

**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.

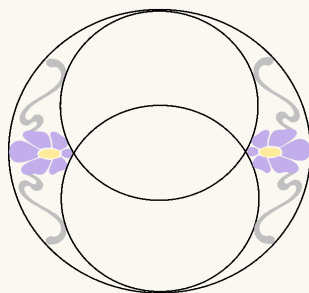
CANA offers people nurture and companionship in their process of awakening and the opportunity to find a commonality with others on a similar continuing journey.

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.

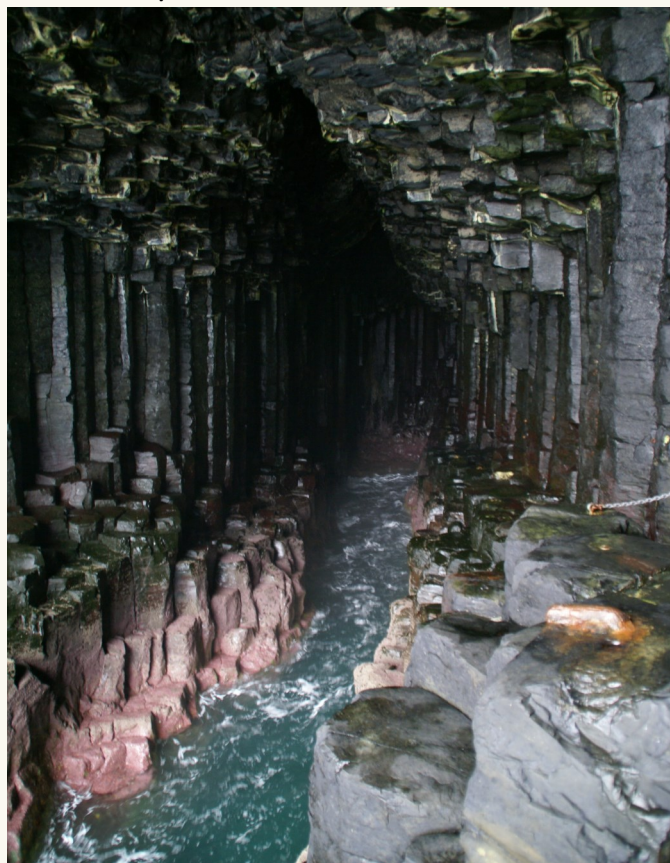
CANA is a group where risk becomes safe through trust and where exploration is key.



CHRISTIANS AWAKENING

AUTUMN/WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017

Volume 6 Issue 3



*"—go into
yourself and
see how deep
the place is
from which
your life
flows—"*

Rilke

Photo by Janet Lake

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Editorial

Earlier this year, I went to Norway with David Karchere of The Emissaries of Divine Light, to speak at a seminar at the invitation of the Norwegian Church. The seminar was called **'Redefining our Spiritual Heritage'** and said this:

"People in the Western World are seeking a fresh and new practice of Christian spirituality. They are looking for something that appeals to intelligence and reason, engages the heart in a loving way, is relevant to their lives today, gives spiritual strength, and is inclusive, open, and non-judging."

We spoke of reconnecting with the primal spirituality that is, was, and always has been, the ageless wisdom that has been the initiatory cause of most world religions. We also engaged in spiritual practices – chant, holding intentions, meditation, deep listening. It is probably true that this sort of exploration is happening on the fringes of Christianity not just in Britain and Norway, but across the whole western world. It is a seeking to go beyond the teachings of the Church to a more timeless, universal, cosmological and ecological viewpoint, a new paradigm for a new age.

I came across an article in the Huffington Post that said this:

"Humanity is taking a quantum leap beyond the religions of the world. Emerging from this quantum leap is a universal spirituality (USP) that removes ideological, gnostic, denominational, and sectarian borders within and across religions. Universal spirituality does not nullify the teachings of any religion, nor does it denigrate any faith or creed. The USP incorporates the morals derived from religions into shared consciousness. It respects the practices of each creed."

This is the direction we are now taking in CANA, starting from our Christian lineage. In everything that we do now we are raising the awareness of the move towards a more global, universal spirituality, and we hope to gradually develop a teaching program which will chart a path from Christianity to a more inclusive universal spirituality, which means that we become 'universal humans', as was discussed at the gathering at Holland House in September. With this in mind, please do note the request from the on-going CANA project **'Towards a Universal Spirituality: Journeying with Christianity'** for excerpts and quotes from books that have given you light-bulb moments.

There are many aspects to awakening, and the Wisdom Retreat in October focussed on the stream coming through from Christian mysticism. Through meditation and experiential learning it encouraged awakening to the higher self, not about knowing more, but about knowing with more of ourselves. In his article on Aurora Gatherings, Geoff Napier from Cygnus Review gives a simple way of forming small groups that can listen deeply and build on the human experience of living with a spiritual focus.

The Church has nurtured the flame of Christianity through some dark times – and now is the time to bring the fire of love more fully into the world. The quote from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is well known, but it's worth repeating:

"The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire."

Don MacGregor

"What we plant in the soil of contemplation we shall reap in the harvest of action"

Meister Eckhart

CANA GATHERING AT HOLLAND HOUSE September 2017

Holland House is a wonderfully nurturing venue for a CANA Gathering with its warm and comfortable atmosphere, and its beautiful chapel for meditation which looks out on enormous cedar trees and stunning gardens, lovingly tended by the staff there. It is in Crothorne, Worcestershire.

This year's theme was **"Sacred Incarnation"**, a title which was somewhat multi-stranded..... Martin held the focus on the Nature Kingdoms and their importance. Janice led us in exploring our Collective journey towards becoming **"Universal Humans"** (a Barbara Marx Hubbard term) with a Universal Spirituality. And I took the group through some personal individual work on that, and how we "vision" ourselves into living our greater potential.

All these are aspects of Sacred Incarnation and what it means to be fully conscious of the privilege of bringing Spirit into Matter and embodying with awareness the Essence that we truly are. And we need to deepen, or expand, our consciousness of this task, within the context of a multi-dimensionality that we only dimly begin to comprehend. This, of course, is a lifelong journey.

But every time we come together at these events and thereby activate the greater consciousness and awareness that is possible within a harmonious group, we move both ourselves individually, and the collective **"noosphere"** (of which Teilhard de Chardin spoke) a little closer towards that evolutionary goal. And this is an act of service to the whole, as well as enabling our own personal growth.

During our time together it happened to be World Peace Day, the Jewish and Islamic New Years, and the autumn Equinox! These were acknowledged and beautifully honoured and celebrated by Jane and Gillian. These seasonal

moments can also be times of a "gathered energy" when it is easier for us to access deeper levels of understanding.

This year's CANA Gathering at Holland House was a small and focussed group of long term CANA members. I wonder, by contrast, whether next time someone has the impulse to offer such an event, it might be timely to explore how CANA might reach out more to its newer supporters, and to those who have not yet accessed what CANA has to offer?

Kate Porteous

Footnote from Editor:

Please note Kate's suggestion in this last paragraph, and *let us know* if you, or anyone else you know, would like to access what CANA has to offer—many thanks.



"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."

C S Lewis

Towards a Universal Spirituality: Journeying with Christianity Update – *New Request*

In the last issue of the newsletter, we outlined the plans for a publication for those on this journey, seeking the emerging steps to the New Story of a shared spirituality in which we, from a Christian background, are discovering the deeper meaning of the Christ's message. In fact, this is likely to be a series of publications, starting with the revision, under way, of the popular and much used '*Stories of Contemporary Christians*'.

In the last newsletter, we asked for contributions to a follow-up volume in the same vein, a compilation of pieces written from a personal perspective on something '*I have been discovering*' rather than '*this is how it is*', suggesting 1500 – 2000 words each. We are still collating and editing these. If you feel the impulse, please, there is still time to send yours to Martin Paine (martin@bluedanube.com) or Jane Upchurch (janeupchurch@aol.com) or Janice Dolley (janice.dolley@btinternet.com). These three are acting as a core team for this.

Now we are requesting suggestions for an additional volume, an anthology of excerpts from different, established writers, lecturers or teachers who expand on this overall theme. So what, or who, for you, threw the switch for those '*Aha!*', light-bulb moments? What reading was accompanied by the sound of pennies dropping? What, for you, still reaches the parts that other writings do not? To what, or to whom, do you go back again and again for affirmation, confirmation and clarity?

This call is a request that you look through your own library or files and send us one or more chapters or excerpts from something that has spoken to you. Most people today are short of time to read widely but could possibly benefit from a selection of relatively short pieces that offer different windows on this emergent spirituality; that, together, could provide a composite picture, the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

If you have an e-copy or could scan or type out a piece, then please email it to Martin (email above); if not please photocopy the chapter, lecture or extract and post it to Martin at the administrator's address on the back cover of this newsletter. In all cases please give the full title of the original, author, date of publication or lecture, name of publisher. This will enable us to reference the pieces properly and, where appropriate, apply for permission to use or seek copyright clearance.

Please would you send this by **November 24th** so we can discuss at the CANA core group meeting 1st-3rd December. Or ASAP!

With our planet witnessing increasing conflict, competitive ideologies, suffering and hardship we hope that any contribution that helps more people to realize that we are all related as part of the One Life and appreciate the need to melt the divisions that keep us apart will be helpful. Thank you and bless you. This is one contribution we can all make.

As we have said, CANA's intention is eventually to develop, from these publications, a modular e-Learning programme, setting a course *Towards a Universal Spirituality: Journeying with Christianity*. This is part of CANA's contribution.

***Martin Paine, Jane Upchurch &
Janice Dolley***



"SILENCE BY THE SEA: EXPLORING THE WISDOM TRADITION"

An Account of the 4-day Retreat in October

Were we 19 drops in the ocean or the ocean in 19 drops? For, from our first meditation period together, the 16 participants and 3 leaders experienced a deep 'collective energetic field' which increasingly seemed to influence what happened in the course of the retreat. We were essentially in silence and the setting was at Othona, situated on the beautiful Dorset Coast near Bridport.

The structure of the retreat was arranged to engage each of us at the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels of our being, reflecting the nature of the Wisdom Tradition which is *"not about knowing more but about knowing with more of ourselves"* (Cynthia Bourgeault). Each day included 3 meditations (with a chant or pan-eurythmics), 2 input sessions, 'intentional work', free afternoon, and a 'contemplative listening/sharing' time each evening.

A mandala, a symbol of wholeness, was laid down on the floor, and as time went on took on a life of its own. Inputs were about the practice of Centering Prayer, the Cloud of Unknowing, the differentiation of the Apophatic and Cataphatic traditions, how to engage with Sacred Texts (including the sacred texts of our own lives) and Welcoming Prayer.

The picture and caption at the front of this newsletter appropriately describes how people went deep, engaging with their issues and deepening their spiritual lives. And there was another aspect, the raising of collective consciousness, the like of which I'd not experienced so forcefully before on a retreat. Maybe this was made possible because the group were seasoned meditators and we three leaders were very vulnerable, each coping with a physical ailment and struggling somewhat!

When blowing out the candles the first time, I'd suggested people silently 'send the light' to someone or some situation close to their heart. The next time the whole group spontaneously stood and did this together, aware that this represented our moving out beyond ourselves to include the all.

The second example: we'd been sharing our experiences of the retreat when the tea-light in a glass on the heart cushion at the centre of the mandala, spilt out of it's metal container (? how) and the heat of the flame broke the glass container in two and started to set the heart alight. What incredible symbolism!! It impacted the group deeply in many ways, and we certainly knew our old containers were no longer sufficient to hold the fire of this love.

Janet Lake



"In my case Pilgrim's Progress consisted in my having to climb down a thousand ladders until I could reach out my hand to the little clod of earth that I am"

C G Jung

Aurora Gatherings

nurturing our inner connection

Just as fewer and fewer people feel satisfied with conventional belief systems, more are wanting to explore their spirituality beyond beliefs, concepts, creeds and the structures of organised meetings of **any** sort that have agendas and goals.

Consequently, many are exploring their spirituality on their own, yet they feel isolated and unsupported, finding a magic conversation here and a chance remark there with a stranger. This vacuum of community does enable us to appreciate the connection, however, it comes. A burst of sunlight from behind the clouds, the blossoming of a flower or watching young children play can be enough to connect us with our inner joy again. Suddenly we experience we live in a world where we are not actually alone, where there is unconditional Love available for all.

For the past 3 years following a clear request from its readers, The Cygnus Review has been publicising the possibility of setting up local meetings for its readers and their friends across the UK, simply - to be together.

The meeting's format is kept to a bare minimum, based on 12 years experience of holding such monthly meetings at a retreat centre in the Cotswolds. There are no agendas or any need for shared beliefs. No one knows how the meeting will go, least of all the one who happens to be holding the space this time. We sit in a circle and introduce ourselves, where we are from and perhaps a sentence or two about what brought us here today. For the rest, we speak one at a time from our hearts about what is living within us, in the present. Quite frequently we may lapse into a convivial stillness enjoying each others presence without the need for words. At others, we may listen intently with our hearts to a sharing of recent breakthrough or breakdown from one of our companions. Naturally, we spontaneously refrain from attempting to "fix" or judge them. Together we inwardly ask for the highest good to happen to all present or

involved in the current story being shared. This opens us to actually trusting that the universe has all in hand, whether we can comprehend how this might be.

For those who are used to organising specific topics, it may seem a bit of a backward step. "Surely, these meetings will just turn into social gatherings?" some have said. This can happen. However, having supported between 80-90 groups over the past 3 years we have learned a lot about "keeping it real", by making lots of little explorations/ mistakes/ learnings and sharing them amongst the groups. We have discovered that the "getting to know you all" period can drag on rather a long time and topics can remain rather superficial or intellectual without the group setting a clear intention for the meetings.

What that intention is at any one time is up to each group, in the moment to set. Sometimes it can be shared during a meeting, especially if there are new people present or participants can already set their intention in the days before the meeting, so that when they arrive their whole being has a chance to already "be" there. Something along the lines of "let everything we contribute be in harmony with the highest good" or "may the results of this meeting be for the highest good of all concerned."

What is said is not as important as the actual intention in each heart present at the meeting. We don't know it all, but we know that each moment in our lives offers just what we need to help overcome our current resistance to "letting go" of control in our lives and letting the universe carry us along in its flow. Like jumping into a fast flowing river, we cannot "half do it". We'll only jump in when we absolutely trust that all shall be well.

Some of the local groups called Cygnus Cafes have elements of structure, some may even bring speakers in or have pre-arranged topics to discuss. This is fine, but we have noticed a mismatch of expectations. Someone wishing to explore heart to heart conversations is a bit

disorientated to be given a lecture or be told they are expected to talk about the I-Ching or their relationships, for instance. Likewise, someone expecting to sit back and listen to an author may feel confused with a group sitting and sharing their life experiences.

For this reason, I have left Cygnus to create a sister list of groups that have a couple of things in common. None have agendas, schedules or speakers, instead they aspire to live in the moment and allow the conversation to flow from heart to heart. Groups can be on both lists if they wish, but only the free-flowing ones are eligible to be listed on the www.auroragatherings.com list.

A word about the name, Aurora.
After considering perhaps a hundred or more possible names, this one felt just right. On research, we discovered that Aurora means,
“The first rays of the Sun that chase away the dark night sky before the orb of the sun slips over the horizon”.

This moment seems to be just where we are, daily re-aquainting ourselves with our very own inner connection or spiritual sun. Each day is a new opportunity to watch for the rays of our inner connection to illumine our daily routines and shed light on them, to chase away the clouds of our inner resistances, whether they be springing from our conditioning, our isolated willpower or our egocentric fears that we are ultimately alone and unloved, which is why we so often feel we need to control our environment, “to make things safe”.

If you wish to explore with us or start a local group along these lines contact me, Geoff Napier on 01285 762 982, or email info@geoffnapier.co.uk
There is additional information on the website: www.auroragatherings.com

Geoff Napier

Laughter

Because God is important we can think that means serious.

Because God is bigger and better than us and we screw up we can think that means serious with us.

We forget that if you are the biggest and best you don't have to be serious. If you know how stuff works you can relax and have fun.

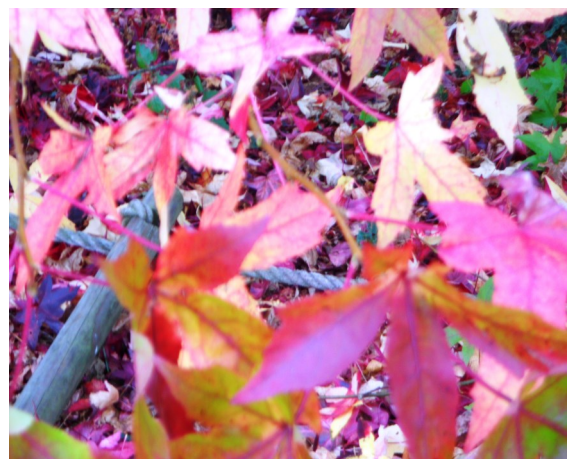
Was God serious when planning the turkey or the baboon's bottom? Did we think we invented laughter?

Next time we laugh so much that every cell tingles, know it is a sacrament and give God a smile.

Jane Upchurch

From her book **Inner Wellies**

ISBN: 978-905893-35-5





Holy Family

Iain McKillop is a Surrey priest, painter and art-historian who has been researching traditions of using art in prayer. Website: mckillop.weebly.com

'HOLY FAMILY' PICTURE MEDITATION

I painted this Holy Family as a meditation on the nature of Jesus. Joseph is carving his son an ark of creatures that symbolised aspects of Christ in the mediaeval bestiary. The bear was the Creator licking its cubs into form, the unicorn the hunted healer, the pelican of salvation revives its condemned young with its own blood, the stork destroys the serpent of sin, the eagle represents Christ's divine nature and Resurrection. If you know the bestiary you'll find many further meanings. The ark signified security in God, salvation and renewed life. But it is unnecessary to comprehend the picture's full symbolism; enough to consider *'Who truly was this child and what did he grow to achieve?'* Faith feeds on reaching to understand, even if only enough to give us security that Truth and wholeness are somewhere within this mystery. This child crawling on a straw floor, grew to learn and teach what abundant life should be.

How much do you think the child Jesus knew of what lay ahead? If he was fully human as well as divine, as orthodox Christian doctrine teaches, his understanding of his roles in establishing Salvation and the Kingdom of Heaven surely grew progressively as Jesus' human mind developed. I imagine him having yet to discover the full potential of his Incarnation, while his play-creatures remind us of his coming promise.

It might be useful to rethink and list, as this menagerie suggests, as many aspects as possible of what Jesus means to you and to our world. Contemplating these may help us expand and deepen our appreciation of what the Incarnation achieved. But it also encourages us to consider what we are in the world to achieve. How may Christ's extraordinary achievements invigorate us to use our full potential and bring others abundantly alive?

Several Counter-Reformation theologians saw in the Holy Family reflections of the Trinity. Here the character of God is unveiled through humility and undemonstrative power. Would you think, looking into this domestic scene that the Kingdom of God, in microcosm, is in the process of being revealed?⁹

In the ordinariness of our daily life we have the potential of awakening others to the reality of God. Joseph is an artisan, Mary a young mother training her infant, Jesus probably doesn't even recognise yet that the shape he holds is a dove, let alone its significance. In living human life holily, with God's Spirit's inspiration, dedicated to our tasks, truths of God can reveal themselves.

You might consider in contemplative prayer how God is being unveiled in your daily life and how the Truth in you is unveiling God to others. How is this awakening your potential and the potential of others?

Iain McKillop



.....and the seasons move on in their unique splendour and new ones are born.....



Book reviews

'The Power We Call God,' by Frank Parkinson

Frank Parkinson is a Quaker, a scientist and a theologian (and a CANA supporter) and this small book of four chapters is one in a series published by 'The Kindlers,' a Quaker group. In a very digestible form, it covers a wide ground in wrestling with the question of who or what is the unfathomable power that we call God. In moving towards a more universal understanding of this, he highlights the fact that *"the greatest obstacle to progress is not learning the new, but unlearning the old."* We are all held back and restrained by our old ways of thinking, our previous conceptions, and a paradigm gear change has to be undergone to transcend the traditional Christian mindset and move into a more global, co-creative understanding.

The first chapter looks at God and religion in our time, coming to the conclusion that much of what started out as great and inspiring religious movements has become institutionalised to the extent that it has become a hindrance to further spiritual development rather than a help. This is partly the nature of institutions, and partly because human consciousness is evolving to higher levels. His second chapter traces something of the growing understanding of this power we call God, from God in nature to the Hebrews' tribal understanding and its evolution. He then explores, in chapter three, the development in Christianity of the idea of God-in-man, and in particular how that was taken in the direction of Quakerism.

Finally, the last chapter looks at moving towards a new understanding of God which ties in with a scientific understanding of the Cosmos, from the Big Bang to co-creation in a divine-human cooperation to further the evolution of humanity. The term 'entheism' is introduced, seeking to put forward the way of silence as the heart of religious practice, seeking the God-presence within. And this is where we have to unlearn the old in order to progress the new, transcending old forms and

moving into a new understanding of God. The book is a bold call to change, well-written, readable and engaging. It is designed to stimulate our thoughts and would be particularly useful for small group discussion. Copies are available from:

Friends House Bookshop, 173 Euston Road,
London NW1 2BJ (right opposite Euston Station)
Phone: 0207 663 1030

Don MacGregor

Dear Friends at CANA,

Thank you for giving a link to the **Love for the Future** course in your last newsletter.

There were a few points in your review of the accompanying book that I didn't understand, having participated in the **Love for the Future** course. In particular, the comment that the book and course lack urgency or moral imperative, and that no earth-based practices are suggested. There are many occasions during the course – and in the action points accompanying the book chapters - where there is encouragement to think through commitments to action such as how you can reduce your carbon footprint; thinking through how you spend your time and money and whether these fit your values; and encouragement to find out about initiatives such as the Ethical Trading Initiative and the Trade Justice Movement. A whole chapter is devoted to Choices and Changes. There are also nature-based exercises recommended at the end of the first three chapters and course sessions. The Eco Church Initiative involves a strong commitment within many Christian denominations to action on green issues, and this will impact on the wider non-church-going population through all the energy reduction work in buildings that are used by the wider community, and through the creation of areas such as wild gardens in churchyards.

Yours sincerely,

Petra Griffiths
Living Spiritual Connections

From the Treasurer

“Easy Paying”

Thank you to all those who support us by regular giving. This enables us to plan and provide regular events, retreats, our newsletter, and material to inform and encourage our spiritual journeys. For those of you who would like to contribute financially and be part of CANA, receiving our newsletter and relevant information, it couldn't be easier. Our website (www.christiansawakening.org) now has a payment facility using PayPal. It can be used for a one-off donation, or for monthly or yearly payments which are particularly helpful to us. We suggest £20 a year. You can use your own PayPal account or your debit/credit card. You can also book places for events by entering the name of the event, how many places you want and the amount to be paid. If you do not want to do this on-line you can send us a cheque to book an event, or arrange donations to us by setting up a standing order through your bank. Our account number is 01889228 & sort code 30-94-38.

Thank you. **Jane Upchurch**
janeupchurch@blueyonder.co.uk



In Totnes market

William Meader's talks and other resources

For those who missed William Meader in May, his talk is available on DVD. His talk last year is also available, as is Don MacGregor's talk – see below

William Meader 2017

'The evolving soul of humanity' (2 DVD's) **£4**

William Meader 2016

'Exploring the interface between Christianity and Esoteric philosophy' (2 DVD's) **£4**

Don MacGregor 2014

'Science, Consciousness and Christianity' (1 DVD) **£2**

The charge covers costs including postage.

To pay and order them, you can use the payment facility on the website which will give me your address for posting them. Put the name of the ones you want in the 'Purpose of Payment' box (eg William Meader 2017 DVD).

Or you can send me a cheque made out to CANA to
CANA, 20 Manor Road, Ruislip HA4 7LB.

Jane Upchurch

AUTUMN/
WINTER 2017

CHRISTIANS AWAKENING Newsletter

**Christians
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(CANA)**

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by mid-February 2018

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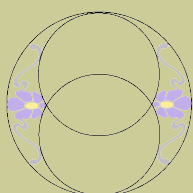
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Janet Lake
Don MacGregor
Denise Moll
Heather-Jane Ozanne
Martin Paine
Celia Storey
David Storey
Jane Upchurch



DIARY DATES

Ammerdown, nr Bath, Somerset

8 December Quiet Day- Rooted and Grounded in Love Ammerdown's Guided Quiet Days offer an opportunity to take time out from our busy lives to pray, reflect and meditate with the help of **Libby Dobson and Sarah Chabowska**. For further information or to book you place either ring 01761 433709 or go <http://ammerdown.org/Quiet-Day-2017>

5 to 7 January 2018—Deeper - The good, the bad and the hopeful An opportunity to start 2018 with a time of reflection. Have you ever wondered what life is really about? Why the world and human life can be both awe-inspiring and devastating at the same time? How life can serve up both laughter and grief? What is it all about? For further information or to book you place either ring 01761 433709 or go <http://ammerdown.org/deeper-Andy-Parnham-2018>

26 - 28 January In search of the unknowable Centering Prayer is letting go and opening to the Ultimate Reality....but if I'm a mass of tensions, the capacity to receive is blocked. Alexander Technique lets me discover and let go of tensions and resistance that hold me back from being open and available. For further information or to book you place either ring 01761 433709 or go <http://ammerdown.org/centering-prayer-alexander-technique-Jacqueline-Evans-2018>

Living Spirituality Connections (www.livingspirit.org.uk/events)

1-3 December: A theology of reconciliation with God and each other for today. Led by **Stanley Hauerwas**. County Antrim, Northern Ireland
www.corrymeela.org

Have you written for the Newsletter yet?

Whether you have or haven't, please know the Editor welcomes from *you* articles, letters, thoughts, ideas, photographs and information on Events you think fellow CANA members would enjoy.

Thank you!