

CHRISTIANS AWAKENING TO A NEW AWARENESS (CANA)

Founded by the Bridge Trust

News & Views

Summer 2009

Christians Awakening to a New Awareness CANA) is a network of people exploring the emergence of humanity's next evolutionary step for which Jesus has paved the way. This requires us to risk living co-creatively through attunement to the ONE.

CANA offers people nurture and companionship in their process of awakening and the opportunity to find a commonality with others on a similar continuing journey.

Our collective journey has no set goal. The reality of our unity may be seen to develop. But the essential nature of our journey is one of continuing exploration.

Everyone's contribution is a valued part of the whole and none is dispensable. As we leave behind the language and interpretations of the past, we are challenged to find new expressions of the emerging vision.

CANA recognises that we are all one through that of God within us from whatever background we come.

CANA is a group where risk becomes safe through trust and where exploration is key.

Inside this issue

CANA Iona Retreat	2
Reflections on Living Spiritually	5
End of Year Accounts	5
The Student Christian Movement is 120!	6
Our Next Evolutionary Step	7
Diary Dates	8

LETTER FROM JANICE DOLLEY

'A universal human is one who is connected through the heart to the whole of life, attuned to the deepest intelligence of nature and called forth irresistibly by spirit to creatively express his or her gifts in the evolution of self and the world. Above all, a universal human has shifted identity from the separated egoic self to the deeper self that is a direct expression of service. To become a universal human is to evolve consciously, choosing a path of development that has never been mapped before, in a world that has never existed before.'

Barbara Marx Hubbard

'Emergence' is the title of the book from which this quote is taken and much is certainly emerging in humanity at this time. Publicly the hidden shadows are emerging into the light for all to see and collectively transform – be this in banking, politics, religion or business. At a personal level the buried essence of the ages is also emerging and is being understood and expressed in new ways.

On our recent pilgrimage to Iona the energy of the ancient landscape touched everyone in its loving embrace. Iona is certainly a place where it is easier to be *'attuned to the deepest intelligence of nature'* and *'connected through the heart to the whole of life'*. It is a place which can create within us new frontiers of inner perspective which take us a step further on our collective journey of emergence into another stage of evolution.

This seems to be a common theme at present and if it is one that calls you then do join us to engage with Fr. Diarmuid O'Murchu on September 26 in London on 'Our Next Evolutionary Leap'. This is a rare chance to be with someone who embodies the impulse that is moving many at this time.

As a CANA group on Iona we were able to connect innerly with the spirit of St Columba and his monks. They seem to have left behind in Iona some radiant essence of early Christianity before it was overlaid with 'churchianity', an essence which is emerging powerfully today. We hope that as a group we were able to create an inner chalice which can hold this essence so that it can fly like the doves of spirit into open hearts and minds everywhere.

On our first afternoon half of the group walked to find the hermit's cell where St Columba had so often prayed. Guided by Janet Lake, who had lived on Iona previously, we made our way over boggy, rocky and challenging ground. It was a remarkable experience of a loving, unified consciousness flowing between all those involved. When we reached the cell we sat in a circle to meditate together. Almost immediately I saw, with inner sight, a flock of white doves rising into the air from the middle of the group and flying off into the direction of England. I was reminded how the dove is so associated with Columba who brought to England a new expression of spirit. It was a dove who brought the signs of new life to Noah as the waters receded from the ark he had built to withstand the floods. A dove was also seen to descend on Jesus at the time of his baptism, signifying the awakening capacity of a human being to receive and fully embody the Christ Consciousness.

On another occasion a member of the group saw that the room in which we were meeting was full of angels and that Jesus was standing in the middle of the circle. Other dimensions of being are certainly with us and it is for us to lift up our eyes and work willingly to co-create a new 'ark of consciousness' in which all humanity might shelter and gestate our next evolutionary step.

of our emergence into a universal human is the sense of ourselves as being in a

place of both universality and particularity at the same time. We begin to glimpse a deeper understanding of how Jesus was referred to as the 'son of man' and the son of God'. So too are we and maybe we are at the early stages of realising it. Some may say that this is blasphemous - as the 'authorities' said to Jesus - but he demonstrated the full integration of his soul with all aspects of his personality and the alignment of his soul with his essential, or God-self. He first showed how potentially 'you and I are one even as the Father and I are one'. So much in daily life – our thoughts, activities, emotional demands – keep us from awakening to who we truly are – a universal human. Humanity is on this journey of awakening and as it says in the piece by Christopher Fry that was read during the retreat, '*the enterprise is exploration into God. It takes so many thousand years to wake but will you wake, for pity's sake?*'

This is a time to realise who we truly are and why we have chosen to be on the earth at this time when chaos and great challenges are messengers to wake up all humanity. We already know that the 'I am' presence is within us and if we can let go of fear and follow intuitive prompting we can use our energy, our gifts and skills to make a difference. The whole higher world is there around us – we only have to ask for help. Perhaps our experience on Iona has helped a sufficient number of us to step into 'the upper room' of higher consciousness, or expanded awareness, from which we can co-evolve with each other and with the cosmos. Together we are being called to co-create new patterns and paths into '*a world that has never existed before*'.

Janice Dolley

CANA IONA RETREAT 2009

I exist in a web of relationships – links to nature, people, God. I trace out these links, giving thanks for the life that flows through them.

From the website *Sacred Space*



Thirty four members of CANA gathered in Iona in May. We experienced wonderful fellowship, all sorts of weather and the particular closeness to nature one finds on a Scottish island. Fellow pilgrims were asked what stood out for them during our stay there and they sent the following impressions:

- What stood out for me – apart from the air, hills, rocks and spirituality of Iona – was the CANA group, so different, so sharing of a commonality difficult to describe. **Denise Moll**
- the island has a powerful voice, addresses directly, makes demands, changes one. **Sheila Simpson**
- the times of meditation, going in deep with the group, feeling part of the whole on that old and sacred island.. It was lovely to meet you, and all the others too.. I shall never forget it. **Jill Henderson**
- thinking about it all made me realise how lucky I was to be in Iona for the first time with a group like CANA; with so many people on the same network, having time to talk and to

reflect while walking through that amazing island. I found the culmination in that wonderful closing ceremony incredibly moving. **Judy Turner**

- it is a case of real withdrawal symptoms – it is difficult to summarise too – it was such a wonderful week – there is so much I could say – I had such a great time. Had I really never met any of the other 33 amazingly friendly and interesting people – I can't believe it!

Janet Bell

- an experience at the Abbey (when) we were invited to become like little children and to show our commitment to Christ by picking up a duplo block (big Lego) from a box in the nave and taking it to the Altar where we corporately built a duplo structure. It was such a simple liturgy but accompanied by scripture read in several languages it was a powerful and moving experience. **Rachel Hetherington**

- What impressed me most was the lovely long walk led by Janet on the Thursday afternoon, especially the experience of collecting serpentine pebbles at St Columba's Bay.

Rosemary Arthur

- **Celia Storey** remembered 'Janice's wonderful meditation at the hermit's cell of the doves being in the centre and flying out into the world and our final grounding and sending out of the light on Friday 1st May'.

- Another memory of the hermit's cell brings tears of laughter to **Wendy Sedgwick**: 'My abiding memory will be becoming aware of seven sheep staring curiously over the lip of the hermit's cell while we three humans sat motionless on their patch'.

My own memories are of the view of the mountains of Mull from the windows of the room where we gathered together: one moment they would be blue like the sea, then a squall of rain would blow up and they would turn black and grey, and in one magic moment the highest mountain was illuminated in a shaft of sunlight like a vision of the Holy City:

How the valley awakes ...

Here is an unspeakable secret:

Paradise is all around us and we do not understand ...

'Wisdom,' cries the dawn deacon, but we do not attend.

There were other images which remain with me: the doves that Janice saw in her mind's eye when we were all sitting in the hermit's cell and the images evoked in our discussions of light and dark and the need to befriend and integrate our own darkness, our own shadow stuff, so that we don't project it onto other people.

A kaleidoscope of memories, a pattern of connections building up all over the UK – everyone I met on Iona seemed to have news of other people I had met, not necessarily through CANA. This left me with many questions: How can we build on this experience? What will be CANA's role in the future? The world seems so much in need of 'elders' who have time to reflect and pray instead of rushing into action. Is there some way in which, collectively, we can fulfil this kind of role?

One answer might be found in a piece by Patricia Diane Cota-Robles sent to me by Celia Storey about the month of May being a very powerful time of year when we have an opportunity to help clear the negativity which is surfacing in our world. Were we beginning tentatively to do something like this in Iona? Jean Cheeseborough's comments seem very pertinent to this. She remembers: 'the joy I felt in knowing that during our going deeper into our meditations, prayers and communion together we were able to send so much light out into the world and make a difference'.

Judy Hanmer

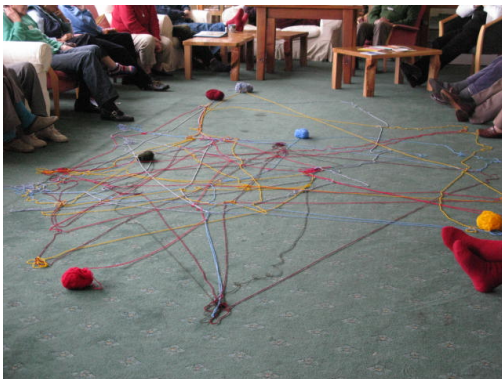
IONA CONTINUED: The following is adapted from a letter written by Celia Storey to a CANA member who was unable to be present.

CANA on Iona – 28 April-2 May 2009

Did I ever send you a post card from Iona? I fear not although it seemed very much as though you and other long term CANA friends were there with us through our four days there. What a gathering there was...34 in all.

Janet Lake gave the first talk. She had been living on Iona and joined us when CANA had our last pilgrimage there. She spoke about her inner journey during the two years she had lived on the island and the nurturing power of nature.

On the first afternoon we walked over to the hermit's cell. It was very boggy and a difficult journey for some but, thanks to each one helping the other, we all got there and settled down for a meditation within the cell walls. Janice had a powerful vision where she saw the centre of our circle filled with doves; after a time the doves rose and dispersed in all directions. It felt that as St Columba had with his monks on Iona developed a teaching that his monks were able to take out into Britain, we also could consolidate a new impulse to be sent into the world.



Sue Howard gave us an exercise by inviting us to create a net or mesh by throwing different coloured balls of wool to someone on the other side of the circle. Gradually we all became connected but often through different threads..... It did make the point of how, in our own way and following our own path, each one of us is somehow connected to the whole. Many of us had met before but even those new to CANA felt connected. Gradually the mesh of intent is growing. Change comes about through the 'densing' of the intent (the hundredth monkey etc).

It seemed to be an important time of consolidating our work, of truly grounding the Holy Spirit in each one of us to individually bring about change in the way we are each called. Denise Moll spoke about Joyce Pearce of The Ockenden Venture and how she had been asked by the government to place 300 Vietnamese children with only about a week to arrange it. She had said 'yes' and with the aid of publicity all that was needed, housing, cots, babies bottles, prams and carers was in place by the time they arrived. She believed that if it was God's will all that was needed would be provided.

Janice Dolley, Kate Porteous and Jane Ozanne gave excellent presentations enlarging the idea and at the end of the last morning we as a group did a meditation envisaging the Holy Spirit or 'that of God within each one of us' that it might act through us and those who will receive throughout the world. One person told me afterwards that she had seen our circle filled with angels and she and another had seen Jesus standing in the centre.

Sadly, religion has been used to control the masses when surely Jesus' message was to empower the masses to act individually and as one body connected to the over arching power for good. We are a very small part of the great change that I believe is coming about...

Celia Storey

EDITORS NOTE

This edition has focussed on the CANA retreat on Iona. Several articles have been held over for the next edition which will be produced earlier than usual. Adrian Smith has kindly agreed to collect further articles, so please send them to him. [Address on page 8]

REFLECTION ON LIVING SPIRITUALLY BY CATIE SHARPLES

I have written several versions of this reflection, as my thoughts on living spiritually evolve regularly, and any written piece soon becomes outdated. This reflection is influenced by a book I am reading at the moment, **“Awakening Consciousness: Selected Lectures of Sir George Trevelyan”** compiled by Keith Armstrong (2008, Oxford: Godstow Press). I highly recommend this book if you are looking to be challenged in your thinking on spirituality and the new awareness that CANA is about.

I live a very busy life as wife, mother, and full-time homeopath. I fail to make much time for meditation, prayer, and “spiritual practice”. But it is impossible to separate the spiritual from the mundane in our everyday lives. We are created in the image of God, the Trinity, body, mind (soul) and spirit. *“The true entity of man is a spiritual being, ageless, eternal and indestructible”* (Trevelyan, p. 231). So everything I do is done as a spiritual being, it’s just that much of the time, I am not aware of it!

In the centuries following Christ’s descent to earth, and even before that, it was known that man was a spiritual entity in a universe spiritual in its essential nature, and in order to live upon earth he had to take to himself a physical body. This consciousness was gradually lost, and in 869AD the Pope, at the Council of Constantinople, decreed that from henceforth it was heresy to speak of people as body, soul and spirit. We were to be spoken of only as body and soul, with our soul having certain spiritual attributes. Our task now, at this time of reawakening, is to re-gain that former conscious awareness of our spiritual essence. Awareness is the key!

If I look with awareness, I see magic in the little events of my daily life. When I live with awareness, conscious of the present moment, I seem to give people what they need to know, and I speak from my heart rather than from my head. I speak from the stillness and tranquillity of my higher self, rather than from the anxiety and fearfulness of my lower self. Practices that help me to act with awareness are sitting quietly to centre myself (brief attempts at meditation), asking for help and guidance from God and angelic beings, and being conscious of the creative power of my thoughts.

Human beings are at the point where evolution becomes conscious of itself. Let us learn to live with the awareness that we are truly spiritual beings, a droplet of the Divine Source, and part of the eternal and timeless world of Spirit.

The following words from Christopher Fry’s *A Sleep of Prisoners* so aptly urge us to awaken now to a new level of consciousness:

Thank God our time is now when wrong
Comes up to meet us everywhere,
Never to leave us till we take
The longest stride of soul men ever took.
Affairs are now soul size.
The enterprise
Is exploration into God.
Where are you making for? It takes
So many thousand years to wake
But will you wake for pity’s sake?

END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS – 2008

The Core Group were pleased to learn at the end of our last financial year that our finances were still standing around the three thousand mark at £3,218.39. This was £213 higher than the previous year. We owe this to having had a good response at our various conferences and to the wonderful help of members of the Core Group who have often given their valuable time free of charge.

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that, despite having thought otherwise due to a deficit of just over £1,000 on the Iona Pilgrimage, our accounts at this present moment are still in the £3,000 area. We knew we were taking a risk by booking the whole hotel on Iona but it seemed important to ensure our privacy in the main reception room. Unfortunately, after we had worked out the amount to charge, the hotel came up with two extra rooms, neither of which we were able to fill.

Thank you for your continued support.

Celia Storey (treasurer)

THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IS 120!

2009 sees the 120th anniversary of the founding of the Student Christian Movement, one of the very first ecumenical organisations and a pioneer over more than a century of open-minded, critically engaged Christianity. The influence of SCM has spread beyond the student world as throughout the 20th Century people who had their spiritual, political and social formation in the movement took those values forward into careers in the church, the ecumenical movement and wider society.

There are two phrases that we have carried with us from the early days of SCM. The first is that as Christians we should “hold the Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other”, being fully engaged with contemporary social and political issues while at the same time encouraging an intelligent open-minded approach to scripture. The second is that there is something about SCM in every generation that strives to be “Church ahead of the Church” – a prophetic voice and an inclusive community where those who find themselves on the margins of the Church can feel welcomed and accepted.

Today’s SCM is a student-led community passionate about faith and justice, envisioning Christianity as inclusive, aware, radical and challenging. At a time of growing secular and religious intolerance the message and role of SCM on university and college campuses is as important as ever. Not only the world of education, but the church, the ecumenical movement and wider society need to hear the voices of thoughtful, engaged young people who take questions of faith and justice seriously.

At a recent thanksgiving service at Manchester Cathedral, Tim McClure (former General Secretary of SCM) reminded us of SCM’s roots and why we must keep saying ‘yes’ to the invitation to love. He gave us this challenge:

“If SCM really is “Church ahead of the Church” – we are called to make the Kingdom a lived reality within the new community, thus to become a model for the whole of God’s world. Why?

- Because a fragmented world needs to learn how to live with integrity while affirming diversity and difference.
- Because a culture obsessed with celebrity and wealth needs the challenge of another culture where humility and un-self-regarding generosity are more highly prized.
- Because a world where hunger, poverty and disease are perpetuated by economic structures loaded in favour of the rich and overfed needs a community that will champion justice, fair trade and the responsible use of the environment.
- Because a world where many search for spiritual meaning needs a community which can introduce them to the love that lies at the heart of the universe.”

Throughout this Jubilee year 2009 and into 2010 we will be reflecting on SCM’s roots and exploring our purpose and mission in today’s context. We want to listen to the experiences of other groups working for social change and radical inclusivity and we will be encouraging students to explore their own sense of vocation.

We invite those of you who share our aims to support our 120th Jubilee Appeal which aims to develop and expand our work by increasing the movement’s regular income from individual supporters. Visit the SCM website at www.movement.org.uk/jubilee or phone 0121 200 3355 for more information, and help us ensure that future generations of students are able to benefit from the same opportunities as those of the last 120 years!

Article provided by The Student Christian Movement

CANA NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

You can save paper and postage by asking for this newsletter to be sent by e-mail. If you would like to do this please email celiastorey@aol.com and she will ensure that you are added to the list. This will also give you the advantage of receiving your newsletter slightly sooner than by post.

OUR NEXT EVOLUTIONARY LEAP

It has never been like this before, for evolution progresses moment by moment, and no other humans have stood where we stand today. This is our threshold and these are our times and only now has it become clear that our survival is dependent on our spiritual awakening.

These words of Jan Phillips (*The Art of Original Thinking*) are worthy of meditation.

It is a mistake to think this is the end of the evolutionary procession. There is evidence today that humanity is breaking through to the next great leap: a leap into a new consciousness. But what is the evidence that this is already occurring? Even in 1972 Fr. Bede Griffiths wrote to a friend: “I feel that we are on the eve of a breakthrough in consciousness, of a new wave of civilisation.”

In theological terms we can notice in our Judeo-Christian tradition three great eras, each of two thousand years. From Abraham (taken to be the first historical figure in the Jewish Testament) to Jesus was the two thousand year period of God (whom today we name Father). Then followed two thousand years of predominance given to Jesus the Christ – even to the extent that what he spoke of as the Kingdom of God came to be wrongly identified with the Church. Today we enter into the age of the Spirit.

One cannot help noticing how these Trinitarian Ages match the two thousand year periods of the astrological ages. When Abraham was inspired to leave Ur of the Chaldees, about 2000 BC, he was moving not only from one land to another but from the worship of the winged bull of the Egyptian era (the Age of Taurus) to initiate the next great age, that of Aries the Ram. Rams feature throughout this period from that which he sacrificed in place of his son to the sheep of the Temple sacrifice. The birth of Jesus the Christ ushered in the next great age, that of Pisces, the Fish. We notice how prominent the fish was in New Testament times. Apart from the nineteen passages in the gospels referring to fish and the promise of Jesus that the apostles were to become “fishers of men”, the fish became the great Christian symbol of the early Church, appearing first in Alexandria around the year 200. The letters of the Greek word for fish *ichthus* were ingeniously seen to be the initial letters of the Greek words for *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*. And now, another two thousand years on, we are entering the astrological Age of Aquarius, of which the symbol is a person pouring out a pitcher of water. This is the age of the outpouring of the Spirit of creativity.

If we notice some of the trends in society today, I think we can claim that they are revealing that we are entering this age of the Spirit. Let’s take just three major current trends, each of which relates to and compounds the others. First, a new consciousness is revealing itself in the desire for democracy, for human rights, for justice. Also in the sense of one world and one humanity as well as in the questioning of religious beliefs and the move from the outer observance of religion to seek the deeper spiritual meaning of life. Secondly, there is the growing awareness of feminine values, showing itself in the challenges to patriarchy, increased creativity and anti-militarism. Thirdly, we have to notice the ecological movement, appreciation of not being *on* the planet so much as being *part of* the planet. It is the ecological movement, among others, which unites us across all religious boundaries. Recent discoveries in astrophysics of the very vastness of the Universe makes us more aware of the tiny place we play in creation.

In his most recent book, *Ancestral Grace* Diarmuid O’Murchu links the way we are heading, towards the Kingdom (or Reign) of God, with this Age of the Spirit when he writes: “Led by the Spirit, the earthly Jesus reconnects us to our deep ancient past, inspires us to be co-creators in the present (the mission of God’s new Reign) and paves the way for our next evolutionary breakthrough.”

Adrian Smith

CANA WEBSITE

If you are a regular user of the CANA Website you will notice that it has once again been changed. We are most grateful to Leslie Cram who has kindly looked after it for the last year or so. He worked diligently on its content and layout. We now have the professional help of Lynette Marshall, the daughter of a Core Group member, which should make it easier to keep up to date. A few changes have been made and there are some additions such as Key Articles and a pdf file of *Exploring Ways Forward for Christians into the Twenty First Century*. Do look at it on <http://www.christiansawakening.org>.