

Give us today



This issue of *Green Christian* is about an alternative way of life.

The articles, without aggression or sense of superiority, set out ways of living which are an alternative to a culture which proclaims that there is only one way of living which works. That way is based on values which make ever-continuing economic growth the essential priority which brings with it the inevitable consequences. It brings a commitment to greed of the kind which makes false promises of happiness and security, violence towards the vulnerable, oppression of those who threaten to disrupt the status quo and a wholesale depletion and destruction of the planet.

Those who write the articles are not special people but they are mostly disciples of Jesus Christ. Their priority is the care and fostering of the whole created earth and they dare to suggest alternative ways to grow food, and to espouse an economy without growth. It is the work of disciples to subvert what is failing.

We are both disciples and citizens

But we are at the same time both disciples and citizens. 'We are summoned by what we understand to be the truth of God but at the same time tax-paying beneficiaries of the present culture'¹. The authors in this issue and those they represent surely believe that 'serious discipleship informs citizenship'¹, so in quiet or daring ways, in conventional or in imaginative ways to both talk and walk in alternative ways of living.

The bold endeavours included in this issue, from the small to the ambitious are part of a habit of life which refuses to believe that there is no other way. Whether it is the protest of the activist, the unacknowledged persistence of individuals and groups or the bold announcement of a new initiative, we refuse to be intimidated by the tired, worn out and failing culture of consumerism disorder.

In this way we follow in the footsteps of the early Church. "The early Christians who became known for their joyous public life together, filled with the Holy Spirit they refused the citizenship of business as usual"¹. So there arises a new initiative, Joy in Enough.

Joy in Enough

CEL announces its new initiative. Here we seek to empower ordinary people to understand that there are alternatives for an economic strategy which celebrate the flourishing of life free from the obligation to consume.

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The centre page pull-out introduces Joy in Enough, the initiative and invites you to Joy in Enough, the conference.

Give us today

Is it our lack of joy which tempts us to collude with a way of life which is destined to bring the destruction of the planet, or is it that the dysfunctional character of an economic system which requires infinite growth in a finite planet diminishes our power to find joy in

relationships and connections with the whole of the created world?

When we pray 'Give us today, our daily bread' we are subverting that system. We are not praying for more than enough, but enough. We are not praying for enough for just us; we are praying for enough so that there is enough for all. There is joy in enough for today. As we break the bread we share it. 'Worship without justice is a sham. We are disciples formed by the central purpose of Jesus' life – service to the poor, the hungry, the oppressed'². We have learned that this includes the whole earth community. 'Jesus' daily mission to serve the poor, the hungry, and the sick was not burdensome, because he was moved by a deep inner feeling and compulsion'². It was compassion.

That gift of compassion was given to the early church. To pray, 'Give us today.' is to pray for that gift, so that the faith we talk about is not a form of words or a good proposition, rather it is 'a habit of life that simply(!) refuses the totalizing claims of power'¹. This serious joyfulness. ■

I acknowledge the assistance and inspiration of a new book,

1. *Truth Speaks to Power*, by Walter Brueggemann, Westminster John Knox Press, 2013 and an old book,
2. *Broken Bread and Broken Bodies* by Joseph Grassi, Orbis Books, 1985.

Chris Walton