

# green christian

the magazine



40th Anniversary Issue

# Green Christian at 40!

**Clare Redfern**, Editor

I've read, encouragingly, that middle age need not be characterised by dwindling energy and increasing grumpiness, but can be a time when one's focus becomes sharper. Avoiding youthful distractions and honing one's talents, it can be a time of fruitful fulfilment.

Green Christian was formed in 1982 (known then as the Christian Ecology Group, later Christian Ecology Link); some founder members are still actively involved. In this issue we recall the early days whilst, as ever, committing ourselves to face the challenges that lie ahead.

A defining feature of Green Christian is that we are a community of encouragement: information, ideas and concerns are shared in our retreats and conferences, our local groups, in the email discussions in the "celink" forum, and since 2020, in regular online workshops. The last are led mainly by members who share their expertise and passions from allotment gardening to non-violent direct action, insulation of church buildings, local politics and so much more.

Green Christian is also a community of faith and prayer. The Green Christian Way of Life Community, which emerged to meet the need by some for an intentional "green discipleship" follows a fourfold discipline of prayer, lifestyle, witness and encouragement. We have a daily prayer guide, as well as other prayer and worship material on the website, including new ideas and liturgies for Harvest and Creationtide.

More recently, the need to offer pastoral support in a time of lament and climate grief has been recognised and has resulted in the multifaceted Borrowed Time project – read more in the News pages in this magazine.

Throughout all these new developments, Green Christian has remained an outward and forward-looking community: "on the edge, pushing new ideas into the mix" was how Peter Day, BBC's then Business Editor described us at the 25th anniversary conference in 2007. Looking back through old magazine copies, I sense a common thread, both challenging and humbling: of committed passionate people willing to swim

against the tide, think and live differently and be outspoken in calling for change.

But today, in our campaigning and witness to living gently on the Earth, are we acting boldly enough? In this issue, three of our patrons offer their contributions, each issuing a challenge to us to speak out in the current crises and be part of the change we would wish to see. Our Co-Chair, Deborah Tomkins, also reminds us of our calling to be "co-creators" with God, finding our individual calling, to bring healing.

With a nod of homage to my predecessor as editor, the inimitable Chris Walton, peruser of alternative prayers and obscure Bible translations, here's how the writer in the Book of Hebrews put it: "Now faith is the turning of dreams into deeds" Heb 11.1 (Clarence Jordan translation, the *Cotton Patch Bible*).

This magazine can only give a snapshot, a taster of the Green Christian community: to experience more – visit the website, come along to our October conference, attend one of next month's On the Road Together events (especially if you live in Derbyshire, York or Reading) or join an online workshop. Let's make this truly a time of fruitful fulfilment. ■



From an early GC newsletter c.1986 – if you are the artist, please get in touch.



Clare Redfern,  
Editor



## Green Christian

Published by Green Christian

### Editorial Team:

Clare Redfern,  
T: 07906 454771  
E: [editors@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:editors@greenchristian.org.uk)  
Tanya Jones (Book Review Editor)  
Frances EF Ward

### Local Groups Contact:

Isobel Murdoch  
T: 01790 763603

### Submissions

Contributions should ideally be made by e-mail as attached files. Alternatively clear typescript is acceptable when negotiated with the Editors. Accompanying photos and drawings are encouraged. An early email or phone call to the Commissioning Editor, Clare Redfern, to indicate an intention to write is very helpful.

### Editorial Policy

*Green Christian* is intended as a forum for Christians of all traditions to reflect on, and contribute to, current thinking and action in the Green Movement. The opinions expressed by guest authors do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors but are welcome for their sincerity and insight. Items mailed with *Green Christian* reflect the views of their authors or publishers and not necessarily those of Green Christian.

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135 Westbourne Road  
Penarth, CF64 5BR  
T: 029 2070 5966

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### Basis of Faith

We affirm our belief in God as Creator of all things and in Jesus Christ as Lord, looking to the Holy Spirit for guidance through the Scriptures, and seeking to hear the Spirit in the challenges of the present time.

### Co-Chairs of Green Christian

George Dow (Internal Chair)  
E: [georgedow@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:georgedow@greenchristian.org.uk)  
Deborah Tomkins (External Chair),  
E: [deborah.tomkins@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:deborah.tomkins@greenchristian.org.uk)

### Treasurer

Eleanor Orr, 35 Kitto Road,  
London SE14 5TW  
E: [treasurer@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@greenchristian.org.uk)

### Membership Secretary

Richard Kierton,  
Flat 1, 31 St James Terrace,  
Buxton SK17 6HS  
E: [membership@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:membership@greenchristian.org.uk)

### Administrator, Press Office and requests for speakers and resources

Ruth Jarman, GC Admin Officer,  
c/o 48 Morrab Road, Penzance,  
Cornwall TR18 4EX  
T: 0345 459 8460  
E: [info@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:info@greenchristian.org.uk)

### Patrons

Rt Rev James Jones,  
Fr Sean McDonagh,  
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# Religion: a force for good? Or not?!

**Jonathon Porritt** appeals to us to play our part



Photo credit: Shutterstock

I'm writing this in early June; another World Environment Day has come and gone. Another climate conference (this one in Bonn, preparing for the next COP at the end of the year) has come and gone. A massive UN gathering in Stockholm ("celebrating" the 50th anniversary of its first ever Conference on the Environment back in 1972) has come and gone. All without so much as a sliver of recognition in the mainstream media.

I used to rail against the indifference of (most of) the media – but these days, I sort-of sympathise. For all the hundreds of millions of words expended on ongoing environmental crises, the gap between what needs to be happening and what actually is happening is as great as ever. If not greater. Journalistically speaking, there's a lot of "same old, same old"

going on here. Or "blah blah blah blah, blah, blah," as Greta Thunberg puts it.

It's nearly 40 years since I wrote my first book *Seeing Green*. This being the 40th anniversary of *Green Christian*, I took it down off the shelf the other day to see what I'd been saying back then about "the spiritual dimension of green politics". Thankfully, it wasn't embarrassing, and it was reassuringly threaded through the whole book rather than added on as a grudging postscript.

I was heartened by the emphasis, even then, on "voluntary simplicity", on reverence for a creative world, on the importance of eco-feminism – and on the suicidal irrationality embedded in the abiding belief that we somehow stand apart

from the rest of Creation. But it was somebody else's words that I'd quoted (to help persuade people that big changes can often happen very quickly) which jumped off the page: "The power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas."<sup>1</sup>

Much as I admire John Maynard Keynes as an enlightened visionary, I have to say he got that one massively wrong! Today's "vested interests" are much more entrenched than ever, fighting harder than ever, and far, far more threatening than ever to the future of humankind.

I usually write about the power of vested interests in politics and business. But stand back and think about the way those vested interests operate within the world's major religions.

Back in the 1980s, I was already having to work hard to persuade colleagues in the Green Movement not to dismiss the importance of a deep spiritual inheritance in green thinking on account of their hostility to (or even loathing of) the world's major established religions. In retrospect, that was a doddle: most of the truly evil stuff (yes, I am using that word advisedly) perpetrated by the major religions was more in relation to things that happened in the past. Right now, I find I have an infinitely harder persuasion challenge on my hands – simply because most of the truly evil stuff is happening – in the name of all major religions – right now.

So much of today's intolerance, racism, misogyny and violence against "the other" is either caused or exacerbated by mainstream religions. And I'm not just talking about relatively small numbers of fundamentalists – which was always the most easily available excuse in the old days. It's much deeper than that. And we cannot afford to turn away from this just because it's extremely uncomfortable. To do so would be the equivalent of denying the rock-solid scientific evidence regarding climate change.

To see so many Christians in the USA still seduced by the views of an utterly evil white supremacist, Donald Trump, is shocking. To see India more and more dangerously polarised by the hateful Hindu nationalism of Prime Minister Modi, is shocking. To see Buddhists in Myanmar (including the "saintly" Aung San Suu Kyi) continuing to justify their horrendous persecution of the Rohingyas, is shocking. To see intolerant Muslims throughout the Middle East, in Pakistan, Afghanistan and elsewhere, doubling down on their oppression of women and girls, distorting the Quran to suit their misogynistic purposes, is shocking. To see European countries like Poland

and Hungary fundamentally corrupted by abusive versions of everything that Christian values stand for, is equally shocking.

Enough, do I hear you say? Yes, indeed. But we can't turn away from this. Entertain for a moment the truly shocking idea that the world's major religions now pose as great a threat to the future of humankind as the oil and gas companies. As "Big Agriculture". As the world's 2,778 billionaires.

Even those who seek to reform these global monoliths from within are as much at risk as those who seek to reform today's fossil fuel companies, mining companies, agricultural companies and so on. I've spent 40 years inveighing against the abhorrent behaviour of much of the established Catholic Church. So imagine my surprise and utter delight when the man who leads that problematic incumbency, Pope Francis, gave the world one of the most inspired, compassionate, radical and inclusive religious statements on the future of life on Earth – in his *Laudato Si'* encyclical back in 2015. (If you haven't had a look at it before, it's still a real cracker!)

But I wasn't at all surprised when Catholic bishops in the US launched a vicious attack against *Laudato Si'* on the grounds that it said more about "paganism" than it did about Christianity! All incumbencies have entrenched voices of reaction, but those reactive elements take on an extra dimension within the world's religions.

I'm upset at having to write a piece like this to mark the 40th anniversary of a truly dedicated and upbeat organisation that I hugely admire – and have been involved with for a long time. But are we as explicit as we now need to be about these massive, collective barriers to achieving the kind of world we all long for?

I still find myself surrounded by denialism of one sort or another pretty much everywhere I turn. I appeal to those who care, deeply and authentically, about the importance of religious and spiritual influences in the lives of billions of people today. These influences still could and should play a much more important part in steering us away from the apocalypse that otherwise awaits us. We must put aside our denialist fantasies in the realm of faith and religion as we do in any other. ■



Sir Jonathon Porritt is a writer and commentator and a Patron of Green Christian. He was Co-chair of the Green Party in the 1980s, a director of Friends of the Earth, and Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission (2000-2009). In 1996, he founded the sustainable development charity, Forum for the Future. His latest book is *Hope in Hell* (Simon and Schuster 2020).

<sup>1</sup> from *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) John Maynard Keynes



# Making all things new

**Deborah Tomkins** calls us to become co-workers with God



*Our place is within Creation*

*Photo credit: iStock*

When I joined Green Christian nearly 30 years ago, few in the Church were taking environmental issues (as they were called back then) seriously. It was mainly organisations like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, and individuals others considered rather eccentric – our patron Jonathon Porritt among them! I was certainly considered eccentric when I sought out bottle banks rather than chucking glass jars and bottles in the bin. There were so few bottle banks that I saved my glass and drove several miles to get to one.

Things have changed a good deal over Green Christian's 40 years, for good and ill. We have domestic recycling collections (but not everyone recycles). Children are taught in school about climate change and plastics (with a concomitant rise in eco-anxiety). There have been school strikes for the

climate, and eco-protests, and arrests (yet many are very far from understanding just how much has to change).

As Jonathon points out in his challenging article for our 40th anniversary issue, "the gap between what needs to be happening and what actually is happening is as great as ever."

Humans, like all animals, are notoriously bad at assessing danger, particularly when it's more than a few days away, or separated from us by distance. Because we're bad at assessing danger, we often get it wrong. We prefer to believe our own senses rather than solid evidence accumulated by others, or scientific projections of likelihood. People look out of their windows and see that everything looks fine, and honestly can't imagine that in a few short years things could be very different.

Neither can they imagine that their own actions could affect weather – or climate – or wildlife – or biodiversity – or people's livelihoods – or flooding – or drought – or famines – or disease – on the other side of the world, or for that matter, in the place where they live. They can't imagine the world changing dramatically in less than a generation. This of course is very different in parts of the world already visibly and irreversibly affected by climate change.

We need to link this lack of understanding with the worldwide growing distrust of "experts", and the rapidly increasing political and religious polarisation. Such polarisation always occurs when people perceive threats to their wellbeing, whether real or imagined. The threat is usually to their way of life or to their finances. This is the kind of immediate threat people understand at a visceral level, and leads to "othering", the denigration of others who are different from us, and often to violence, whether against property or people.

Many people in the privileged West or Global North don't have the needed visceral response to the linked crises of climate, ecosystems and biodiversity. They may accept intellectually that these issues exist, but, as Jonathon says, there is also a huge level of denialism.

The established world religions are not immune to denialism, including Christianity. In some Christian circles people believe that climate change isn't really a problem, or even that it's some kind of scam enacted by mysteriously-funded climate scientists. Of course the opposite is true – fossil fuel companies spend millions of dollars every year on denial and greenwash.

Within Christianity, denialism can also be couched as hope, a kind of pious wish that God will step in at the last minute and save us, or that our human ingenuity (inspired by God) will somehow dig us out of this mess by inventing new tech – just in time to avert disaster. Or even that it's the End Times (theologically we have been in the end times for the past 2,000 years); so, some say, "Bring on the end of the world, do everything we can to end it, because that's when Jesus comes again and everything is made new."

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that humans must deliberately bring about the end of the world. Not even Jesus knew when it would be. The ending, however it happens, is within God's gift and power. That is not to say that we don't have the power to destroy the world. We do have that power, whether with nuclear bombs or global warming or simply stripping the planet bare, like locusts. In contrast, Scripture is clear that we are tenants on God's property; the Earth is the

Lord's, and everything in it; our place is within Creation, not apart or somehow set aside; and we are to be co-workers with God, not just among our fellow humans, but also within Creation. I would even say that our God-given task, as God's co-workers, is to heal.

As Jonathon has said, not enough has changed, either fast enough, or deeply enough, over the past 40 years, and religion, instead of using its spiritual insights to achieve great good, can be so self-protective and frankly, misguided, that it becomes entrenched in evil.

We need to look closely at the heart of our faith, rather than the forms of religion, however beautiful, venerable or meaningful. Jesus shared food with and worked alongside all the "wrong" people. This was uncomfortable, and eventually dangerous. When we listen to the Spirit and step outside our usual practices and comfortable places, when we allow those we are ministering to to minister to us, when we accept that our privilege does not mean that we know all the answers, and become humble, then, I believe, we are beginning to reach the heart of our faith.

We should be wary of following the crowd – humans are herd animals! We need to seek always to find the essence of what we, our unique selves, are called to be and do, in this place, at this time, and not be afraid to speak it out. Then we can create small communities of love, grace and truth, and much can be done. And, as Green Christian has always done, we work alongside those of all faiths and no faith.

We have achieved much in Green Christian over 40 years: our many campaigns, the founding of Operation Noah, our amazing resources, conferences, retreats and workshops, our community of faith, Joy in Enough, the Way of Life Community, our Borrowed Time project, our spirituality, which recognises our place in Creation, and above all our prophetic witness. Let's not lose that prophetic edge, but keep praying and working with grace, love and compassion, that in Jesus all things may be made new. The opportunities are there. Let's seek them out. ■



Deborah Tomkins lives in Bristol with her family and two lively young dogs, and is passionate about local food, books and music. She is currently Co-Chair of Green Christian. Deborah founded the Bristol Climate Writers network in 2017. She is a prize-winning author of short stories and climate-themed novels.



# From our Patrons

## Challenging the status quo **Sir Ghilleen Prance**



Recent wildfires in the USA

Photo credit: Malachi Brooks

May I congratulate Green Christian on its 40th anniversary. During the past 40 years, beginning as Christian Ecology Link, Green Christian has played an important role in Creation care and it has been a pleasure to be linked with it for well over half of its existence.

There is one topic that dominates my concern at this time and that is climate change. There is no need to go through all the evidence for climate change that were presented at COP26 in Glasgow: they are so obvious all around us, and as I write today there are fires burning in Arizona and in Siberia, floods in India and Thailand and drought in Somalia.

My concerns are twofold: the lack of significant action to halt temperature increase at 1.5 degrees, and as a biologist the effects of climate change on biodiversity. What we are doing by not controlling climate change sufficiently is not only threatening the future of our own species but of all the other creatures and organisms with which we share this planet.

A growth economy that in the long term is completely unsustainable is given priority and world leaders seem unable to make the radical changes needed to sustain life on Earth. Greed and self-interest still predominate. This is a moral and ethical dilemma, and this is where Christians and other people

with strong spiritual and ethical convictions are needed. The worst aspect of climate change that goes against all Christian teaching, is that it is caused mainly by the rich nations, yet it disproportionately impacts the poor and marginalised people who suffer the most from our inconsiderate lifestyle.

For this reason, I have been delighted to see Green Christian working on a sustainable economy through their Joy in Enough initiative. Unless morality, ethics and spirituality predominate we will never stop climate change and the loss of biodiversity. The Christians of the world are still a large potential lobbying group with influence, but their actions are still small. Those of us of faith have a great responsibility to act and to persuade more Christians into action. ■



Flooding in Thailand

Photo credit: Misbahul Aulia



Prof Sir Ghilleen Prance is a botanist with a long and distinguished career, and a particular interest in the Amazon rainforest. He was Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew from 1988 to 1999 and was Scientific Director of the Eden Project in Cornwall (1998-2010). He is a deacon in Lyme Regis Baptist Church.



Inspiring the earthing of Heaven

### Bishop James Jones KBE



The Right Reverend James Jones KBE is a Patron of Green Christian and former Bishop of Liverpool. He has been active particularly in areas of justice and environmentalism, chairing the Hillsborough Independent Panel, and the Independent Panel on Forestry. His book *Justice for Christ's Sake* was published by SPCK in 2021.



Photo credit: Hitdelight on Shutterstock

For me, a seed was sown just over 20 years ago. In the Millennium Year of 2000 I met with several thousands of young people in and around Liverpool. They told me in no uncertain terms and long before Greta Thunberg that they were seriously worried about the future of their planet.

Challenged by their passion I began to study what Jesus had to say about the Earth. He told us in the Lord's prayer to pray for the earthing of Heaven (Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven). In the Gospels, Jesus spoke about himself as the Child of the Earth (this is what "Son of Man" really means in the original Hebrew) and often, in the same breath, talked about the Earth.

And at his crucifixion before they laid him in the heart of the Earth, the Earth quaked and then on the third day when God raised him from the heart of the Earth, the Earth quaked again. It's as if the Earth could not remain silent as it saw the Child of the Earth bringing about the salvation of the world – a salvation not just for individuals, but rescuing the Earth itself, and restoring all things.

Challenged by a colleague, Phil Leigh, who asked what I was going to do with this new understanding, we set up "Operation Eden" to help churches to transform their local environments and to earth Heaven in their neighbourhoods. This then evolved into Faith4Change which 20 years on and in spite of the banking crisis and the pandemic is flourishing and enabling all faith groups to take action on climate change and to create just community environments for everybody.

That little seed sown by young people and watered by others including Edward and Barbara Echlin from Green Christian, is now active on Merseyside in many projects including helping the Diocese of Liverpool achieve its Net Zero target for 2030. Phil Leigh now leading the team says: "Environmental issues have waxed and waned over the past decades. In our communities though, an understanding of the fragility of Earth's ecology has only grown and not least in our faith communities".

I hope that in the years to come, Green Christian will continue to support and challenge Christians to earth Heaven. ■

# Fast fashion – a necessary evil?

**Katie Taylor** wonders whether greater awareness can change our habits



Xtinction Rebellion protest against fast fashion

Photo credit: Graham Young/ BirminghamLive

The damaging effects of the fashion industry on the environment are well-documented. The industry has been estimated to produce 8-10% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but there are wider effects too: water pollution and overuse, oceanic microplastic pollution, the use of petrochemicals in textile production, and textile waste. Besides this are the human costs: risks to textile and garment workers from harmful chemicals, the arduous working conditions and pitiful pay. Fashion brands are now producing almost twice the amount of clothing, as compared to 20 years ago and current consumption leads to over 92 million tonnes of waste textiles being thrown away each year.<sup>1</sup>

known about? We are living in a culture that encourages fast fashion but there are signs of a growing awareness of the need for an alternative, sustainable approach. The fashion industry with its “environmentally polluting supply chain operations”<sup>1</sup> will need to change substantially. But is slow fashion really a viable alternative?

Slow fashion, using recycled or ethically sourced materials, taking account of environmental impacts along the supply chain, aims to produce long lasting, good quality clothing. Another aspect is the reuse of clothes and textiles already in circulation using creative repairing, altering and upcycling. It is estimated that without

significant change the industry will grow by 81% by 2030, putting an unprecedented strain on already devastated planetary resources.<sup>2</sup> The promotion of fashion trends and unethically-produced items are clearly at the root of the problem; so why are we investing in an industry that is destroying our environment?

Attempts by organisations, such as Xtinction Rebellion Fashion or sustainable fashion brands, to change attitudes and create an alternative culture of wearing secondhand, shared or upcycled clothing remain outside the mainstream. There’s also a degree of elitism when discussing issues related to sustainable fashion as not everyone has the option to expand into more expensive ethical options.

For individuals on lower incomes, buying habits cannot always reflect personal ethics. Many have no choice and must buy what they can afford.<sup>3</sup> Vintage and second-hand clothing becoming trendy has also led to prices getting higher and higher. Despite arguments made for cheap alternatives such as shopping second hand, this is ultimately a naive and unrealistic hope. The gap between those who can afford to be sustainable and those who cannot is widening and it has been pointed out how concern for lower paid workers can quickly turn to snobbery towards the same group and their shopping habits.<sup>3</sup>

Are the impacts of our shopping habits either not acknowledged or simply not

1 Kirsi Niinimäki et al., The Environmental Price Of Fast Fashion, *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, (2020)

2 XR Boycott Fashion – Xtinction Rebellion UK, *Xtinction Rebellion UK*, (2020)

3 Molly Greeves, Shame Fast Fashion Brands Not The People Who Buy Their Clothes, *Byline Times*, (2020)

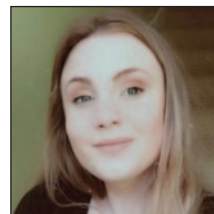


Some large brands are making claims that they are improving their track record on sustainability; the H&M group report they are working “to develop a fairer, more transparent and traceable supply chain” with an increased use of recycled materials (up to 17.9%) and a reduction in plastic packaging. No real change will occur unless it starts from the top but are changes such as those at H&M going far enough? Fashion journalist Molly Greeves writes how it is the multi-million-pound corporations that should be shamed into changing their

ethics, rather than shaming and alienating those who cannot afford to make changes. The elitism of the slow fashion movement risks driving people away.<sup>3</sup>

A greater awareness of the destructive effects of fast fashion is clearly needed. For myself, I admit it wasn’t something I had thought much about before researching it as part of my degree. I’ve bought a lot of fast fashion in the past, more for the cost rather than trying to stay trendy. Now with a heightened

awareness of the ethical dilemmas around fast fashion, I am thinking about trying to make adjustments. I’ll be looking at eco-ranges and only buying what is needed, searching for things that are timeless and can become a staple in my wardrobe. I hope you’ll consider it too. ■



Katie Taylor is completing a degree in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at the University of Gloucestershire. In her spare time, she likes painting and drawing, and is always up for an adventure!

## Consume better, consume less?

**Dr Andrea Werner** considers alternative and sustainable fashion

Clothing, alongside food and shelter, is one of our most fundamental human needs. But clothing has always been about more than just protecting the body from the elements or covering us up. Since the dawn of civilisation, clothing has been an expression of social status, linked to ideas of beauty and aesthetics; clothes can help us to feel good about ourselves and attractive to others. What is perceived as beautiful and attractive, however, changes over time and social context, creating the notion of fashion: the way in which clothes reflect and communicate a vision about ourselves within society.

For many centuries fashion could only be fully enjoyed by those wealthy enough to afford expensively made new clothes. However, in recent decades, thanks to the availability of new and cheaper materials, mass production methods, as well as a globalised economy, fashion has become more widely available. It’s an ever-accelerating industry, with ever

shorter fashion cycles encouraging people to consume more and more items within ever shorter time periods. At the same time, these “fast fashion” clothes are often of poor quality and are discarded after being worn only a few times, mostly ending up in landfills or incinerators.

Besides the huge environmental cost, there is also a severe human cost – the communities producing the clothes and clothing materials often experience oppressive labour practices, with harsh working conditions and very poor pay. This should challenge us as Christians. These practices are deeply harming – both to people, and planet. How can this be confronted and changed, and what can we ourselves do to make things better?

Change is important both in production as well as consumption in order to make

industries more sustainable, with better conditions for workers: companies need to produce both better and less, whilst consumers need to consume better and less.<sup>1</sup> Larger fashion corporations are slow to change, being wedded to the highly profitable “fast fashion” model. However, a few highstreet brands show hopeful changes, some offering clothing made from fairtrade cotton, for example, which works to ensure a decent income and fair working conditions for cotton growers and those working in cotton processing.

Recent years have also seen a rise of “sustainable fashion entrepreneurs” and I had the privilege to be involved in a research project exploring their visions, practices and business models.<sup>2</sup> One of our key findings was that such companies use innovative materials such as reclaimed, “surplus” and novel plant-based materials, setting inspiring

<sup>1</sup> Heikkurinen, P., Young, C. W., & Morgan, E. (2019). Business for sustainable change: Extending eco-efficiency and eco-sufficiency strategies to consumers. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 218, 656-664.

<sup>2</sup> London College of Fashion, *Fostering Sustainable Practices*, [sustainable-fashion.com/fostering-sustainable-practices](https://sustainable-fashion.com/fostering-sustainable-practices)



Sharing and caring, clothes can have many lives

*fionameadowsillustration.co.uk*

examples for better production practices in their industry.

They are also concerned about changing consumer behaviour: high-quality, long-lasting clothing is often sold with guidance on how best to care for garments to make them last longer. Others offer repair services or provide a repair kit for DIY repairs. Long-lasting fashion items inevitably come with a higher price tag, but the longer we are able to keep and use them, the more “value for money” they become over time; such garments could be seen as “investment pieces”.

Other business models go further, increasing the wear rate of garments beyond one user, expanding the successful charity shop model of secondhand usage. An interesting example is fashion app Nuw, which enables its users for a small fee to share and swap their wardrobe pieces with others, thus discouraging the frequent purchasing of new clothing. Some companies offer a “trade in” service: customers can send in their garments which they no longer wish to wear in return for some store credit, and these garments are then sold again as “pre-

loved” to new customers. Other companies rent out otherwise expensive garments for special occasions. Not only do such strategies reduce resource use but they also help to make sustainable fashion more affordable.

Finally, many of the companies we researched, actively seek to instil in people a new sense of appreciation and love for clothes and clothes-making. Raeburn, a London-based sustainable fashion brand, for example, offers behind-the-scenes studio tours as well as garment making and repair-skills workshops.

Whilst perhaps these companies and what they do need a lot more exposure in order to challenge industry practices at a larger scale, their visions and practices may prompt us to rethink how we ought to consume clothing and value the clothing we have. It may trigger questions such as: Do I make the most of the clothing I have in my wardrobe? Do I care for my clothes in the best possible way? How many fashion items do I need? Would I be willing to try out clothes rental, sharing or swapping? What do I do with my clothes when I no longer wish to wear them?

As Christians, such exploration of our fashion habits may be underpinned and motivated by virtues enabling us to live well in the eyes of God: moderation – a call to enjoy the life given to us whilst avoiding its harmful excesses, respect – for God’s Creation and the Earth’s resources, and gratitude – for those who design and make our clothes. ■



Dr Andrea Werner is an Associate Professor at Middlesex University Business School. She specialises in research on business ethics and sustainability. She serves as a Licensed Lay Minister at St Michael’s, Camden Town.



## "Letter to Someone Living Fifty Years from Now"

Most likely, you think we hated the elephant,  
the golden toad, the thylacine and all variations  
of whale harpooned or hacked into extinction.

It must seem like we sought to leave you nothing  
but benzene, mercury, the stomachs  
of seagulls rippled with jet fuel and plastic.

You probably doubt that we were capable of joy,  
but I assure you we were.

We still had the night sky back then,  
and like our ancestors, we admired  
its illuminated doodles  
of scorpion outlines and upside-down ladles.

Absolutely, there were some forests left!  
Absolutely, we still had some lakes!

I'm saying, it wasn't all lead paint and sulfur dioxide.  
There were bees back then, and they pollinated  
a euphoria of flowers so we might  
contemplate the great mysteries and finally ask,  
"Hey guys, what's transcendence?"

And then all the bees were dead.

By Matthew Olzmann, from *Constellation Route* (Alice James Books 2022)



## A Green Christian timeline with comments from supporters, old and new



Judith Pritchard  
Green Christian pioneer

In 1981, assembled in the Winter Gardens at Malvern were members of the Ecology Party, one of Britain's most idealistic but least rated political groups. It was from a meeting of Christians at the conference that the Christian Ecology Group formed, aiming to provide a Christian presence within the Ecology (now the Green) Party, and to advocate the Party's policies and ideals with Christian people generally.\* The main "doer" in our early days was a local Malvern member, Judith Pritchard. Without her grit and determination, the new group might well have foundered. Judith died in 2010, and my thanks go to her and to all those whose efforts have, over these four decades, filled our lives with hope.

1981

1982

Ammerdown Conference  
Christian Ecology Group is officially formed

1989

Name change to  
Christian Ecology  
Link

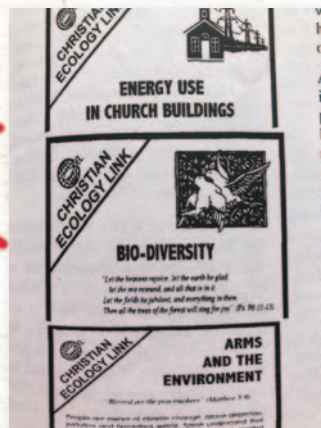
I was involved with the then Christian Ecology Group from its birth and served on the committee for a while. A key event for me was when I was asked to write a chapter for a forthcoming booklet. I got the chapter on animals – my first attempt at writing. I still have an original copy! As time went on I wanted to concentrate more on Christianity and animal rights, but I remain an interested member of Green Christian to this day. I am grateful to Green Christian, which first gave me the opportunity to write. It would please me to see the green movement generally embrace animal issues more than it sometimes does.



Martin Davis  
founder member

I have really enjoyed working and engaging with Green Christian's lovely, passionate members and Trustees who have helped me to orient my faith in all matters green. Thank you!

I sincerely believe that the core role of Green Christian is to bring challenge with hope, confident in the Creation-healing work of God, to Christians and Churches in the UK.



1990s

cutting from the  
magazine showing  
early CEL  
publications



Barry Miles  
a member from  
the earliest days

Staffan  
Engström

online workshop  
coordinator



1998 Old style magazine  
printed in black and white  
with occasional green!



We value our fruitful relationship with Green Christian that cross-fertilises and nourishes our movement. We very much appreciate the fact that Green Christian amplifies our calls for public witness through our vigils, and collaboration on talks and events. Congratulations to Green Christian on 40 years of prayerful concern and service!

Melanie  
Nazareth  
Christian  
Climate Action



(\*NB: Green Christian has no formal links with the Green Party – Editor)



# 40 Years: Looking Back, Looking Forwards

Widen your horizons!

Being a member of the Green Christian community helps give me ideas. For example, through contact with the Barnet local group, I have an intention of introducing a Green Christian group in Uganda which would, I guess, be the first of its kind in Africa. This is how I would like to see Green Christian change in the next 40 years – increasing its international outreach and support.

**Rosemary Nakasiita**

new member,  
based in Uganda



**2021**

Regular online workshops continue

**2023**

Cloud and Fire

**2020**

Green Christian's first online festival attracts over 300 participants

As a little boy I was taken for long walks in the Sussex countryside where my eyes were opened to wild flowers and birds. I discovered a deep personal attunement with the natural world. Later as a student I would take myself off to the countryside and spend a restorative weekend sleeping in a Kentish wood and then wandering the lanes. I know now that much of the flora and fauna among which I found my existential place, those forty, fifty years ago, is no more. I feel I simply have to live my life in response to that reality – and that's why what we do in Green Christian matters so much to me.

**2019**

Borrowed Time, grappling with climate grief, is set up



**Andrew Norman**

Green Christian  
Co-chaplain

**2018**

Green Christian On The Road events begin

**2015**

The Green Christian Way of Life community is formed

Some words to celebrate GC's 40th anniversary: loving, kind, forward-thinking, intelligent, thought-provoking, supportive, pioneering, engaging.

When I first joined Green Christian, we were often the only "greens in the village". Our task was to get climate and related issues on church agendas, and on wider societal agendas. Now nearly everybody is aware of climate change, biodiversity loss and the enormous challenges they pose. But we need to get the churches to advocate effective action, modelling this action ourselves – we have to discuss and debate more about what is effective – not just to applaud every "green initiative".

**2014**

CEL becomes Green Christian

**Jules Robinson**  
new Trustee



**2013**

Green Christian sets up Joy in Enough

**Tony Emerson**  
co-founder of Green Christian's Joy in Enough project



**2008**

Green Christian's Rainforest initiative is started

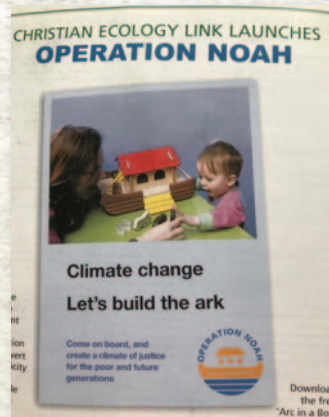
**2002**

LOAF campaign gets underway



**2004**

Operation Noah is launched



**In 2008**

Operation Noah becomes an independent charity



# When too much isn't enough....

**Cat Jenkins** discusses inequality, consumerism and the Plenty! course

In the midst of the current cost-of-living crisis, many people may be feeling as though they're struggling to make ends meet. Choosing between "heating and eating" may mean that life's luxuries have to be abandoned for now, while they try to make sure they can afford the essentials and even then, a recent study<sup>1</sup> shows many are having to compromise on things such as quality of food, which could potentially affect their health.

For others, though, life's still pretty good. Since the start of the pandemic, whilst those on low incomes have battled with rising costs, the wealthy have generally got wealthier – as this chart from the New Economics Foundation, produced at the end of last year, shows:

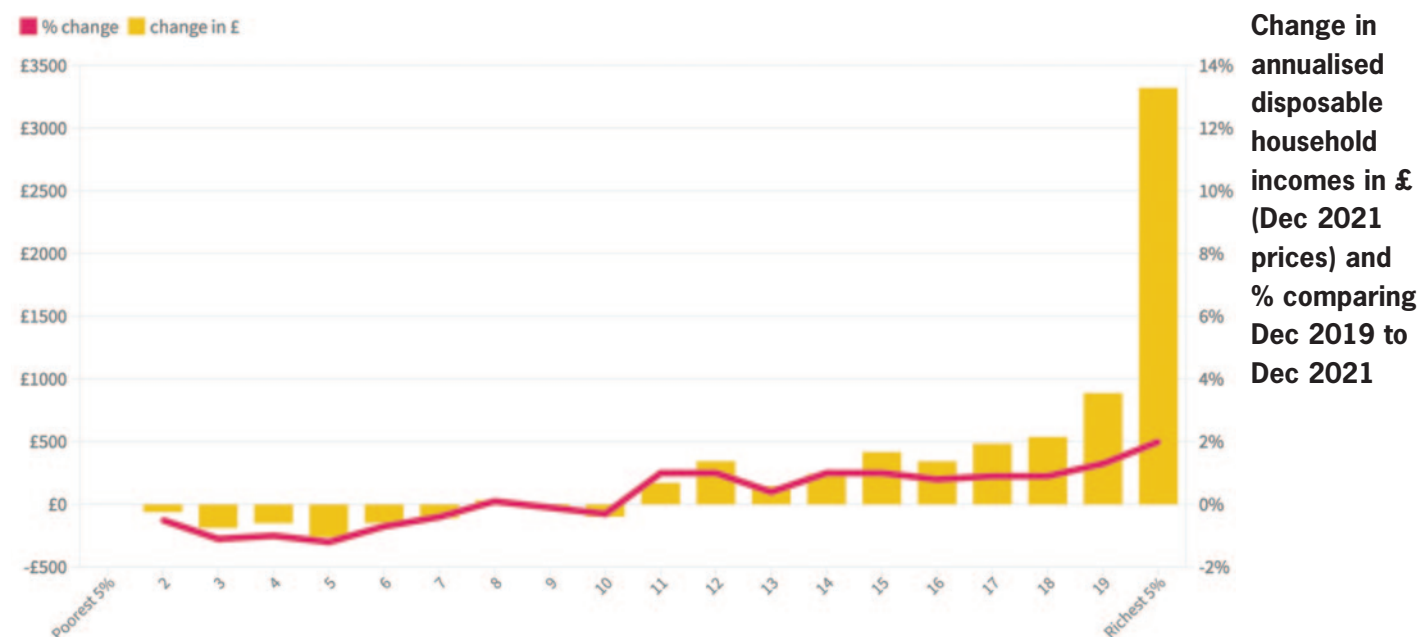
It's not a pretty picture. The UK has some of the worst wealth inequality in the developed world; in fact, out of all of the countries in Northern Europe, it has the number 1 slot for wealthiest region (London, as you might expect), but also *nine of the 10 poorest*. Nine!

This fact was brought home to me when I ran a series of home group discussion sessions, using Joy In Enough's *Plenty!* study series – and it was a real eye-opener for participants. As I write, we're in the middle of the Conservative leadership contest, and candidates are seemingly competing to outdo one another with their promises over various things. For example, tax cuts, which might help some with their costs of living, but will do nothing for the very poorest who don't pay income tax or NI anyway, and aren't necessary for the very richest, who many argue should be subject to a wealth tax. Then, there's talk of doing away with "wokeness", certain human rights, and the country's "green" ambitions – all of which gives me a little shiver of anxiety.

A recurrent message seems to be that we need to stem the rise of inflation, but at the same time tempt people back into the shops to give the economy the boost it apparently needs. Tricky balance, that, and whilst it's important that people should be able to afford the necessities of life (and a certain amount of fun stuff too, ideally) there is danger in thinking that

## Incomes of the poorest have been squeezed, while the richest have had runaway growth.

Source: New Economics Foundation



<sup>1</sup> Almost 4.5 million UK families are in serious financial trouble, Bloomberg UK, 10th July 2022 [bloomberg.com/news/articles](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles)



a healthy economy is one in which people are buying more and more “stuff”.

The *Plenty!* discussion materials make this plain: over six weeks, carefully selected scripture, videos and wider reading help participants see a bigger picture; one in which what we do, and how we spend our money, impacts not just on our own environment and wellbeing – but also that of others, both here and abroad. This isn’t “new news”, or at least it shouldn’t be.

It’s been appreciated for a long time how advertising can manipulate us into spending on wants, rather than needs, and what huge damage our consumerist economic system is having on the planet;<sup>2</sup> also on our values and our connectedness to God and to one another.

The *Plenty!* series is challenging. One participant in my group commented on how deeply uncomfortable she was beginning to feel about some of her lifestyle choices. However the course can also begin to give people an entirely new perspective on the part they play in God’s Creation – and on

what constitutes “enough”. If you’ve not looked at the course yet and would like to explore further, you can find the details at [joyinenough.org/resources/plenty/](http://joyinenough.org/resources/plenty/) – or, alternatively, contact me, Cat Jenkins on [catturmer@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:catturmer@greenchristian.org.uk) for information about the course, and how you can train to become a facilitator. It might just help you see the world, and our predicament, with new eyes! ■



Cat Jenkins is Administrator for Joy in Enough's *Plenty!* Project. She is a former regulator of offshore financial businesses, has lectured and written books on corporate governance, fund management and fraud risk and is also Programme Manager for Church Action for Tax Justice. She is a Methodist, studying for a Masters in Digital Theology, and is on the Core Team of Deep Adaptation.

The Green Christian Conference on Oct 7th/8th in Birmingham will feature workshops based on the *Plenty!* discussion course. See GC News pages in this magazine, or our website, for more details.



“Never before have we had such an awareness of what we are doing to the planet, and never before have we had the power to do something about that”

– David Attenborough, ‘A Life on our Planet’

Imagine a society where every person can flourish and everyone has enough. Where local communities thrive. Where the climate is stabilising and animals and plants have a home.

What is your role in creating this society? What could your church do?

Take the conversation to your community with Green Christian’s 6-session *Plenty!* programme.

<sup>2</sup> [nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/consumerism-earth-suffers](http://nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/consumerism-earth-suffers)



# How can I green my Church?

**Ruth Jarman**, Green Christian's information officer, has some suggestions for responding to the climate and biodiversity emergency



Photo credit: Will Tarpey on Unsplash

## Getting started

First, form a green team! Find other people so you aren't alone, people who love you or love Creation, preferably both. One friend might be all you need!

Then, create an event at your church, or ask for a slot in the service. Tell your church about the dire situation we are in and why people who believe it is God's

world need to speak and live prophetically. We have suggestions for videos to show or sermons to give on our website. Aim at getting your church leader on board first of course, and make sure the Church Council are invited, indeed expected, to attend!

Register for Eco Church. This programme, devised by A Rocha UK, involves a thorough look at all the different aspects of church life from theology to toilet cleaning products and churchyard biodiversity to banking. The most important thing about Eco Church is not to do it yourself! Ask your Church Council to agree to support it as a church, and divvy up the jobs, involving as many people as you can.

You could join Green Christian as a church and receive five copies of the twice-yearly magazine whilst supporting our work. Start praying regularly for Creation in your church. Green



Photo credit: Ruth Jarman

Christian's monthly *Prayer Guide* is a great resource for intercessory prayers for individuals and at church services. All our leaflets can be ordered online for free and the prayer guide can be accessed and downloaded from the website or sent as a daily email.<sup>1</sup>

## Stuff really worth doing

Commit to going net zero on carbon emissions (measure,<sup>2</sup> reduce, switch to green energy and offset with climate



Photo credit: Joseph Pearson on Unsplash

<sup>1</sup> [greenchristian.org.uk/resources/leaflets/](https://greenchristian.org.uk/resources/leaflets/) or contact [resources@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:resources@greenchristian.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> [360carbon.org/en-gb/](https://360carbon.org/en-gb/)  
<sup>3</sup> [climatestewards.org](https://climatestewards.org)



stewards).<sup>3</sup> Some churches, such as the Church of England, have already committed to be net zero by 2030 so if you are an Anglican, you can remind your PCC of this and help them along the way.

Why not go for net zero before 2030 to lead the way?

Tearfund and others, including Green Christian, have put together a step-by-step Climate Emergency Toolkit to speak prophetically at this time.<sup>4</sup>

Raise awareness further in your church by suggesting that house groups, or other small groups, work through Green Christian's *Plenty!* series. It can be run both online and in person. This is a great starting point to get people thinking about more than just changing light bulbs.



In Green Christian we think the climate and ecological emergency is probably the greatest pastoral challenge the churches have ever faced. Borrowed Time is a programme that offers safe spaces to explore and share our responses within the context of faith. We have resources for individuals and groups, and for ministers and others in leadership roles.

## Thinking deeply about where the money goes

Green Christian is proud to have co-founded Operation Noah in 2004, which with its Bright Now campaign is leading the faith divestment movement in the UK. Even if your church has no investments in fossil fuels, the Church Council can still commit not to invest. You can also agree to an ethical purchasing policy. The latest resource from ECCR's Money Makes Change



Faith-motivated. Science-informed. Hope-inspired.

## Bright Now: towards fossil free Churches



programme – an Ethical Buying Guide for churches – equips churches to take practical steps with their spending to shape a fairer, more sustainable world.<sup>5</sup>

## Finding encouragement and inspiration

Do continue to encourage the everyday ways of living gently: recycling effectively, reducing our printing, using fairtrade tea and coffee, setting aside wildlife areas and avoiding herbicides in the churchyard. Use these activities as ways to help people integrate their faith into their everyday lives.

But make the most of opportunities to talk about how individual actions, though good in themselves as part of our discipleship, are not enough, and that urgent transformational change is required. This is why we must also support campaigns and protests.

The campaign for the Climate and Ecology Bill encompasses climate, nature, trade, agriculture and really tells the truth about the climate and Creation emergency and how the UK should respond.

If all this sounds overwhelming and

exhausting, then you are not alone. Taking the first step is often the hardest and the most important. But with the need for change becoming increasingly obvious, you might be encouraged in finding unexpected allies at church and elsewhere.

We can't do everything but can begin to "be the change we would see in the world". Don't forget to go out and find inspiration in God's beautiful world – for this is what we are called to care for and enjoy. ■



Ruth lives in Hampshire, is a keen musician and is at the other end of the [info@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:info@greenchristian.org.uk) email address. She is also involved with Operation Noah and Christian Climate Action.

## Join Now

Membership on line starts at just £2 a month. Please go to

[greenchristian.org.uk/join-us/](https://greenchristian.org.uk/join-us/)

Or use the form below and send with your remittance to:

Green Christian Membership, Richard Kierton,  
Flat 1, 31 St James Terrace,  
Buxton SK17 6HS

Please tick:

- ☐ Standard Membership £30
- ☐ Joint/Family £40 Corporate £60
- ☐ *Green Christian* (the magazine only) £20
- ☐ Church Membership (recommended) £60

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
(GC94)

<sup>4</sup> [climateemergencytoolkit.com](https://climateemergencytoolkit.com)

<sup>5</sup> [eccr.org.uk/blog/new-resource-ethical-buying-guide-for-churches/](https://eccr.org.uk/blog/new-resource-ethical-buying-guide-for-churches/)

# Drawing Together

**Isobel Murdoch** reports on Green Christian Local Groups' activities

As we try to move on from Covid-19, some of Green Christian's local groups are enjoying more in-person events. **Clun** group in Shropshire held an eco service and an outing to a local garden in June. The **St Albans** Hope In Action group took part in the town's annual SustFest, running a Plenty! programme at St Luke's Church and joining a God's Green House event. A talk on "Code Red For Humanity: How might we live in a collapsing civilisation?" was inspired by Plenty! and the Borrowed Time course.



Lincoln's Faith and the Environment Group, Biscathorpe  
Photo credit: Christine Hall

**Lincoln's** Faith & the Environment group, co-led by Green Christian members, held weekly prayer vigils in central Lincoln during Lent. In May, they organised a walk to a proposed oil drilling site in the Lincolnshire Wolds, and one of them gave a presentation on the climate emergency to the Lincoln Labour Party. Green Christian **Sheffield** met for walks over the summer and held stalls at two events, while also supporting Forest Church locally. **Rugby** Green Christian group held a Climate Crisis Q&A evening in June.

Green Christian's newest group, in **Colchester**, grew out of the On The



Protest walk to the proposed oil drilling site at Biscathorpe in the Lincolnshire Wolds

Photo credit: Christine Hall

Road Together event held there last autumn. The first group event was a talk in May by Canon Imogen Nay, from the Diocese of Chelmsford.

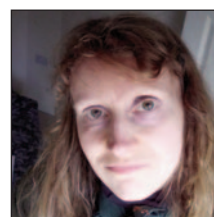
Now that green thinking is more mainstream, cooperation and mutual support between different organisations is increasingly important. For example, Green Christian's **South West** group meets quarterly on Zoom, while the rest of the time members are active in local networks like Cornwall Churches Environment Group and the Third Order of St Francis. Cooperation is also central to **Green Christian Worcester**, which is involved with Worcester's Green Churches Network and Worcester Cathedral's Eco Group.

Last year **Reading** Green Christian group campaigned for Berkshire Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels, and members have supported events in each others' churches. The **North Wales Green Christian** group took part in a climate strike in Wrexham to mark International Women's Day on 8 March, highlighting climate change's disproportionate impact on women

worldwide. **Hereford** Green Christian recently held two talks, one by Welsh Water, a not-for-profit committed to environmental action, and the other by Hereford Community Recycling And Reuse Group.

Some groups and events remain online, such as the **Cheltenham** group's regular Climate Prayers on Zoom. **Barnet** Green Christian combined an in-person meeting with a Zoom option, as they discussed moving forward after COP26 with a speaker from A Rocha. In Scotland, a Zoom group has opened up opportunities for members to connect, whilst scattered across the country.

Could you consider trying a local group where you are, or becoming a local contact? It would be great to hear from you if you have any questions. ■



[isobel.murdoch@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:isobel.murdoch@greenchristian.org.uk)  
01790 763603



# Come to our conference – 7/8th October, 2022

## Building back greener? Christian perspectives on the future of our economy, money and work



Photo credit: Sharon McCutcheon on Unsplash

What might it mean to build a genuinely sustainable, low carbon economy? What distinctive contribution might Christians make? The conference is inspired by Green Christian's Joy in Enough project and will offer thought-provoking talks and workshops, give opportunities to network as well as bring questions and concerns. All are welcome to attend and travel bursaries are available for under 30s.

Our event starts at **7pm on Friday 7th October 2022** online on **Zoom** when environmentalist and writer, **Paul Kingsnorth**, co-founder of the Dark Mountain Project will be speaking.



**Saturday 8th October 2022** is an in-person event that runs from **10.15am – 4.30pm at the Priory Rooms, Birmingham, B4 6AF**, a conference centre in the Bull Street Quaker Meeting House, situated just minutes from mainline train stations.



Our speakers on Saturday include **Cat Jenkins** from the Joy in Enough team and scientist and theologian Professor **Christopher Southgate**.

Workshops will include: Money Makes Change, Tax Justice, Consumption and



Advertising, Rage Against the Machine, and Joy in Enough's *Plenty!*

Please join us. It will be a great opportunity for people to meet and talk to each other in person again! Donations are set at different levels from £10 to £30. For more information and/or to book visit [greenchristian.org.uk/conference2022/](https://greenchristian.org.uk/conference2022/)

### **Plenty!**

*Plenty!* is a small group discussion series developed as part of our Joy in Enough project. If you would like to lead a group at your church you can download the resources from the Joy in Enough website. Facilitator training for the *Plenty!* course continues to be available on Zoom for anyone who wants it. Please contact [catturmer@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:catturmer@greenchristian.org.uk) if you would like to book the training.

If you are interested in being a *Plenty!* participant, and can't find a local group to be part of, do write to Cat (address as above). We may be able to find a group near you or put together a group using Zoom.

We would love to hear about your *Plenty!* experiences if you have completed the *Plenty!* discussion resource. Do write to Cat about them.

## Deep Waters



Photo credit: JunCTionS, licensed under CC BY 2.0

**Deep Waters** is Green Christian's faith-based eight-session programme for enabling people to process their feelings about climate change and eco-anxiety. It seeks to be a practical resource for pastoral needs and is now available for churches and other groups to use.

Deep Waters is designed for both online and in-person groups. In small breakout groups, participants take part in supportive discussions, using scripture, poetry, images, scientific research, articles and music as starting points. Reflective exercises are suggested. You can join a group run by us, or set up your own course using the resources we offer.

The next Green Christian centrally-run *Deep Waters* programme will begin on 20 September 2022. Register your interest in joining the September online shared journey on the Green Christian website.

## Cloud and Fire – pilot participants needed

Cloud and Fire brings together participants in small online groups,

under the canopy of Borrowed Time, Green Christian's programme offering pastoral care in the climate and ecological crisis. It will be of particular value to those with responsibilities for pastoral care, worship and spiritual guidance in our churches.

Cloud and Fire is a contemplative Christian journey anchored in scriptural symbols and image. It is an invitation to make new meanings in the climate emergency. On this journey, one of our guiding motifs will be the Exodus of God's people from slavery, another theme will be the mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection.



Photo credit: Jason Wong on Unsplash

We want to refine Cloud and Fire before offering it to churches. Can you help us? We are looking for volunteers for our second pilot to be held in the autumn via Zoom. We would especially welcome those in a position of leadership and/or who provide spiritual guidance. If this resonates with you and you are in sympathy with our ethos, then do get in touch via the Borrowed Time pages on the Green Christian website ([borrowedtime.earth/join-in/contact-borrowed-time/](https://borrowedtime.earth/join-in/contact-borrowed-time/))

## Greenbelt

Green Christian members will be at Greenbelt's 2022 festival on the Green Christian stall. The Christian arts, faith and justice festival this year has the theme "Wake Up!" On our Green Christian stall, we will be considering how we can "Wake up!" to climate grief, sustainable food, a just economy and our Green Christian Way of Life with a different topic for each day. Revd Helen



Green Christian will be at Greenbelt

Photo credit: Joey Thompson

Burnett will lead a *Lament for the Earth* session in the Grove. If you are reading this at Greenbelt, come and visit us!

## Green Christian On the Road Together

We have three On the Road Together events in September which are open to all and give an introduction to Green Christian for anyone who is interested.

At Dronfield Baptist Church in Derbyshire on Sept. 3rd the meeting will include a nature walk through the Lea Valley Project.

At St Nicholas Church, Earley in Reading on St Francis Day Sunday 4th September, there will be a sermon slot in both their church services: at 8am, with Ruth Jarman (Green Christian's Information Officer) and at 10am, our co-Chair, Deborah Tomkins. These will be followed by a *Joy in Enough* workshop and LOAF lunch.

At St Luke's Parish Church in York, on the 10th September, during the Great Big Green Week, all are invited to a day of discussion, workshops, stalls and worship for Creation Season. There will be guest speakers from Green Christian and an interactive drama activity, *A Passion for the Earth* by Riding Lights theatre company. See the Green Christian website (under Activities tab) for more details and how to book.

For 2023 we are planning an On The Road Together event in Norfolk. Contact Howard Gardner [howardgardner@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:howardgardner@greenchristian.org.uk) for more details.



If you would like to set up an On the Road Together event at your church, please get in touch. We can help with providing speakers and leaders for workshops on topics such as Joy in Enough, the Green Christian Way of Life and Borrowed Time.

## Loss and Damage Day, 22nd September

Green Christian supports this global day, which calls for reparation from richer nations for climate damage in poor communities across the globe – those who have done little to cause the sufferings they now endure.



Photo credit: Claudia Van Zyl on Unsplash

Please join us for a **short contemplative prayer session on Zoom at 8am** at the start of the national day of action. This will be led by Green Christian Chaplain, Revd Andrew Norman and will use images as a focus for our prayers. Details and Zoom link on the Green Christian website.

For further information and ideas of actions you can take see the Church Together in Britain and Ireland website: [ctbi.org.uk/loss-and-damage-action-day-22-sept-2022/](https://ctbi.org.uk/loss-and-damage-action-day-22-sept-2022/)

## Call out for volunteers

Would you like to join Green Christian's Engagement & Inclusion Group? We need people to focus on one (or more) of the following roles:

- arranging more of Green Christian's regular online workshops.

- sharing Green Christian's thinking and resources with dioceses/districts/churches.
- increasing diversity in Green Christian's membership.
- assisting with arranging On the Road Together events as these happen.
- supporting another group member with engaging more younger adults (under 40s).

We meet together as a group three times a year on Zoom to share ideas, progress and feedback.

The Group's aims are:

- to increase engagement in Green Christian's aims and activities, especially by resourcing individuals and local initiatives or groups.
- to support the inclusion and encourage the contributions of a diverse range of people, especially those currently under-represented.

To express an interest or to ask any questions, please email the Group's convenor, Isobel, at [isobelmurdoch@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:isobelmurdoch@greenchristian.org.uk) or phone her on 01790 763603.

## New Harvest Resources

Harvest is a time to reflect on, and respond to our creative role and responsibilities within God's Creation. We have updated our harvest resources with two new Orders of Service for use at harvest festivals: one traditional and one contemporary. In the new resources, we seek to address contemporary food and farming concerns.

How our food is produced raises many issues relating to wildlife, human health, animal welfare and social justice. The wellbeing of UK farmers, too, needs to be addressed, with many on the margins of economic survival.

Harvest is a timely opportunity to communicate the LOAF principles within



Photo credit: Kate Remmer on Unsplash

your church – that where possible food should be Locally grown, Organically produced, Animal-friendly and Fairly traded. You may wish to consider arranging a Harvest Supper at which as much food and drink as possible has been produced according to the LOAF principles. You can order LOAF place mats and leaflets from us at: [resources@greenchristian.org.uk](mailto:resources@greenchristian.org.uk)

## Lent Appeal



Photo credit: Shutterstock

Thank you to all those who contributed to our "Rooted and Grounded" Lent Appeal. Thanks to your generosity, we have raised nearly £3000. Part of this is being used to provide travel bursaries for young people to come to our Building Back Greener conference.

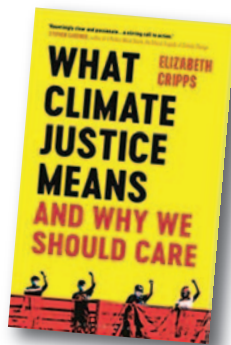
### Legacy

Leaving a legacy gift to Green Christian will help ensure the work we do lives on. When writing or amending your Will you need to make a note of our official name (which is still CEL), our registered address and our charity number:

Christian Ecology Link,  
35 Kitto Road, London SE14 5TW.  
Charity No. 328744.

## What Climate Justice Means and Why We Should Care

Elizabeth Cripps  
February 2022  
Bloomsbury  
ISBN 978-1472991812  
224 pages  
RRP £12.99 (paperback)



Elizabeth Cripps is a philosopher and ethicist who has been exploring issues of climate change and justice for over 16 years, including as a senior lecturer at the University of Edinburgh and as the author of *Climate Change and the Moral Agent: Individual Duties in an Interdependent World* (Oxford University Press, 2013), which makes the case for collective action on climate change and for individual responsibilities both to promote such action and to help those most harmed.

Her new book is addressed to a less academic audience, though it draws effectively and deeply from scholarly work in philosophy, politics, law and other disciplines. As a “philosopher’s toolbox”, it begins with the stark and shocking reality of existing climate injustice, and proceeds to examine and elucidate concepts of justice, capabilities, responsibility, privilege, intersectionality and the environmental principles of polluter pays, ability to pay, beneficiary pays and climate and ecological debt.

A persistent thread throughout the book is the insight that, “any climate policy makes assumptions: about what takes priority, who to protect, whose voice to take seriously.” The relationship between climate and other forms of injustice, especially racism, misogyny and the disregard for Indigenous experience, can be masked by lazy uses of “the Anthropocene” and perpetuated by the oppressive pseudo-solutions of geoengineering, population control and the “grandfathering” of inherited rights to emit. She also explores the issue of climate justice for non-human entities in a non-ideal world where it is already too late to fulfil the primary human responsibility, of non-interference with

other species and ecosystems.

Building on these philosophical foundations, she goes on to discuss what climate justice requires in terms of practical and political action, the principles of just transition and the ways in which international instruments such as the Paris Agreement fall short of delivering either justice or effective emissions reduction. She reminds us that a failure to act is not morally neutral but that not all action constitutes justice, highlighting what Annalisa Savaresi has described as “mitigation colonialisation” which excludes communities from decisions about their own place and future.

As its final chapter, the book asks *But What Can I Do?* The conclusion is holistic and multi-layered, recognising the value of personal action but reminding us that “what you do as an individual and what happens politically are not two separate spheres.” She advocates focusing on what we can achieve while working with others who share our concern about climate justice, accepting, where necessary, some degree of ongoing complicity, rather than seeking to live in pure but sterile isolation. Self-care matters, but we should not misuse the threat of burnout as an excuse to avoid significant personal cost. “Most of us living comfortable lives in affluent countries don’t need to know exactly how much we should do. Because we already know this: it’s more than we do now.” Climate justice, as this warm, readable and rigorous book illuminates, is desperately urgent, but neither simple nor self-evident. To do justice, with compassion, respect and effectiveness, requires appropriate language, concepts and arguments. The Christian tradition offers some of these, but we need also to build relationships, correspondences and conversations with secular actors who are seeking the same outcomes. Elizabeth Cripps’s wise, humane and unflinching vision dovetails with the Gospel imperative to active love, educating and challenging us to make that love a reality in a burning and broken world.

Tanya Jones

## Courting Chaos: Navigating the Ecological Crisis with the Help of Jeremiah

Kevin Durrant  
September 2021  
Resource Publications  
ISBN 9781666716221  
216 pages  
RRP £18 (paperback)



This is a richly layered book, drawing together the Biblical account of Jeremiah during the chaos of his times with today’s increasing climate, ecological and social chaos, and includes engaging and lively illustrations from art and poetry, as well as Scripture and history. Kevin Durrant looks at the big picture, and sees patterns that we would do well to heed. He begins by examining concepts of chaos, and ends with the hope in Jesus who was himself engulfed by the waters of chaos but overcame them.

Durrant examines along the way violence, the various iterations or interpretations of chaos, the purpose of prophecy (or of prophets), pain and lament, ultimate and proximate hope, action (whether hope-filled or not), our place within Creation, and the purpose of Scripture – amongst many other ideas.

When I began reading this book I made notes of striking quotations – ideas new to me, or particular images or parallels – but there are so many I soon gave up. This book is scholarly without seeming so, engagingly written and accessible to anyone interested in the subject. I recommend it.

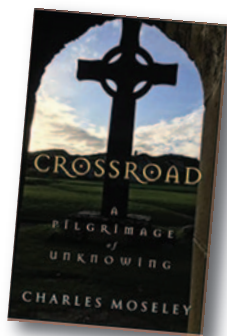
Kevin Durrant is a Baptist minister and a member of Green Christian. He led the Green Christian residential retreat at Launde Abbey in 2019, and is the author of *The Earth Will Teach You*.

Deborah Tomkins



## Crossroad: A Pilgrimage of Unknowing

Charles Moseley  
March 2022  
Darton, Longman  
and Todd  
ISBN 978-1-  
913657-86-4  
256 pages  
RRP £20 (hardback)



Do you ever start a book, attracted by the cover and the blurb inside, but after the first few pages feel tempted to give up on it? To be honest this is how I felt about this one. Initially I was drawn by its theme of pilgrimage, and specifically to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, and to the island of Iona, both important places of pilgrimage for me personally. But I was put off by the style in which it was written, which to me read as one man's rather personal journal, reflecting on six long walks which he had undertaken for reasons of his own. He refers to his religious practice, sometimes noting that he had stopped to sing the Angelus but without explaining what that is. He includes chunks of favourite poetry, some of which I found quite difficult, but without any references to their provenance. His wife pops up at various points, driving out to meet him, providing delicious sandwiches, and she is quaintly referred to as My Lady without being introduced to the reader. Trudging through one village and complaining about its tasteless Victorian villas he admits that he was getting to be a rather grumpy old man. I had already been thinking that for a while! But then I saw the gold shining and found after all the precious seam that runs throughout this book.

The author, Charles Moseley, is a successful writer and academic. He has achieved Fellowships of Cambridge colleges, the English Association, the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society of Arts. So the book is as beautifully written as one might expect. But in its pages he opens his heart. He lays bare his soul before God. Kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament in a Norfolk village church he asks: "How do we learn to love more?" – and then admits to the awful recognition of so

much self-love in his life. We cannot undo what we have done, he realises, but goes on to remember a certain wise woman who had once said to him: "Where there can be no cure, let there be healing."

As he walks through the countryside we can share his sense of the web of life and of being deeply at one with the birds and animals, trees and flowers which he takes time to stop and contemplate. I found these passages deeply rewarding. However the pages I marked, and will want to return to, are where he faces the suffering in nature and the way this contradicts the goodness of our Creator. He comes across a young foal which had fallen and bounced cruelly down a cliff and lay out of reach but clearly in terrible pain. He remembers other heart-wrenching moments. A sparrowhawk tearing a live blackbird apart. A humpback whale lying on a beach, holding her dead calf, scarcely alive and enduring her eyes being pecked out by gulls.

Here is a challenge we must face as Christians. Charles Moseley does so with honesty and great spiritual wisdom. It takes him to the Passion of Christ and then finally to realise the hard truth that dying is what we are made for, being necessary for life to flourish. Yet "opposites cleave to each other in a bond of universal love", he says, in "a cosmic harmony of endless giving and receiving." His book points to a treasure into which we are invited to dig for ourselves. By its last page I felt completely comfortable with his literary idiosyncrasies - and very glad I had persevered to the end.

Andrew Norman

## Science Geek Christy and her Eco Logbook

Petra Crofton  
September 2021  
Lion Children's  
Books  
ISBN 9780745979465  
160 pages  
RRP £8.99



This is a lively book aimed at upper primary children. 11-year-old Christy

and her close group of friends win an eco-holiday to Ecuador – but first comes the difficulty of how to get there. While there they have all sorts of adventures, discussions and dilemmas, and science-mad Christy keeps a diary of it all. There are even villains as well as wild animals!

The story showcases lots of environmental and climate issues, and also some of the solutions. I often wondered whether Christy sounded a little mature for a girl of that age – but my 11-year-old friend Lottie (see below) didn't think so. The book is also solidly rooted in Christianity, as Christy's dad is a vicar – various problems are worked out with the aid of Christian ethics. Christy is a strong-minded individual who really thinks things through, and also values her friends and family.

Lottie says: "I love this book because you dive right into the deep end of adventure and get carried away by a stream of curiosities and surprises".

Petra Crofton is a biologist and philosopher who has worked with the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and A Rocha. She leads outdoor children's and youth work at her local church and runs environmental education activities in the community and at primary schools.

Deborah Tomkins

## The Greatest Polar Expedition of All Time: The Arctic Mission to the Epicenter of Climate Change

Markus Rex, translated by Sarah Pybus  
June 2022  
Greystone Books  
ISBN 978-1-77164-948-3  
296 pages  
RRP £20 (approx, hardback)



In 1893 the great Norwegian polar

explorer and scientist, Dr Fridtjof Nansen, set off on a voyage in the *Fram* to travel as far north as possible using the Transpolar Ice Drift (*Farthest North*, 1897). Almost 125 years later, the German icebreaker *Polarstern* set out on the same route, its purpose being to examine the unique ecosystem of this region and to provide scientific data for climate modelling, in view of the fact that the Arctic is warming faster than anywhere else on Earth. The MOSAIC expedition, initiated by the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research, involved hundreds of scientists from around 80 institutions and 37 countries, whose mission was to live and work in the Arctic for a whole year, a feat never before achieved, given the inhospitable conditions and isolation of the region.

The book is in the format of a diary kept by Markus Rex, atmospheric scientist and expedition leader. It details the voyage of the *Polarstern* and the difficulties presented by thinning sea ice (as a result of climate change) in finding and establishing a base on a stable ice floe. Eventually one is found and the team set to work in setting up scientific laboratories which are referred to as “cities”. There are descriptions of dramatic shifts in the ice, polar bear intrusions, details of the scientific work undertaken and the unique beauty of the landscape itself. Lighter moments are provided when describing the close camaraderie of the team, the devising of entertainments and celebrations, showing they had fun as well as working hard. The expedition began in 2019, but was almost derailed by the pandemic in 2020 which put the whole enterprise in jeopardy. However, this was overcome by diplomacy and co-operation. Co-operation is at the heart of this story, with Russian icebreakers acting as the major supply ships and transfer vessels.

Having read Nansen's *Farthest North*, I was very much looking forward to this up-to-date version of the same voyage and I was not disappointed. It is written with humility, humour and great insight and knowledge, and its warning is stark. The ice is half the thickness it was in Nansen's day, and temperatures have risen by up to ten degrees. The

melting of the sea ice will impact not only all life forms and the people of the Arctic, but the whole planet. The scientific data presented in this book is a wake-up call that needs to be heeded by the international community and acted upon before it is too late.

Linda Wickham

## Contemporary ecotheology, climate justice and environmental stewardship in world religions



edited by Louk A. Adrianos and Tom S. Tomren  
December 2021  
Embla Akademisk  
ISBN 9788293689140  
345 pages  
RRP 39 euro (or download free from [oikoumene.org](http://oikoumene.org))

This major work is the most all-embracing and compelling study of ecotheology that I have read. It repays – and needs – careful reading and I strongly recommend it. The product of a conference at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, it has received the imprimatur of the World Council of Churches and is naturally much enriched by “Orthodox Creation thinking”.

The mandate for ecotheology, the study of God as if all Creation mattered, comes from the oft-overlooked third commandment of Christ, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole Creation” (Mark 16:15). This book contains articles, all worth reading, in three main sections: theological reflections, ethics and global contributions. Key themes include calls to love Creation as yourself and to recognise the role of human greed in bringing about the Anthropocene epoch. Christian traditions, including African, Pentecostal, Anglican, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, are at the heart of the book, but ecological insights drawn from Islam, Buddhism,

Shamanism and Hinduism are also celebrated.

Louk Adrianos's own piece analyses the retreat from the spiritual which epitomises the Anthropocene, including the ecological racism inherent in nuclear testing, with disastrous effects, in Indigenous areas. An unusual and illuminating contribution from Anastasia Fedoseeva and Alan S. Weber discusses the naming of Lake Baikal by some of the Buryat inhabitants as “Nature Lake”. It also describes the ways in which their practice of a combination of Shamanism, Christianity and Buddhism stands against human dominance and for self-denial and the sacred unity of all living beings. Seyed Masoud Noori and Maryamossadat Torabi write compellingly about climate-based apartheid, advocating action by world religions, while Edward Dommen celebrates ecotheological cooperation utilising concepts of stewardship, dignity, benevolence and the power of the Qi life force to integrate humans with nature.

The book is full of unusual insights and examples of practical initiatives both successful, including a fuel-saving cooking stove project by the Lutheran Church in Cameroon, and less so, such as their tree-planting initiative. It highlights points of difference, such as varying attitudes towards fossil fuel extraction and eco-colonialism expressed by Indigenous peoples. There are many specifically Christian insights, including reference to the Orthodox holistic vision of nature, in which Creation and the Creator have become one. Humankind's root problem is our denial of the sacramentality of Creation; accepting God's gifts in nature as signs of sacred things and insofar as they sanctify us, we meet St Thomas Aquinas's definition of a sacrament.

From the minute detail of the crib being a sign of God's lowly love to all Creation, to the high vision of the gathering up of “all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth under Christ” (Ephesians 1:10), this splendid assemblage of visions has a majestic coverage of the future of our joyous Gospel.

John Anderson



## Healing

Rest with me  
In this moment,  
As a leaf  
Floats gently downstream,  
Among diamonds of sunlight  
Returning to the sky.

Stay in these moments,  
As the morning mist  
Floats above the surface  
Of the lush, green meadows,  
On the far side of the stream.

Stay and listen  
To the morning song,  
Bringing music  
To the silence,  
A prelude gifted  
To the rising sun.

Walk with me  
On my journey,  
We will talk  
Of forgiveness  
And peace.

Chris Roe

## Earth Day Prayer

God of love and grace  
Through your presence  
you make all things Holy

We celebrate the  
sacredness of your Creation  
The sacredness of all living things -  
the earth, the seas,  
the skies

We acknowledge that  
the earth is yours,  
Given as a common  
treasury for all.

Grant us such openness  
to your presence that  
we may treat this,  
your planet, with  
reverence

That we may respect  
its limits and boundaries  
That we may share  
its goodness fairly  
and sustainably

God our creator, saviour and peace-giver,  
Teach us how to live  
In holy communion  
With you and with your world  
In Christ's name we pray  
Amen

by Rev Simon Topping (with permission)



# Green Christian Conference

The Priory Rooms, Birmingham B4 6AF

Oct 7th (evening online) Oct 8th (in-person), 2022

***“Building back greener? Christian perspectives on the future of our economy, money and work”***

Speakers:

Paul Kingsnorth, writer and environmentalist

Cat Jenkins, Joy in Enough

Christopher Southgate, theologian and scientist



With talks and workshops on creating a sustainable economy and a better future including:

- Tax Justice
- Money Makes Change
- Consumption and Advertising
- Rage Against the Machine
- Joy in Enough's *Plenty!*



Come and join us for a stimulating day of thoughtful discussion.

See the GC News pages inside for more details and visit our website to book a place. [greenchristian.org.uk/conference2022/](https://greenchristian.org.uk/conference2022/)



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