

Why Green Christian? What's the connection?

Clare Redfern, Editor

“Hello Clare, how are you? What are you up to these days?” said my neighbour Liz, standing in her front garden, removing moth larvae from her box hedge. She showed me the vivid green and yellow caterpillars, plump and squirming in her hand, savouring what was presumably going to be their last mouthful of leaves. I said that I was preparing a magazine called *Green Christian*. She frowned slightly and asked: “so there’s a link is there, between Christianity and green things?”

Ah, what to say? “Of course there’s a link!” I want to shout.

Creation cries out, say the psalmists (poetic licence or not) with trees singing for joy, the rivers clapping their hands and the heavens declaring the Glory of God! We are part of all that – all beings, all things – caterpillars, moths and box leaves included. Surely we must show care and reverence? Didn’t the Old Testament prophets call us to act with justice and mercy, and Jesus tell us to “Love our neighbour”? Isn’t this blindingly relevant to the suffering caused by climate change, by ecological degradation?

But I didn’t say that. I didn’t want to sound crazy! And she might feel guilty about the caterpillars.

However, this encounter prompted a back-to-basics look at “If Christian, why green?” drawing on contributions from Green Christian members. And I hope that the magazine as a whole demonstrates not only why, but how ordinary people and groups, motivated and informed by their faith are expressing their commitment to environmental action.

At a global level, calling for a diversity of voices in the debates, informed by people from the Majority World across Africa, Asia and South America, Israel Olufinjana calls for a proper emphasis on climate justice. This is highlighted too by Andii Bowsher in a summary of some key issues at the COP28 UN Climate Conference.

At national level, Ruth Musgrave joined the Big One protest and Jonathan Herbert describes involvement in direct action as a member of Insulate Britain, finding parallels with contemplative prayer. Deborah Tomkins speaks of local action through the work of churches and communities in Bristol. Individual choices in our lifestyle are important too and

Maria Nita explains why she has stopped eating meat and dairy products.

We open the magazine with a tribute to Julian of Norwich, in the 650th anniversary year of her visions. Veronica Mary Rolf finds a clear link between Julian’s visions and our current ecological crisis. Christ’s declaration to Julian that “all manner of thing shall be well” is not to appease our fear and indifference, but an affirmation, that, as Veronica puts it: “Christ may make all things well by teaching us how to renew what we have ruptured so radically.”

I hope that this issue of the magazine makes some clear connections for you and gives food for thought and encouragement in the outworking of your faith and concerns. I’m curious to see what Liz thinks of it too. ■



Clare Redfern,
Editor



Box tree caterpillar
(*Cydalima perspectalis*)
Photo credit: Shutterstock