

**Christians
Awakening
to new
Awareness
(CANA)**

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.

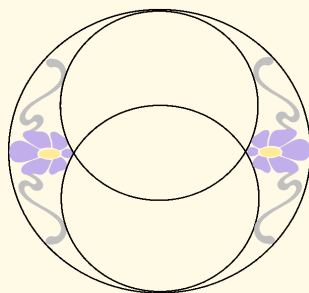
CANA offers people nurture and companionship in their process of awakening and the opportunity to find a commonality with others on a similar continuing journey.

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 recognizes 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.



CHRISTIANS AWAKENING

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2016

Volume 5 Issue 2



Photo and quote by Janet Lake

When the light of our civilisation is totally eclipsed, the manifestation of a new world order becomes possible

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Editorial

by Don MacGregor

I write in the aftermath of the terrible atrocity on Bastille Day in Nice, the failed military coup in Turkey and the general upheaval in British politics since the referendum. It would be very easy to feel totally downhearted, see the world descending into chaos and worry about what disaster is going to happen next. In general, the media tends to get us to think along those lines, sensationalising doom and gloom scenarios to get attention and up their ratings or sales. We can get drawn into this attitude. We have seen political exaggerations, lies and accusations during the referendum debate, cold-blooded, ruthless killing using a lorry as the killing machine, and threats to democratic rule in countries trying to emerge. We see human greed and vengeance enacted repeatedly, bringing yet more human suffering. When will it end? A natural questions for us to ask.

Yet I am a firm believer that we progress through suffering and it can become opportunity for change. Suffering strips us of our plans and power, reducing us to realising that our own personal resources are not endless, and if we rely on our egoic way of thinking, which comes from the lower self, we will be forever stuck in 'eye-for-eye-and-tooth-for-tooth' mentality. Coming to this sort of realisation means a commitment to change, and to awakening to the higher self.

Two thousand years ago, teaching was given to humanity that love is the way forward - strong, compassionate, understanding, and sometimes tough love. That is the basis of the Jesus heritage, the roots from which CANA has grown. The suffering that we see in the world today is gradually bringing a call for a different response, a response to rise above the old ways and to find new ways of relating to each other. Ways that recognise our common humanity, our oneness. Opportunity for change and transformation is the real message that Jesus brought. "Repent, for the kingdom of God is near" meant that we are to turn from our lower ways, look to the divine path of compassion laid

out for us and modelled by Jesus and begin to live our lives from a new higher place, centred in the One 'in whom we live and move and have our being', which Jesus called the kingdom of God. More on this in my article 'Peace through Transformation' later on.

The difficult truth is that this change and transformation is often precipitated by crisis – we fall before we rise, both individually and socially. Many predictions and prophetic utterances have been emerging in recent years about the evolutionary path that humanity is on and the energies for change that are coming into our consciousness. Change we must, but what further crises will have to happen before some begin to see the light? One of these prophetic voices is Barbara Marx Hubbard. These inspired words are from her reflections on the Beatitudes:

There is a chance that your planet will not have to undergo the worst of the worst. It depends upon how quickly you receive my message, my word. Many are preaching salvation of the individual through love. No one is proclaiming the other half of my message: the transformation of the species by the use of its collective scientific, technological, spiritual and social capacities. You, my newer messengers: you who are born at the time of the twinkling of the eye; you who are born at the moment of your metamorphosis; you, beloved, born at the hour of the planetary birth of the next era of evolution, must carry the new half of my message. This new half affirms and completes the ancient half that has been preached for two thousand years. It is the half that could not be pronounced until the fullness of time, until the quantum transformation has begun, until the Earth has cracked its shell and sent you, her children, forth among the stars.

[From *The Evolutionary Testament of Co-Creation: The Promise Will Be Kept* by Barbara Marx Hubbard]

This is the direction which CANA is taking, to begin to inspire and orientate others to see the need for the transformation of humanity. No longer can we treat others as enemies, no longer can we behave tribally with some included and others excluded. We are all one.

in the One Life that sustains everything in being. As it says in the article by Christian de Quincey, it's 'Consciousness all the way down!' No longer can we stay with outmoded, outlived theologies that are well past their sell-by date. Some notable Christians have been saying this for years.

"The choices before the Christian world are clear to me. We can pretend that there is no problem with the continued use of the literalized, dated and inoperative language of our faith, changing nothing, and the result will be that Christianity will die. The other choice is that we can develop a whole new way of seeing Jesus and conceptualizing God that will lay the groundwork for a radical reformulation of what we call Christianity."

[From *Jesus for the Non-Religious*
by Bishop John Shelby Spong]

Maybe Christianity as we know it in this country does have to die, or at least to struggle on in its own increasingly small enclave. I say this as one who has been caring for struggling rural churches for the last 12 years. Emerging from the cocoon of 'churchianity', our hope is for the rise of a more universal spirituality that can operate with respect for all living creatures and all faiths and teach a path of love and service that does not depend on being able to recite 1500 year old creeds and sing Victorian sentiments. It can be rooted in that tradition without having to take on all the Romanesque and medieval ideas that took it so far from its founder's teaching.

So to look at the world today, it depends which spectacles we put on. Many around us wear lower-self specs, but there is a new improved version which allows us to see from a higher place, to see from a place of oneness and unitive consciousness, to awaken our eyes to a soul-perspective. Suffering becomes an opportunity for transformation if we are wearing the new specs. New ways are emerging. Radical change is in the air. Onwards and upwards!

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CANA ESSENCE AND PURPOSE

With its roots in Christianity, CANA seeks to aid the exploration of the spiritual dimensions of life in a way that is open ended and free from the boundaries that most religious frameworks and structures have imposed.

In transition from a set religious adherence to more open ended ways of spiritual formation and expression, many people have found a need for a safe place to share and explore the process of awakening to a new awareness, through the following suggestions:-

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.

The ways CANA offers support in exploration is via:

- ◆ sharing through the newsletter
- ◆ conferences, symposia and occasional sharing days
- ◆ encouraging local groups and informal conversations
- ◆ encouraging retreats and quiet spaces and places just to BE
- ◆ writing and publishing articles, documents and open learning materials as resources and supportive frameworks for learning and exploration.

The essential nature of our journey is one of continuing exploration, in which everyone's contribution is a valued part of the whole. As we move beyond the language and interpretations of the past, we are challenged to find new expressions of the emerging vision.

Areas of Interest

CANA does not have a mission statement, or a fixed statement of aims and objectives. The CANA Core Group, which guides the organisation, feels that we are currently going through a period of transition and change, with further awakening to new understandings of the traditional Christian message and the relationship with other spiritual and religious traditions. CANA acts primarily as a safe place to explore the boundaries of belief and practice, and as a pressure group for change both within the established church and our prevailing culture. It is there for those in the church, those who are ex-church, and those who have never been to church. Accordingly, below are some of CANA's current areas of interest:-

1. Global Shift: We are in a new era, with many different aspects and understandings. A global shift in human consciousness is spoken of around the world. On an esoteric level, new energies are understood to be entering the field of humanity, bringing paradigm shifts in understanding the reality in which we exist. We hope a new harmony is approaching and there may emerge a universal spirituality that goes beyond religious divisions and enhances peaceful co-existence.

2. Personal Transformation: This is a radical movement from self-centredness towards a more compassionate and holistic awareness. It involves a lifetime commitment to inner growth. CANA draws on the teachings and example of Jesus for this journey.

3. Rethinking Christian Practice: The deepest mystical experience of humanity is of oneness with the divine. This is a journey of transformation and soul development. Practices to help us on the journey include meditation, mindfulness and contemplative prayer as a means to rise above the egoic, dualistic self to the place of Christ Consciousness or non-dual consciousness.

4. Rethinking God and Jesus: God is seen as the one presence in which we live and move and have our being, the compassionate consciousness that sustains us and in which we are all one. Perceptions of Jesus as a Wisdom teacher of transformational love are re-emerging, a man who attained the divine potential for all humanity and blazed a path for us to follow.

5. Rethinking the Bible: Literalist understandings of the Bible are challenged. Other gospels, particularly Thomas, give new insights into the Wisdom tradition within Christianity – or was it the original Christianity? The Charter for Compassion states, *“We therefore call upon all men and women ‘to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion’ to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate.”* [<http://www.charterforcompassion.org>] This calls for radical re-visioning of any interpretations of scripture that are tribal, patriarchal, misogynistic and anthropomorphic and overtly anthropocentric, helping us to move from our roots to our future.

6. Rethinking Theology: Writers and theologians, pushing forward the edges of Christian understanding, are giving us new insights into the traditional faith. Doctrines of atonement and sacrifice are interpreted in fresh ways that chime with our understanding of the universe today, not 500 years ago. Mining of the deep seams of Celtic, Esoteric and Mystical Christianity is bringing new riches to the surface, helping us to move on from fixed doctrine to fullness of life. CANA offers to help build a bridge from the old to the new.

7. Rethinking Church and Community: Much more involvement of the laity in ministry is a move already happening. This is bringing fresh impetus – more use of silence and creative times of worship. New thinkers are bringing in fresh expressions of traditional prayers, hymns and liturgy and different ways of being ‘church.’

8. Wholeness and Healing: Reinterpretation of the original meaning of salvation shows the link with

healing and wholeness, not for some future glory, but for life in all its fullness now. This is the way of being modelled by Jesus, a healer. Healing potential is there for us all, accessing the divine healing energy that is a part of this reality in which we exist.

9. Opening to Love: Although it is often hard to perceive, we hold that humanity is evolving towards a more compassionate and caring global society. CANA encourages the path of transformational love and opening of the heart centre at all levels of connection with life. This is the ‘kingdom of heaven’ of which Jesus spoke.

10. Science and Spirituality: Some scientists are now sharing how science and spirituality need not be in conflict, but mutually enriching. The idea that consciousness is the ground of being from which all material reality emerges is gaining ground as a theory that gives huge insights into religious and spiritual experiences.

11. Planetary Consciousness: We recognise that we are part of the biosphere of the earth with all the spiritual, environmental and biochemical implications implied. This needs considering in any new formulation of Christianity. We are part of this interconnected, sacred web of life, and have a responsibility towards it.

12. Continuity of Consciousness: CANA emphasises the importance of the inner life, the understanding of the nature of the soul journey and the continuity of consciousness as the soul moves to other realms of existence at the end of life.

13. Community Building: The outward expressions of this transformational, inner journey contribute to the global shift towards a more compassionate world. CANA co-operates in creating groups, networks and links to other organisations to build community.





The Prodigal Son

Artist: Iain McKillop

IMAGERY & OUR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD

(continued from Spring issue)

Too often 'Christian Art' just illustrates biblical subjects in various styles. It is more useful when its imagery opens our minds, enables us to interpret or look at faith from a different perspective, or sensitises us. Like ministers & theologians, Christian art's most useful role (whether in images, music, words or liturgy), is not to ornament or decorate worship and teaching but to enhance faith & provide ways to relate to & express truth. Art rarely works if it attempts to preach or promote dogmas, (that is a role for theologians or teachers of doctrine). Creative Arts are more like devising a novel: we seek to invent an image or experience of the senses that excites someone to engage with it, stirring the imagination, making connections to their own life. This may further stimulate the mind, enhance emotion or enable one to think about or feel faith. We cannot convey literally what Jesus looked like, nor compose or paint physically a spiritual subject. Religious art creates metaphors not reality. But if we form something that has the ring of truth, an image or metaphor has potential to awaken spiritual responses.

It isn't easy to communicate spiritually because we use physical means to suggest a different, invisible dimension. Our imagery needs to be carefully considered and refined. Christians also need to be trained in using and responding to the arts, imagery or metaphors in worship or prayer. Often we just concentrate on the surface of images or stories until we are trained to reach within and find what they open or suggest to us. As with Jesus' most memorable parables, when a metaphor works it sets up an imaginary world which others find relevant to their experience. Contemplating allusive imagery can become a catalyst for living spiritual experiences. Our challenge in communicating faith is to find metaphors that come alive today. The best biblical or traditional Christian imagery still communicates in living ways, as it has for centuries. We follow Jesus' creative lead. Alongside explaining well-trusted metaphors in ways that open their meaning to contemporaries, we need to imagine new imagery, which 'unveils' aspects of God and will speak into our contemporary world to further enhance Christian faith and trust in God's reality.

Iain McKillop

Iain McKillop is a Surrey priest, painter & art-historian who has been researching traditions of using art in prayer. His exhibitions regularly tour British cathedrals. Website: mckillop.weebly.com

**Tomorrow belongs to
those who can hear it
coming.**

David Bowie
(from Facebook)



An English country summer scene

CANA Resources

Downloads

On our website there is a resources page from which you can download past newsletters, booklists and reviews, and study booklets on:

Christ in us Today

*Exploring Ways Forward for Christians into the
Twenty First Century*

Living in a more spiritual way

The Christ

Christians Today Opening to a New Awareness

Christian Reincarnation?

The Lost Kingdom of God

Christ Consciousness

Religion & Spirituality

*Why is the Church Not Facing up to the Spirituality
Revolution?*

Why not pay a visit to

www.christiansawakening.org

DVDs:

1. **“Exploring the Interface between Christianity and Esoteric Philosophy”** with William Meader. A Spiritual Exploration Day 11 May 2016 held in Oxford Quakers Meeting Room. This is a video of the whole day’s session. It is on two DVDs, costing £3 in total.

There is also a transcript of the first talk, an Introduction to Esoteric Philosophy. Email Jane on janeupchurch@blueyonder.co.uk for a copy.

2. **“Science, Consciousness and Christianity”** – the video of a talk given by Revd Don MacGregor at St John’s Church Hillingdon on 30 August 2014. Cost £1.50. It is also available as an audio CD in MP3 format for £1.50. Please specify which you would like when ordering.

The work of silence is essential to our survival and fulfilment as human beings.....it is a refuge but not an escape.

Maggie Ross, hermit

CANA DVD’s AVAILABLE

DVD’s of the following talks are now available for the cost price of £1.50 each:

Don MacGregor

Science, Consciousness & Christianity **£1.50**

William Meader

Exploring the Interface between Christianity & the Perennial Philosophy (2 DVD’s) **£3**

Send your address and a cheque made out to CANA to the Treasurer:

Jane Upchurch, 20 Manor Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 7LB. For enquiries:

janeupchurch@blueyonder.co.uk or 01895 639476 or 07979 492418

As you know, we are no longer a membership organization, but your donations are vitally needed to keep us going! You would be welcome to send a cheque to Jane (details above) or a transfer to our Bank:-

The CANA bank details are:

Sort code - 30-94-38 account number: 01889228

Thank you—every little bit helps!

“People have good reasons to be angry and afraid. Racism, poverty, climate change and so many other injustices are causing real suffering. But we cannot fight violence with violence. Only the contemplative mind has the ability to hold light and dark together; only unitive consciousness allows transformation at the deepest levels”

Richard Rohr



Sycamore tree in flower

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I thought the Spring Newsletter was more thought-provoking than usual, not least your short piece on small groups. Half a century ago Rufus Jones, an eminent American Quaker (and writer on Meister Eckhart) said: *"The future of Christianity lies in small groups."* This is, in fact, how Christianity itself started, and the only way in which real progress can now be made, I believe. I have sorrowfully come to the conclusion, though, that some kind of separation from orthodoxy must follow, as the Jesus movement was ultimately expelled from the synagogues. If we seek, and with God's guidance, find what Clare Freeman calls "faith in our time", will we not need a new wineskin to hold this new wine? If it is not so new as to call for a new kind of structure, will it have any real or lasting value?

How I agree with you that "In this technological age of electronic communications, face-to-face groups are even more significant for daily living".

I also noted with the greatest interest the report on the meeting of the **One Spirit Alliance** and in particular the mention of Gurdjieff's "fourth dimension" (akin to my hyperspace and Eckhart's timeless realm) and "the room felt electric". This sounds like the experience that sometimes occurs in a gathered meeting of the Quakers and underlies my earlier remarks about how private and group prayer are to be harmonised. I'm not sure that 'electric' is the most accurate word, but it is something of a pentecostal nature.

But the most thought-provoking thing in the Newsletter was probably the skeleton discussion on *"What is it you have faith in on the inner plane?"* If the essence of Christianity is to be propagated today we need a new narrative, for we can no longer be honest in trying to believe the Adam story and that honesty is, I believe, what Eckhart was talking about when he said, in his usual dramatic way, that he would choose truth over God.

Frank Parkinson

Judy Hanmer writes:

This prayer by Rabindranath Tagore, who was a Hindu, is one I have been using for the last forty years. For me it evokes such a strong feeling of God's presence in our everyday lives, if only we can recognise it. It comes from The Oxford Book of Prayer edited by George Appleton who was a lovely mentor to me when I was searching for 'something more' than just going to church on Sundays:

Day after day, O Lord of my life, shall I stand before thee face to face?

With folded hands, O Lord of all worlds, shall I stand before thee face to face?

Under thy great sky, in solitude and silence, with humble heart, shall I stand before thee face to face?

In this laborious world, tumultuous with toil and struggle, among hurrying crowds, shall I stand before thee face to face?

And when my work shall be done in this world, O King of all kings, alone and speechless shall I stand before thee face to face?

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In September I'm sponsoring two rather special workshops in London. We already have people coming from Scotland, Holland, and New Zealand - but there is room for more, and I would really appreciate your help in getting the word out to as many people as possible who might be interested and benefit. This work is, I believe, part of our individual and collective journey towards greater wholeness. The spiritual path most closely aligned to it is a Buddhist one, though the work is universal and fundamental.

Julia Macdonald

Connirae is coming to London UK for the first time in over 20 years to share and teach this new work. You can find out more and buy tickets by clicking here <<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coming-to-wholeness-foundation-workshop-connirae-andreas-live-in-london-tickets-18811044340>> and there are half price bursaries available for people on low incomes. Contact julia@juliamacdonald.co.uk <<mailto:julia@juliamacdonald.co.uk>> 07964 721843 for more details.

SUMMER 2016

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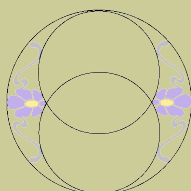
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Don MacGregor
Denise Moll
Heather-Jane Ozanne
Martin Paine
Celia Storey
David Storey
Jane Upchurch



CHRISTIANS AWAKENING Newsletter

DIARY DATES - 2016

Sat 17th September, ONE SPIRIT SUMMIT 2016, Global Cooperation House, 65-69 Pound Lane, London NW10 2HH—10.30-5.30 pm *New Story: New Era Responding Together to the Call of Spirit*. No charge, donations relied on. Contact: 07771 701031. Those who recognize Spirit as fundamental to our lives....we can build on each other's work....to discover what is being asked of us at this time.

Silence by the Sea - a UK Wisdom School—26-29 Sept (Mon-Thurs pm) at Othona, Dorset. *"It's not about knowing more, but about knowing with more of yourself... about increasing our capacity for spiritual perception from an awakened heart"* Cynthia Bourgeault

Coordinators are Don & Jayne MacGregor and Janet Lake, all members of CANA (www.christiansawakening.org) who have attended and been inspired by the Wisdom Schools and teachings of Revd Dr. Cynthia Bourgeault (www.contemplative.org). For booking information contact the Othona Community:

Website: www.othona-west-dorset.co.uk

Email: mail@othona-bb.org.uk Tel. 01308 897130 Cost: £225 (conc. £200)

A SPACE for LIVING SPIRITUALITY at The Quaker Meeting House, 95, South Street, Bridport DT6 3NZ. SERIES 2 "SPIRITUAL PRACTICE"

Event 1: Sat. September 10th 2016. 10.00 - 4.00.

"Enter the Silent Land: Christian Meditation Practices"

led by Janet Lake and Sarah Craven-Webster

Event 2: Sat. October 8th. 2016. 10.00 - 4.00.

"Sufism: spiritual path of love, harmony & beauty"

led by Rosemary Brown

Event 3: Sat. November 12th. 2016. 10.00 - 4.00.

"Day of Mindfulness .. Community of Interbeing"

led by Jacqui Schweitzer and David Will

Space is limited so booking is required.

Donations £5-£30 per day: bring-and-share lunch.

For further information: Janet Lake's email: iona16@hotmail.co.uk

www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/events_july_september16.pdf.

The annual **LivingSpirituality** event run in partnership with St James's, Piccadilly is the launch on **Sunday 25 September** of the exciting new book by **June Boyce Tillman - Experiencing Music - Restoring the Spiritual: Music as Wellbeing**. 1.45-3.30pm.

For those who find CANA has something to add to their lives, would you consider writing something about your spiritual focus for a future edition? Thank you so much.

Editor