

EVERYBODY by now must have heard of the Green Movement; and a majority can have some degree of sympathy with its aims to achieve a more just distribution of the world's wealth, to replace destructive large-scale industrialism with smaller-scale and sustainable production methods, and to accord primary importance to human and animal welfare and protection of the environment in the governance of affairs.

Recent revelations¹ of genetic damage and chronic illness caused by uranium mining and the burning of brown coal in the "Black Triangle" of southern East Germany and northern Czechoslovakia will have reinforced the message.

We also have frequent warnings² of the more insidious dangers that will follow the damaging of the ozone layer and the upsetting of the natural balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Evidently something will have to be done; and the Green Movement is in the forefront of those demanding urgent action.

For such demands to be effective, in the sense of promoting more responsible attitudes among both governments and governed, it is desirable that movements with similar aims should combine their efforts, speak with a universal voice, and reduce discordances to a minimum.

Tim Cooper is a pioneer in this kind of work, having helped to found Christian Ecology Link, of which he is now Joint National Coordinator, and having been a prominent member of the Green Party for more than ten years.

His reasons for believing in the feasibility of a combination of Christians and Greens to promote a secure future for the planet and its inhabitants are such as, at first sight, to encourage some confidence. After all, both bodies of people profess a concern, not only for human life, but for all life.

They also have long-term objectives, unlike the short-sighted expediency that is so much in evidence among those who at present make decisions on our behalf.

In principle too, the one, as the other, rejects material values and their ultimate expression in military conflict. Unfortunately, however, Tim Cooper's own text reveals an area of weakness, in that some Christian attitudes and material interests conflict with Green policy. Some Greens, for example, have actually blamed Christians for the situation they deplore, saying that it has been brought about by too ready an endorsement of the Old Testament doctrine of man's supremacy over the rest of creation.

Tim Cooper concedes that there is justice in this accusation, and admits that some Christians even regard material success, however achieved, as a sign of divine favour. He also feels, nevertheless, that René Descartes, who "thought human beings to be unique by virtue of their mind and spirit", must take some of the blame.

Tim Cooper himself would temper the doctrine of "supremacy" with that of "stewardship", saying that man is responsible to God for taking good care of the earth. Confronted with the question of why God permits us so blatantly to abuse our trust, he claims that God "retains coercive power at His disposal, which He may or may not choose to use".

The further question of why God permits suffering, he answers as follows: "The most likely explanation is that there were the same processes of life and death prior to the fall but that no suffering was actually felt by any creature".

Evidently there are many Christians who would still find no dif-

Just how Green Christians?

DAVID REDFEAR reflects on the new book of pioneering TIM COOPER

ficulty in accepting such rationalizations; but how many Greens, or potential Greens, would welcome them as allies?

An alternative frame of reference, based on observation of the geological record rather than of faith in chapters 2 and 3 of the Book of Genesis, will follow more naturally after a consideration of Tim Cooper's discussion of the question of land reform.

BOTH HE and the Green Party are firmly of the opinion that the land is "the main source of an unjust distribution of wealth". He writes "There is grave injustice in many countries because land is concentrated in the hands of very few people."

This is where the material interests of the Church of England conflict with Green policy; for "..... most Church land is owned by the Church Commissioners in order to pay the clergy."

"Its landholding totals over 10,000 acres, making it one of the nation's largest owners of agricultural land. According to the Church Commissioners, 'as a charity our first duty is to get a proper return on our investment. Because of this, environmental issues have to be at the margin.'"

They also have urban holdings, as for example the site of the Metro-Centre in Gateshead, which has an annual turnover of about £350m.

The rent of this land, or the return to the Church over and above the various employers' wages bill, and the return on their capital investment, represents a considerable unearned income for the Commissioners.

They may be ready to consent to Tim Cooper's solutions to the land question — namely, "compulsory purchase, inheritance tax or wealth tax" — for they could avoid all three but they would fight to the last ditch to defend themselves against Henry George's³ solution of confiscating the rent for public revenue.

Curiously enough, Tim Cooper fails to mention this policy, although it has appeared on the agenda of more than one Green Party conference.

TIM Cooper's plea to Christians to work for Green objectives has involved him in the difficulty of explaining why God permits man to neglect his duties of stewardship over the earth. There is an alternative statement of man's origin, nature and destiny that renders such an explanation superfluous, and generally gives a better account of the world as it is.

Tim Cooper shows his awareness of it in a passing reference to

Tim Cooper, *Green Christianity: Caring For The Whole Creation*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1990. £5.99.

Darwin, who, "... from apes, point to animals". One might object since Darwin

Anthropologist within the last fifty years from it.

A well-documented ancestors, understood to a carnivorous hands for the world

Then, their ingenuity rapidly alternatingly possess the big brains

Unfortunately, other well-documented private property; held in common dominance with superior territory neighbours when behaviour detrimental for individuals or

It is not hard to see a situation that the what they are, and fact that, being newcomers to 100,000,000 years

Let us also acknowledge brilliantly adapted themselves are animal instincts.

Having got so individual except and to help others for such a reason

This reservation book as an expensive valuable information mentally-friendly

It is also only those of an individual whatever their role land reform, the his. Some of the

REFERENCES

1. Nick Thorpe *East Friesian Ice That Fuelled Cold* 24th June 1990.
2. "Global Warming: A