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ecological world view. So, maybe one cannot start over after all? Perhaps not. But the Christian faith tells us that 'with God all things are possible'. The Christian faith confronts us with the reality of the Kingdom of God as a central orientation, where God's rule is to be obeyed.

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Environment and Youth

Chris Seaton¹

Many young Christian adults in Britain today find themselves in an invidious situation. Their culture seeks serious answers to questions like, 'How should we understand the environmental crisis and what can we do about it?' The world view of their peers is dominated by the subtle (but apparently green) philosophies of the New Age movement like relativism, reincarnation, and pantheism. Yet their churches provide them with few answers and warn them away from the Green Movement, fearing that it is completely contaminated by New Age ideas. Little wonder, then, that the church in the United Kingdom is losing thousands more teenagers each year than it is attracting.

In the midst of this dark picture there are some bright lights. One such light is Revelation Church in West Sussex. It was formed in 1983 from a youth group of eighteen teenagers and now has over 500 regular attenders in six congregations. The average age is currently twenty-nine years.

The Bible provides many instances of young people whom God has anointed to offer leadership and example to the church, Joseph, Samuel, Mary, Timothy, and Ruth being but a few. Indeed, to Timothy, Paul wrote, 'Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers' ([1 Tim. 4:12](#)). Such an example has been set by the Revelation Church and many other local churches and groups associated with the 'Whose Earth?' project in 1992.

Revelation Church did not become actively involved in environmental action until one of its leaders, Chris Seaton, was asked to write a book for young people on the subject early in 1991.² Soon after this, the church became involved in a Spring Harvest initiative in association with TEAR Fund called 'Whose Earth?'. This project was established to educate young people about the biblical teaching on the creation and provide practical ways in which they could respond to the Bible in their lifestyles and in community action.

¹ Taken from a paper prepared by Chris Seaton and Lowell Sheppard.

² *Whose Earth?* (Crossway Books, 1992). While the book is neither intended nor endorsed as the official book of the 'Whose Earth?' project, it carries much of its theology, heart and ethos.

The first within Revelation Church to get involved was a youth group based in the Chichester congregation called 'Nutty 2000'. Nutty is composed of twenty to thirty new Christians, many converted from [p. 285](#) drug- and alcohol-abusing backgrounds, all aged between fourteen and twenty-one. The story began in May 1992, when Nutty's leader, Greg Valerio, invited Chris Seaton to speak to the group on the subject of a Christian response to the environment. On this occasion, both the biblical basis of the issue and the 'Whose Earth?' project were presented to the group.

In response, four particular projects emerged that revolve around the 'Whose Earth?' theme, two relating to Nutty and two of wider impact. The first idea was taken from the 'Whose Earth?' resource pack and involved a can collection scheme. Nutty collected 2000 aluminium cans from around the streets and public places of Chichester and sold them to a recycler. In addition to collection on the streets, local public houses were approached to save all the cans usually thrown away, with a promise of weekly collection by members of Nutty. The proceeds gained from the recycling project were passed on to environmental projects in the Third World via TEAR Fund.

Secondly, in August 1992, Nutty organized a sponsored clean-up of the local River Lavant. This dried stream was the subject of a dispute between the local Council and the water authority that resulted in no one removing litter from its river-bed. Funds were raised according to the number of sacks of debris filled, and a press release was sent to the local media. Members of Nutty brought unbelieving friends along to help with this task.

Thirdly, Revelation Church was determined not to allow the initiative of 'Whose Earth?' to be a flash in the pan and for the environmental emphasis to lose momentum after September 1992. As part of a wider social initiative known as Christian Citizenship, Chris Seaton chaired a 'Green Task Group' that prepared teaching materials and taught them in all six congregations in October and November 1992. This group has also prepared a Green Audit for church members and the church office (no building is owned) and is helping to organise a major evangelistic 'Creation Celebration' to be held in Chichester in summer 1993. This is seen as the third specific response to 'Whose Earth?'.

Finally, Greg Valerio—who works with Revelation Church and is funded by TEAR Fund as a development educator along the South Coast, has approached a school in Bognor Regis about using the 'Whose Earth?' resource pack as part of the PSE/RE syllabus. The response from the head of RE, whose world view is decidedly New Age, has been surprisingly favourable!

'Whose Earth?' held a major event in Hyde Park, London on 5th September 1992. Three thousand young people—including Nutty [p. 286](#) 2000 from Chichester—came along to hear about one another's activities, to debate the issues, and to worship the God of creation. Backed up by the credibility of effective action, the culturally relevant question, 'Whose Earth is it anyway?' was answered unequivocally, 'the Earth is the Lord's!' ([Psalm 24:1](#)).

Mr. Christopher M. Seaton, trained in the legal profession, now works in England doing leadership training for three church plants, is part of the Executive committee of *Whose Earth?*, and has written a book by the same title for young people.