

Valuing the Earth



From left:
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and Production Editor
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If you're reading *Green Christian* magazine for the first time you might be wondering what this organisation does, who runs it and what's the point? Even if you've been a member for a while, the questions might still resonate! Back in February, the Steering Committee took time out to ponder these matters; Paul Bodenham, our Chair summarizes the conclusions in a special insert in this issue.

One thing we aim to be is a community of encouragement for people who care for the Earth. We have helpful resources: information leaflets for example on sustainable food (the LOAF guide) and *Living Gently on the Earth*. Also on the website are our prayer guide, blog posts, sermons and book reviews. Through workshops, retreats, and local group events (see page 20) there are opportunities to learn, connect and reflect. We seek to foster an active and effective spirituality that finds expression in prayer, public witness and

practical action. The Way of Life meeting described on p11 is one example of this.

Green Christian also initiates projects such as Joy in Enough, which is promoting an alternative to our current, growth-dependent economic system. All these activities are volunteer-led and open to more support and collaboration. Why not come along to the Annual Members Meeting, this November in Sheffield, or our retreat in Suffolk in June (details on back page) to find out more?

The magazine is a place for sharing insights and inspiration from within Green Christian membership and without. In this issue we have a focus on ecology and biodiversity. We continue to examine the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, with Edward Echlin looking at parallels between its teaching and the vision of Green Christian. The Pope describes how our consumerist "throw-away culture" is destroying both natural habitats and the livelihoods of

communities round the globe. Richard Solly, who works, with the London Mining Network, to protect the rights of indigenous people from the actions of powerful mining corporations, gives a poignant account of this.

Sir Ghillean Prance, a GC patron, reports back from a recent trip to Amazonia on the urgency of preserving this amazing habitat, a home for innumerable species, also so vital as a carbon sink. Another botanist, our website officer, Judith Allinson recalls both African rainforests and her everyday adventures with plants in the Yorkshire Dales. "The more people appreciate wildlife, the more they will want to save it." she says and provides helpful pointers for doing both.

But how do we value the Earth and all it provides? Nigel Cooper and Hilary Marlow explore this question from very different angles, Nigel in terms of the cost-benefits of "ecosystem services" and Hilary drawing on wisdom found in the Old Testament. Here is advocated an economy based on justice, generosity and praise, as the source of blessing for the Earth and all its inhabitants.

An environmental spirituality finds God in all things; for Christians all created things are united in Christ. Paul Ballard explains how the communion table, or Eucharist, celebrates not only our life in Christ but our relationship with all of Creation, the whole Earth community. In the bread and wine, we bring offerings from "this broken world, calling out with us for healing and renewal", which are broken, blessed and given back to us "as food in the struggle."

As Ed Echlin, echoing the Pope, affirms: "The human family... is capable of what is true, good and beautiful". Green Christian is a community grappling with the difficult truths – of climate chaos, of habitat destruction, the brokenness of our world and our lives, but growing together in Christ to bring healing and hope. Why don't you join us?

African Proverb
"Those who travel alone, travel fast;
those who travel together, travel far"

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Mike Clifford suggests that we should add a fourth R to the three Rs of Reduce Reuse Recycle, namely Repair.

When I occasionally give talks to small groups about being more environmentally friendly, I end with seven Rs, which are, in order of importance:

- Rejoice - in all the good things God has given us for free.
- Refuse - to believe the advertiser's message
- Reduce - the amount of stuff you buy (things you do, places you travel)
- Rent - borrow or share instead of buying new
- Reuse
- Repair
- Recycle - this is a last resort because recycling something still uses a lot of energy.

and again I say, Rejoice!

yours sincerely,
Louise Cook
Purley

[And we would like to add another R - Rest (Editors)]