially in 2021: grounded, responsible, attending to others – and finding fulfilment in this. In a world facing multiple crises linked to our destructive tendencies and appetites, it also reminds me of Jesus, who walked over the world, calling people to lives of humility, contentment and self-giving, to share in both his suffering and his joy.

This is a vital message that the Church and Christians can offer; beneficial technology is hugely important but we must be aware of hubris and arrogance that denies our need to change our hearts and lifestyles. The new Plenty! resources from Green Christian might be one way to explore this in a group setting (see GC News on page 20).

Meanwhile billionaires are jostling to reach the stratosphere, some even daring to see a humanitarian benefit in this, with the offer of free flights and the claim that we could soon leave behind a devastated Earth and form space colonies instead. But the disadvantaged and historically exploited, like the rest of us, would surely prefer a stable climate, homelands protected from destruction by industry or extreme weather events and a place for their children to thrive! Not the grim vision of future life in a hermetically sealed space-dome.

The UN COP26 climate talks in November will be definitive for the future of the whole Earth and its peoples. So in this issue we are taking a brief walk over the world with reports of both climate chaos – and hopeful activism – around the globe and closer to home.

At Green Christian we are specifically urging increased ambition from COP26 and looking for strong leadership from our UK Government. Many Christian groups are calling for change in various and creative ways (the Loving Earth project is just one example).

We are all still complicit in our dependence on fossil fuels – and yet, positive change is taking place. Can there still be a tipping point of hope for the Earth? *"Be patterns, be examples.."* read about our initiatives in the GC News pages and the Annual Report, see the COP26 resources on our website and join us in praying, protesting and witnessing, even cheerfully, to the change we want to see. ■



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Our front cover image, "Flooded Valleys" is of an embroidered panel from the Loving Earth Project (see article on page 18). The anonymous creator of this beautiful panel writes: "The Angel Gabby, the angel of Hope and Change, is flying over the floodwaters trying to encourage us to take notice, to act quickly and stop squandering the Earth's resources and burning fossil fuels..the trees became like hands reaching up pleadingly, to be raised up, not drowned."

Go to the Loving Earth Project website (<http://lovingearth-project.uk>) to see all the panels and read more.