

Thinking the unthinkable

Our front cover image, by Chidera Anyakora, offers us a joyful and fantastical vision of a world in harmony. In painting a picture where frogs perch on crocodiles' noses, where butterflies and sharks greet each other in a world of intermingled sea and sky, Chidera invites us to imagine flourishing co-existence; life with the passion of a beating heart at its centre.

Can we imagine a world transformed? Things going really well, not just for us as individuals but for the whole world. Generosity and grace in the policies made by governments, institutions and corporations, a repentance for past sins prompted by greed, distrust and fear; for an economy based on the worship of money. Maybe even Artificial Intelligence (with human "junk-code" added) assisting us with multiple benefits. Greenhouse gas emissions falling as fossil fuels are left in the ground and we change our ways of living and consuming; wildlife flourishing and biodiversity increasing.

In short, a vision of paradise, of right relationships restored. In our book reviews there is mentioned an "ancient Christian tradition that paradise is simply the world in its deepest reality". Could we reach out towards a reality deeper than the present one, where runaway

climate change looks increasingly likely (see Phil Kingston's sobering article), of escalating armaments and wars.

What is needed is surely beyond us – having messed things up this badly, is there still hope?

This issue, even as it grapples with tough themes, also contains encouragement to help us. Bishop Laurie Green at our reflective weekend in September spoke of how God's power is made perfect in our weakness – which is a relief! Church teaching, Laurie said, has often emphasised individualism and individual salvation allowing "structural sin" to be ignored.

Christians should certainly be active in citizenship and politically engaged, say Vanessa Elston and Ruth Jarman, and must advocate for radical policy change (such as outlined in the Climate and Nature Bill). Our Green Christian Churches Project, led by Melanie Nazareth, provides support to churches enabling them to be a stronger counter-cultural voice calling for effective change. Green Christian has also, for several years been developing resources to help in coming to terms with a sense of loss, grief and hopelessness; our *Deep Waters* programme, for example.

On first seeing our front-cover picture, words from *The Day of the Lord*, a song from the Iona Community's *Wild Goose Songs* came to mind. Here is paraphrased Isaiah's vision of shalom:

*The lamb with the lion shall lie, and the last shall be first;
And nations for war no more shall study or thirst.*

The last verse seems particularly apt:

*The day of the Lord shall come, but now is the time
To subvert earth's wisdom with Christ's folly sublime,
By loving the loveless, turning the tide and the cheek,
By walking beneath the cross in step with the weak.*

I hope this issue of Green Christian inspires you, with a trusting foolishness and faith, to imagine a different world. ■



Clare Redfern,
Editor

This issue contains two winning entries from the Columban Schools "Biodiversity Matters" art competition, held earlier this year. Young people, aged 13-18 years were asked to produce a piece of writing or image that demonstrates an awareness and understanding of the issue of biodiversity and highlight those trying to build a sustainable future.

Thanks to both Chidera Anyakora and Charlotte Moyes (see p12) for permission to use their stunning artwork.