



CANA NEWSLETTER

AWAKENING TO UNIVERSAL SPIRITUALITY
Evolving with Christianity

APRIL 2020

CANA is a network of people responding to the new impulse of Spirit at this time.

Many of us recognise its resonance with the teachings of Jesus as a way of transformation.

Our hope is to rediscover and re-imagine a path leading towards a more universal spirituality that can operate with respect for all living creatures and all faiths, a path of love and service for the betterment of all.

This is not just about the transformation of the individual, but the global shift of humanity to a higher way of being and of love that Jesus termed 'the Kingdom of God'.

www.cana.org.uk

Disclaimer: In CANA we welcome a multiplicity of views so the views expressed in these pages may not reflect those of the members of the Core Group.

EDITORIAL

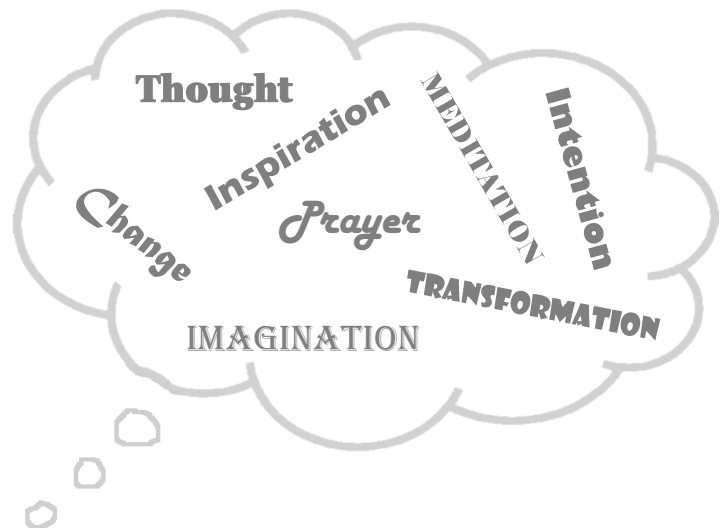
The Cana Spring Newsletter was just about to go to print when the seriousness of the coronavirus epidemic hit home, so we have made some changes and saved some articles for the next edition. We begin with a discussion paper on what the positive

outcomes of the epidemic might be. This links with the newsletter of Summer 2019 which featured 'eco-spirituality, evolution of consciousness, oneness, climate crisis, Gaia and the Planet' within its pages. (Our newsletters are available on the Cana website www.cana.org.uk.)

A remark attributed to Einstein suggests that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it so in this newsletter our Cana Core Group decided to explore how our consciousness might be raised to a higher level by the *Power of Thought and Intention*. Don writes about *Prayer and Intention*, Janice Dolley offers ideas about the importance of *Weaving Networks of Spirit* and my contribution is about an inspiring conference which emphasised the importance of the *Power of the Imagination* to envisage a better future for mankind. Following this Jane Upchurch offers extracts from *Conversations with God*, a book which many of us have found inspiring and Don wonders if it is madness to think that if we focus our positive thoughts, our hope and belief long and hard for the next few years we could bring about a better, more healthy and harmonious way of living.

Following on these themes Don and Janice plan to give a countrywide series of talks entitled *New Insights for Changing Times*. However, due to the current corona virus crisis, these plans are now on hold until later this year or early next.

Judy Hanmer
Editor



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HAS COVID-19 ANY POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

There is no need to rehearse the unpleasant features of covid19 since they are only too well known but there are some hopeful features of the way in which the virus has changed our familiar world. First, the covid-19 crisis has given us an intimation of how dramatically we could arrest climate change had we the will to do so. To date we have adopted the path of portentous words but cautious action rather than embrace radical life-style changes in the here and now. We have glorified Greta Thunberg as a youthful prophet but too many of us have chosen not to accept, for the time being, the full import of her warnings. But here we are today in the midst of what can only be called an enforced green revolution: drastically reduced long-haul flights, Venice deserted, petrol consumption falling, and factories on half-time working. Pollution in China is discernibly reduced, asthmatic children can breathe a little better, birds can be heard again in Wuhan and people are rediscovering the consolations of home and family. What is it that has brought about this revolution? The lesson is clear: for real change to happen there needs to be a trigger, something that jolts us out of our comfortable ways and alters our expectations about what the future will look like if we continue on our current path. In this viral crisis fear has been the trigger and perhaps only when we feel the same level of fear over the consequences of climate change will we act upon the evidence of science and of our own eyes and radically transform our way of life.

Second, traditional social and economic inequalities have given way to a different set of inequalities. True, to escape infection some plutocrats have hunkered down in remote Caribbean islands and when catastrophe strikes it always impacts worse on the poor, but in this instance the inequalities of age and climate seem to matter more. On the evidence to date the old are more vulnerable than the young and tropical populations seem to be better protected from infection than those in the northern hemisphere. That the balance of survival favours the young seems a healthier prognosis for the human race than the reverse; and if tropical regions are less susceptible to infection than temperate regions, that represents a not unjust reversal of how the 'good things in life' are traditionally distributed globally.

Third, if we have any sense the covid-19 outbreak will make us think a bit more deeply about our place in the eco-system. Homo-sapiens are undeniably special in many ways. We have learned to fashion our environment rather than accept its limitations. We have 'conquered' many diseases and landed men on the moon. Thousands of IVF babies have been born to the delight of parents

who might otherwise have been childless. But have these achievements also had about them a degree of hubris, a sense that we can manipulate and exploit mother nature so that she forever bends to our needs? We may have overthrown notions of a powerful and all-pervasive divinity, but how can we discover a respect for the natural world that allows us to live fulfilling lives within it rather than over it? Perhaps the present viral plague is nature's way of reminding us that we share in her creation rather than govern it.

Fourth, we are witnessing at first hand the fragility of our economic system. In less than a week the stock market has crashed, pensions have lost much of their value, whole industries face bankruptcy and millions of workers fear for their jobs. Cambridge often boasts of its status as a global city but by the same reckoning it is subject to the merciless vicissitudes of global capitalism. No economic system could have withstood the strains produced by covid-19 but has our dependence on specialisation gone too far? Has our reliance on distant sources of materials, goods and services rendered us more vulnerable in times of stress? Should we have invested more in the local rather than the global economy? Should we have shared Cambridge's prosperity further afield – to some of the areas of the county languishing for lack of development and opportunity? Have we sufficiently nourished the talent and enterprise of our citizens rather than rely too much on imported brain-power? These are troubling questions but we would be foolish not to consider them.

Fifth, the covid-19 crisis has united the human race in common cause but exposed some real weaknesses of leadership. The virus threatens every nation no matter whether rich or poor, first world or third, advanced or underdeveloped. If humankind is to defeat threats of this kind it must find ways of acting together, of creating global institutions that respond speedily to outbreaks of disease before they become pandemics and to climate changes before they become catastrophes. That in turn requires visionary leadership and a willingness to subjugate national pride to the welfare of the entire planet. In this crisis we have witnessed a fumbling uncertainty among leaders and crude attempts to turn the crisis into a means of self-promotion. Could anything more clearly underline the need for cool-headed and honest men and women to be at the helm in times of trouble such as these?

This discussion paper by John Hipkin,
Local Councillor in Cambridge, UK,
is printed with his permission

PRAYER AND INTENTION

We have always known that our consciousness, our emotional thought processes, and our feelings have the ability to affect our health for better or worse, but now science is beginning to understand how that works, and hence to develop ways to harness that latent power. It places the responsibility for our health firmly back with each of us – it begins with us! Positive thinking or intention, optimism, prayer, and meditation have all been shown to have positive effects on health and length of life. This ties in again with many spiritual teachings.

From the Christian tradition, we find this: Philippians 4:8 *'Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things'.*

Mahatma Ghandi said "A man is but the product of his thoughts – what he thinks, he becomes". The Buddha said, "All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think, we become". And also, "Your worst enemy cannot harm you as much as your own unguarded thoughts".

When you couple this teaching with the knowledge that our thoughts and emotions produce the chemical messengers that alter our genes and can cause disease, then we find that science is proving the efficacy of spiritual teachings. What we spend our time thinking about affects our well-being.

If positive intention can have an effect on which genes are switched on or off, then we begin to have a mechanism for how some forms of prayer works. And it does work - the Office of Prayer Research has investigated over 227 studies, deducing that 75 per cent show that prayer has a positive impact.

Recent research has also shown that the central issue in focused intention is the emotion of love. Over 60 studies have provided evidence to show that prayer has a measurable impact on healing. These studies collectively reveal that, regardless of which religion or form the prayer takes, if it is without love and compassion, the prayer has little or no effect.

It seems that research is telling us that the power of prayer is not just in the thought, but also in the feeling that is generated. This is found in the Bible

as well. The translation tells us that Jesus says simply, *"ask and you shall receive"*, but when we look at that in the original Aramaic that Jesus spoke (by translating the biblical Greek back into Aramaic), it has far more shades of meaning, and could be expanded to *"Ask without hidden motive and be surrounded by your answer – be enveloped in what you desire that your gladness may be full."* This is because there are fewer words in the Aramaic language, so each word has a greater range of meaning. Expanding the meaning shows us that the asking is to be done in an envisioning way, with real desire for it to happen. Put feeling into it! We lose so much in translation. Intentional prayer is internally creating the experience of what we desire, as if it already exists, with the emotion of compassion.

Yet meditation and contemplative prayer are forms that do not focus on feeling, so how do they work? I think the answer is that they change us to be more

aware, awake, and alive people! Meditation has been shown to have many medical benefits, with numerous well-documented studies. It has been shown to lower blood pressure, reduce the incidence of strokes, heart disease and cancer, diminish chronic pain, reduce anxiety and depression, and has various other medical benefits. As Dawson Church puts it in his book *The Genie in your*

Genes, "If meditation were a drug, it would be considered medical malpractice for a physician to fail to prescribe it."

There is something healing and balancing about coming before the divine presence in quiet and stillness. Many who use this technique would say that little happens in a felt, experiential way during the period of meditation, but it is the effect in the rest of their life that makes a difference. The inner stillness seems to carry over into everyday life, reducing stress and bringing the ability to be more centered in the midst of hectic lifestyles.

The great illusion we are in is self-consciousness. We are so aware of ourselves that we have lost the awareness of God-consciousness in which we exist. Our egos are too strong. We perceive God as separate from us and so we picture him as a Being that is 'out there' rather than 'in here'. The spiritual path through meditation is going beyond the ego-self, the illusory self, to unitive consciousness.

Don MacGregor



WEAVING NETWORKS OF SPIRIT

We are living in pivotal times, walking the cliff edge of change in a world in which the evolutionary impulse has moved Life forward over 13.5 billion years. I am not a scientist so cannot speak from that perspective but I know that evolution sometimes moves forward in great leaps. The lives of each of the great Masters catalysed a leap forward but not many people at that time really grasped the implications of their teachings. They then had to live into what they had been shown and learn to hold a steady course between the pulls of the material world and the call of the Spirit worlds. This is where the work of all those who hear and respond to the call is so important as they *"intuit and anchor new ideas and methods within the consciousness of humanity"*.

Today some think that we are living at the apex of evolution since humanity has now attained conscious awareness, has learned to manipulate the material world to meet our needs and so we can then just sit back and enjoy life with as much monetary wealth as we can. But they forget that we are here for a purpose and that we are only now beginning to perceive, as Sir George Trevelyan so often quoted of Christopher Fry at a time when *"wrong comes up to meet us everywhere, never to leave us till we take the greatest stride of soul man ever took. Affairs are now soul size"*.

So in this article I am going to run over the waves of the soul sized emerging new consciousness that have surfaced periodically in the past, the strides of soul that are currently being taken and suggest how not only are we evoking the power of the One Life but that the One Life is also being called forth from us. We need to explore the nature of the evocative call at this time. We know about the impulse of evolution in a biological sense but we are now beginning to recognise that consciousness is also evolving.

If we look back, we can see that in our early past a sense of Spirit shone through early cave paintings. It was accessed through dance, music and song. It is there in the megalithic monuments, it shines through fairy tales and myths if we have eyes to see. For example, we are shown how humanity is in a great sleep but can be awakened through the 'kiss of the prince' of our higher selves which is so relevant today when as Neale Donald Walsh in his latest *Conversations with God* series says that humanity's key task at this time is "to awaken the species". In the past the great Gothic cathedrals lifted us towards the heavens and the ancient cultures demonstrated how to live in harmony with invisible dimensions of being. It is still there in indigenous communities and in western cultures it surfaced periodically despite the rising power of exoteric orthodoxies that tried to squash, or even dispose of, those that threatened their creeds and

power structures. Nevertheless, a deeper esoteric understanding surfaced through the Kabbalah, through alchemy, the Quest for the Grail, Gnosticism, Egyptian Hermetic teachings, the Knights Templar. It showed itself in the fifteenth and sixteenth century Renaissance, the seventeenth century Rosicrucians, eighteenth and nineteenth century Romantic poets and is now profoundly surfacing again in our times.

The key aspects of this hidden stream are what is so greatly needed today. This understanding is within us all at an unconscious level and it only takes a small spark to ignite it. Once ignited it opens up the ancient wisdom so that we begin to realise that:

- ◇ *It is the eternal sea of consciousness that has created and sustains the universe.*
- ◇ *Matter is how Spirit appears in the physical world, but we have come to worship the matter itself and forgotten the Spirit that supports it.*
- ◇ *Our hearts are the organs of the soul and are as important as our brains as a tool of perception and expression.*
- ◇ *We need to use both sides of our brain, the rational left brain and the intuitive right brain.*
- ◇ *Love is the glue that holds all life together.*

If we truly grasped the two great commandments - to "love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and our neighbour as ourselves" then we would begin to realise that we are all one and what a different world that would be.

These hidden streams had to be hidden lest they were destroyed by those invested in the exoteric understanding, but when the gnostic gospels were discovered hidden in earthenware jar in the last century they revealed just how long this knowledge had been known. As Jesus says in the gnostic gospel of Thomas:

"If you bring forth that which is within you what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth that which is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you."

What we are now realising is that within each of us is a core of divinity awaiting our discovery. If we had the insight and the courage to bring this forth how different our world might be!

It is now, with the spread of meditation and mindfulness, that stillness is helping us to bring what is within us forward, to rediscover what is said *"Be still and know that I am God"*. This is something that began to emerge in the 1960s along with the discovery that God is not a being out there but a divinity within each of us. *"The kingdom of heaven is*

within you” was said 2000 years ago and the mystics have always affirmed this but now many, many more are living in this knowledge.

The new consciousness that has been emerging since the nineteen sixties is moving us towards a deeper understanding:

- ◇ *The reality of the invisible worlds, the various ways of connecting with guides and helpers and friends and family who have passed on ahead of us, the truth of “ask and you will receive” and the way our requests can be answered can at times seem miraculous.*
- ◇ *The need to educate the whole person: body, mind, emotions and spirit.*
- ◇ *The diversity of life forms, all expressions of the One Life and thus the need for us to respect and care for all living beings and so live in harmony with nature. Could it be that as we begin to care for the divine in the natural world that we realise that our generation has been guilty of a kind of second crucifixion because we have destroyed the sacred in so many life forms?*

I was part of a small group in the early nineteen seventies that clubbed together to buy a small farm to try to farm organically, care for the environment, live in closer connection with each other and offer holistic forms of education. It was called *The Bridge Trust* as we saw that bridges were now needed between the present separative consciousness and the new that was emerging. My friends at the time thought I had gone potty but luckily there were other supportive initiatives under way, I attended the first conference on the wholeness of life held in the new Universal Hall in the *Findhorn Foundation*, there were several on Iona, groupings like Friends of the Earth were starting and out of The Bridge Trust sprang CANA, (Christians Awakening to a New Awareness) to work with the evolving edge of Christianity.

Each initiative was envisioned and inspired by a spark igniting within a few people, a small group forming and a clear vision held with patience and perseverance keeping it all going. As a spark lights up in one person who shares it with another it is a bit like the now well known understanding of the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into the butterfly and the crucial survival of the early imaginal cells that are moving beyond the then conventional reality, surviving by linking with others and forming imaginal clusters.

One obstacle has been the entrenched materialist science that has resisted any new understanding. Einstein was among the first to break through this by showing us that all is energy but now evidence is being brought forward that *consciousness is not something that we have but what we and the whole world are* and that our world is a cosmic hologram in

which the same patterns of information are expressed at every level from the minutely small to the unimaginably large, micro to macro – all is one. The Scientific and Medical Network have now published the *Galileo Commission* report “Beyond a Materialist World View” and a *Unity Community* has been growing around Dr Jude Currivan’s work on the vital importance of communicating a Whole World View. The ancient story of oneness is re-emerging as the New Story that we need to teach our children and find ways to live by in daily life.

Now is a pivotal time as we shift from the importance of one person, one grouping to an emerging group consciousness that will carry us through towards a new era for humanity and planet earth because we need to awaken to the miraculous nature of who we really are, how each of us has a part to play, how the diversity of our endeavours provide the necessary diversity for the unity of the One Life to be fully expressed and to the depth of love that underpins and embraces us in every moment of our lives of expression to the growing unity of the One Life.

Whether our soul role is to initiate new endeavours or support what others have undertaken, we all have a part to play in what has been termed this ‘Great Awakening’. Should you feel called to assist an endeavour to ‘Restore Spirit in Today’s World ‘ then I would be delighted to send you an invitation to a day in London on **Saturday 16th May**. (e-mail janice.dolley@btinternet.com) This is not a conference as such but rather a participative symposium to explore proposals in which all can collaborate to take forward the essential ideas of the reality of the invisible realms, the assistance that is available from universal intelligence in many forms and how the new story of the essential oneness of all life could be a game changer to resolve in collaborative ways the many challenges that face our world today.

Maybe the role of those of us in Cana is to bring hope where there is so much despair, hold a strong vision of a way of brotherhood and love is ahead and work co-creatively towards this in every way we can. I think it was the philosopher Edmund Burke who first said “All it takes for evil to flourish is for good men to do nothing”. Some of us can travel to be with others; others cannot, but they can hold the power of positive vision and loving thought; and some of us can offer to host one of a travelling series of day events in different areas on the idea of “Insights for a Changing World” (see [next page](#)). It is the shift in our consciousness and our assistance to assist others who may find it hard to embrace change, that will make the much needed difference.

Janice Dolley

See *The Dream of the Cosmos* by Anne Baring (Archive Publishing 2013) for further reading.

NEW INSIGHTS FOR CHANGING TIMES

Janice Dolley and Revd Don MacGregor of the CANA Core Group were planning to be touring various parts of England, offering a day session, but this is now postponed until the coronavirus pandemic dies down.. However, we are still looking for hosts to book venues for us. If you can offer to host a session, we would be most grateful. Please contact Don donmacg@live.co.uk or Janice janice.dolley@btinternet.com

So, what is it all about? Read on...

Established paths seem to be leading humanity towards a cliff edge in so many ways, but new insights are dawning that are shifting us from a world based on separation and material gain for a few, towards more enlightened ways. These are based on the realisation that all life is deeply interconnected and that seeing from this 'oneness' perspective is the way forward. This realisation, which has been proclaimed by the mystics of all faith traditions, is now being affirmed by leading edge science.

This event is part of a search for ways forward that acknowledge that it is our responsibility to respect and care for all life and to recognise that there is a realm of Spirit waiting to engage with us on this journey. It is in a spirit of collaboration that many people are now seeking to revitalise the best of the old ways as well as blaze a trail towards a new future. Within the chrysalis of the old a transformation is occurring and the butterfly of the new will emerge. Each of us is involved in this search for oneness and we invite you to explore with us.

In a day of presentations, sharing, interaction and discussion we shall explore new paths, expanding from our spiritual roots into a new story for humanity.

Facilitators: Janice Dolley and Revd Don

MacGregor. Both are active members of CANA www.cana.org.uk and involved in promoting the transformation of humanity for the 21st century. They have both written recent books and will draw on those and their extensive experience in guiding the day.

Some of the areas to be covered will include:

Convergence of science and spirit.

Oneness with Gaia and the whole Divine Cosmos.

Continuity after physical death – the ongoing journey.

Implications for faith traditions, especially Christianity

Books:

Janice Dolley, 2020. *Awakening To A New Reality: Conscious Conversations Across the Threshold of Death*

[Also available secondhand - Janice Dolley, Ursula Burton, 1984. *Christian Evolution: Moving Towards a Global Spirituality*]

Don MacGregor, 2012. *Blue Sky God: The Evolution of Science and Christianity*. Circle Books

Don MacGregor, 2020. *Christianity Expanding: Into Universal Spirituality*. [To be published Autumn 2020]

*“And the people stayed home,
and read books, and listened, and rested, and
exercised, and made art, and played games, and
learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened
more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some
danced. Some met their shadows. And the people
began to think differently.*

*And the people healed. And, in the absence of people
living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless
ways, the earth began to heal.*

*And when the danger passed, and the people joined
together again, they grieved their losses, and made new
choices and dreamed new images, and created new
ways to live and heal the earth fully,
as they had been healed”.*

Kitty O'Meara

EVOLVING CONSCIOUSNESS

I have been a member of the Scientific and Medical Network for twenty years or more and have found it a great source of inspiration and hope: inspiration to think more deeply about the connections between science and spirituality, and hope because in our materialistic age so many organisations, including many of our churches, are freaked out by the merest hint of 'mystical' thinking, or any experiences outside what is considered 'normal'; yet here is a network of eminent scientists, doctors, surgeons, philosophers, poets, clergy and ordinary people like myself who want very badly to think outside the constricting boxes created by the society in which we live.

The excitement of doing just that came home to me at a recent conference on 'Evolving Consciousness' organised by the Network in London, last November. The chief inspiration of the conference came from the work of Owen Barfield, a friend of Tolkien and CS Lewis.

The day began with conversation between Mark Vernon and the main speakers: Gary Lachman came to Barfield through his attempts to understand the work of Rudolf Steiner and he reminded us that Steiner said that the world we live in today was imagined yesterday, and the world of tomorrow is being imagined today. In short, *imagination matters*.

The priest and poet Malcolm Guite said that we are at a liminal and shifting point in our collective story where we need to find a way to articulate meaning. He quoted Coleridge: 'Imagination is the living power and prime agent of all perception'. We are able to accumulate a vast body of knowledge, but need to discover its meaning. Imagination can facilitate nothing less than a sharing in divine sight, thus revealing 'a world bathed in spiritual light'.

Marilyn Monk added that this happens when our individual capacities align themselves in the service of the whole – a pattern that can be perceived in nature itself as every element, from subatomic

particles upwards, understands itself by the part it plays in the dance of the totality it shares.

The above is only a brief summary of the talks: Mark Vernon's conference report is available on his website www.markvernon.com/evolving-consciousness and it is also possible to watch the whole of the interview with Gary Lachman and Marilyn Monk, molecular biologist, psychosynthesis counsellor and Alexander technique teacher, .. The latter's ten minute explanation as to how she, as a scientist, reached the conclusion that everything exists in a hierarchical structure from the smallest particle, upwards, to the creator and that this proves the existence of a loving God, is amazing to behold.

In the afternoon we divided into small discussion groups pursuing one of four themes: personal formation, religious and spiritual traditions, science and modernity and mysticism and gnosis.

As Mark Vernon says in his report: 'the room came alive with thoughts as people pursued questions such as what individual transformation involves and how religious traditions can be freed to communicate their life once more. Others contemplated how science and spirituality are akin because they both seek to test intuitions. There was also much discussion of the nature of gnosis and how to communicate powerfully felt mystical vision.

Books written by the speakers at this conference:

Mark Vernon: *A Secret History of Christianity* (John Hunt 2019)

Gary Lachman: *A Secret History of Consciousness* (Steiner Books Inc 2011)

Marilyn Monk: *Mammalian Development* (OUP 1987)

Malcolm Guite: *Mariner: A Voyage with Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Hodder & Stoughton 2017)

Judy Hanmer

Imagination is 'a quickening spirit, giving life and energy to the human mind; it is in effect, God present as an active force in the world'.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



THE POWER OF THOUGHT - extracts from CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

by NEALE DONALD WALSCH

Life is a creation, not a discovery.

You do not live each day to discover what it holds for you, but to create it. You are creating your reality every minute, probably without knowing it.

Here's why that is so, and how it works.

I have created you in the image and likeness of God.

God is the creator.

- ◇ You are three beings in one. You can call these three aspects of being anything you want: Father, Son and Holy Ghost; mind, body and spirit; superconscious, conscious, subconscious.
- ◇ Creation is a process that proceeds from these three parts of your body. Put another way, you create at three levels. The tools of creation are: thought, word, and deed.
- ◇ All creation begins with thought ('Proceeds from the Father'). All creation then moves to word ('Ask and you shall receive, speak and it shall be done unto you'). All creation is fulfilled in deed ('And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us').
- ◇ That which you think of, but thereafter never speak of, creates at one level. That which you think of and speak of creates at another level. That which you think, speak, and do becomes made manifest in your reality.
- ◇ To think, speak, and do something which you do not truly believe is impossible. Therefore, the process of creation must include belief, or knowing. This is absolute faith. This is beyond hoping. This is knowing of a certainty ('By your faith shall you be healed'). Therefore, the doing part of creation always includes knowing. It is a gut-level clarity, a total certainty, a complete acceptance as reality of something.
- ◇ This place of knowing is a place of intense and incredible gratitude. It is a thankfulness in advance. And that, perhaps, is the biggest key to creation: to be grateful before, and for, the creation. Such taking for granted is not only condoned but encouraged. It is the sure sign of mastery. All Masters know in advance that the deed has been done.
- ◇ Celebrate and enjoy all that you create, have created. To reject any part of it is to reject a part of yourself. Whatever it is that is now presenting itself as part of your creation, own it, claim it, bless it, be thankful for it. Seek not to condemn it for to condemn it is to condemn yourself.
- ◇ If there is some aspect of creation you find you do not enjoy, bless it and simply change it. Choose again. Call forth a new reality. Think a

new thought. Say a new word. Do a new thing. Do this magnificently and the rest of the world will follow. Ask it to. Call for it to. Say 'I am the Life and the Way, follow me'.

This is how to manifest God's will 'on Earth as it is in Heaven'.

And about prayer from chapter 1:

No prayer – and a prayer is nothing more than a fervent statement of what is so – goes unanswered. Every prayer – every thought, every statement, every feeling – is creative. To the degree that it is fervently held as truth, to that degree will it be made manifest in your experience.

When it is said that a prayer has not been answered, what has in actuality happened is that the most fervently held thought, word, or feeling has become operative. Yet what you must know – and here is the secret – is that always it is the thought behind the thought – what might be called the Sponsoring Thought – that is the controlling thought.

If, therefore, you beg and supplicate, there seems a much smaller chance that you will experience what you think you are choosing, because the Sponsoring Thought behind every supplication is that you do not have now what you wish. That Sponsoring Thought becomes your reality.

The only Sponsoring Thought which could override this thought is the thought held in faith that God will grant whatever is asked, without fail. Some people have such faith, but very few.

The process of prayer becomes much easier when, rather than having to believe that God will always say 'yes' to every request, one understands intuitively that the request itself is not necessary. Then the prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving. It is not a request at all, but a statement of gratitude for what is so.

Jane Upchurch

Grateful thanks to the author Neil Donald Walsch and his publisher Hodder & Stoughton for allowing us to publish the above extract from his book *Conversations with God*

What we think, feel and believe, whether or not it's 'true', significantly affects our notions of what's real ... numerous studies and experiments have shown that we literally 'see' what we believe that we see what we expect to see.

Jude Currivan, Cosmologist,
in her book *The Cosmic Hologram*

WHO'S MAD NOW?

I recently came across a quote from Abba Anthony of the Desert Fathers and decided to put it up on Facebook with a comment – and got some interesting responses, which are below

MY FACEBOOK POST WAS THIS:

Abba Anthony said, “A time is coming when men will go mad, and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him saying, ‘You are mad, you are not like us.’” So, who's mad, and who's not mad? Am I mad to believe in a divine presence in which everything exists? Some scientists now say there is an underlying matrix of information that holographically creates the universe as we know it. Seems just a difference in terminology to me! Am I mad to think that in some way, through our own individualised bit of consciousness, we co-create with the underlying divine informational matrix? Am I mad to think that if we, as humanity, focus long and hard for the next few years, we can bring about a better, more healthy and harmonious environment and avert some of the possible climate crisis? Am I mad to believe that cultivating right relationships and goodwill can change things? Or am I just an optimist!

It's a relevant question, which will be played out in the future. Am I just an optimist to believe that, like Julian of Norwich, ‘All shall be well and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well’? Or is it that my optimism, with that of everyone else thinking in that vein, will actually change the way things happen? Can ecological disaster be averted? The direction that both science and spirituality are heading is that we are a part of an interconnected whole, a cosmic matrix that we could call the Divine, and that consciousness plays a part in co-creating the future within that matrix. Our consciousness, the way we think, our attitudes and convictions and behaviour affect the morphic information field (mind of God?) from which reality emanates.

I had a brief exchange with a fellow clergyman in the comments on the post. It shows that many clergy are beginning to think outside the theological box. It went like this:

Him: Everything we see is a portrait of the Divine. But to use the word 'everything' is slightly misleading. There are no things out there. It is all in our consciousness.

Me: Are we all part of one consciousness, called

'God' by some like us?

Him: We ourselves are not divine life or the Source and Ground of all life, we nevertheless know that our life and being is not separate from God's life and being. We are one with it, but we are not IT.

Me: A fine distinction, 'We are not IT'. Do you mean as in a drop of water is not the ocean, a molecule of oxygen is not the atmosphere?

Him: Yes...but we are always going to struggle to find the right words or illustration to describe this. ‘The only things we perceive are our perceptions’ (George Berkeley)

ANOTHER FRIEND WROTE THIS:

“There is a great bit in one of Kurt Vonnegut's books, *Breakfast of Champions*, where the main character, a down and out science fiction writer called Kilgore Trout, goes into a public toilet and sees scrawled on the wall 'What is the Purpose of Mankind?' He scrabbles around for something to write with and finally finds a dead match, with which he scrawls : 'To be the eyes and ears of the

creator of the universe, you idiot'.”

And finally, a relative wrote this: “You are mad Don MacGregor but sometimes mad men make a lot of sense.”

Well, in my madness, as the world seems to descend into chaos, my hope and belief is that this is the opportunity and preparation for humanity to wake up and see that the only way forward is through mutual understanding, goodwill towards all, and cooperation in building a sustainable and compassionate future for all. Hold that vision, and we change the world.

P.S. I am not meaning to be disrespectful to anyone who has had mental health issues in using the term ‘mad’. In this context it is being used simply as a term for someone who ‘sees things differently’.

Don MacGregor



Miracles do not happen in contradiction to nature, but only in contradiction to that which is known in nature – St Augustine

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CHALICE & THE BLADE: OUR HISTORY, OUR FUTURE' BY RIANE EISLER

"The Chalice and the Blade tells a new story of our cultural origins. It shows that warfare and the war of the sexes are neither divinely nor biologically ordained. It provides verification that a better future is possible—and is in fact firmly rooted in the haunting dramas of what happened in our past."

I found the Chalice and the Blade a powerful book; it is scholarly but very readable. It examines the widespread finding of goddess figures from pre-history, and archaeological evidence from early civilisations such as the Minoan, interpreting these as indications of matriarchal societies. Here matriarchal means the highest regard for women, but without domination over men. Eisler's work that develops from this proposes that there are two basic models for society: partnership, and domination (usually with men in the dominant role). It also offers hope for movement towards a more egalitarian society in the future, and indications of what this might mean. This is developed further in her recent book, co-authored with Douglas P. Fry: *Nurturing our humanity: how domination and partnership shape our brains, lives and future*.

Jane Upchurch

LIFE CONTINUES AND HAS MESSAGES FOR US TODAY

When my best friend and co-author Ursula Burton died one of the first things she said to me was "Janice, I can see thought, I can see what you are thinking". She appeared three hours after she passed as I sat on a plane to take me to Edinburgh so that I could help sort things out. She seemed vibrant, radiant somehow.

My new book *Awakening to a New Reality: Conscious Conversations across the Horizon of Death* will at last be published at the start of April. It is based on conversations with Ursula after her passing as she very much wanted those of us still in this dimension of being to understand the greater sense of reality that she now had and help us to see that her present reality was what we are moving towards now during the great shift in consciousness that is currently underway. Likewise when my own husband of 63 years together passed over a few months ago he also said "I can see what you are thinking" A friend passed on to me her insight into how he could now understand "what you women have been on about all this time". "You women" referred to myself, our four daughters and associated female friends.

In this book I have tried to weave these conversations so that we can also understand that

the 'new reality' Ursula is speaking about is also surfacing as our present reality on this Earth plane at this time. Mystics of all traditions have always testified to the oneness of all life and science is now converging with the mystics to bring us a deeper sense of the subtle levels of existence that have been largely ignored in recent decades.

A flier for this book is enclosed for all who receive this newsletter by post and a click on e-flier for those who receive the electronic version. All of us can receive from the cosmos in inner ways. The doors of perception are opening and the veils between ourselves and other worlds are thinning. Today we are living in a time of expanding awareness, of discovering a deeper meaning to life which includes the knowledge that death is not the end and that we continue on in different ways. My own next quest includes exploring the potential of the power of thought and positive intention. We are all on a journey of awakening to new discoveries which are there for all of us

Janice Dolley

EPIGENETIC REVELATIONS

(The following is an extract from Don MacGregor's forthcoming book *Christianity Expanding – Into Universal Spirituality*)

Epigenetics is the study of what goes on around the gene. It analyses the way in which genes are activated by the environment in which they exist. Experiments have shown that the DNA helix is surrounded by a sheath of protein molecules that act like switches by unwrapping the genes. But what makes the switches work is the environment surrounding the cell. More precisely, the electro-magnetic and chemical signals in the environment around the cell are what 'flick the switches'. On the surface of every cell are various receptors for chemical and electro-magnetic signals. They work in two ways. Firstly, our own thought processes cause the release of chemicals into the bloodstream. This is happening rapidly, all the time. Genes are being wrapped up and unwrapped constantly as we speak, by our thoughts and emotions and our unconscious body-regulating mechanisms. We are constantly changing our gene expression.

Secondly, the environment around the cell is affected by the electro-magnetic radiation and fields of energy that are given out by all manner of living beings, including ourselves. There are protein receptors on the surface of the cell that register these messages and convey them to the genes. It is these more subtle energies that are suspected to be the way in which one person can influence the well-being of another - by affecting which genes are in operation.

One of the writers in this area, Dawson Church, put

it like this:

“When you understand that with every feeling and thought, in every instant, you are performing epigenetic engineering upon your own cells, you suddenly have a degree of leverage over your health and happiness that makes all the difference.”

This not only places the responsibility for our health firmly back with each of us, but it also opens up a whole area of understanding about the power of intention, of thinking positive thoughts, of prayer, healing and meditation and all the spiritual disciplines and therapies – and the positive effects they have on health and length of life.

We are becoming much more aware of the potential of the human being for health, healing and wholeness – but it all stems from an evolved understanding of the role that our own consciousness has.

Don MacGregor

THE POWER OF EIGHT

I was particularly impressed with Lynne McTaggart's book *The Power of Eight: Harnessing The Miraculous Energies of a Small Group to Heal Others, your Life and the World*. An extract from the Amazon summary says:

“As human beings we are inclined to be insular and tribal. This book has shown me that there are things our society has not recognised that demonstrate how we are all connected world-wide: people, plants and planet. In *The Power of Eight* Lynne arranged many experiments about how group intention can heal our lives - and change the world for the better.....

Drawing on hundreds of case studies, the latest brain research, and dozens of McTaggart's own university studies, *The Power of Eight* provides solid evidence showing that there is such a thing as a collective consciousness. Now you can learn to use it and unleash the power you hold inside of you to heal your own life, with help from this riveting, highly accessible new book.”

As human beings we are inclined to be insular and tribal. From the theme of ‘We Are All One’, this book shows me that there are things our society has not recognised that show how world-wide we are all connected: people, plants and planet. In *The Power of Eight* Lynne arranged many experiments with thousands of people holding the same intention for a person or situation. Miracles happened. When they held a peace intention for the war in Sri Lanka that had been going on for 25 years, it got worse, but then it stopped, as if the flare up was necessary to bring about the change needed. What was not expected was the effect on those taking part who also found peace and healing in their own lives and situations.

The book is called *The Power of Eight* because Lynne McTaggart found that you do not need thousands. Just a group of eight people, agreeing to hold the same intention for 10 minutes for a person or situation, would be effective, and healing also occurred for those holding the intention.

We Are All One and interconnected in amazing ways.

Bill Upchurch

A GOD BEYOND BELIEF BY DR LANCE MOORE (2019 CIRCLE BOOKS)

The subtitle is *Reclaiming Faith in a Quantum Age*. But the word quantum is slightly misleading. It refers to the effect of quantum scientific thinking on all forms of thinking including religious. The primary word for the book is really Paradox. Although the book uses the insights from Quantum Science it is not about science, except in a chapter on Religion and Science. Its main thesis is the importance of appreciating paradox. He has a good line in humour, thus starting with An Un-Skippable Preface, which is an essential introduction. After that there are 11 chapters of paradoxes with "Questions for Thought, Study and Group Discussion". They make the book ideal for group discussions. I hope that I may run a group using this book.

But don't wait for a group, read it! At no time should you be bored. A lot of the time you will want to reread what Lance has written because it is fascinating and needs learning. His insights help explain how we (the Church) have gone wrong in interpreting words of Scripture. The chapter “The Paradox of Divine Scripture & Human Writing” plays with subjects like creation, which may be helpful mythology but bad science. The author then goes on to indicate how we need to be aware of bad early translations from Hebrew, Aramaic and other early languages, later from bad choices on Latin and even English.

The words ‘reclaiming faith’ in the sub-heading are most appropriate and justified in describing this book. Get it!

David Storey

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

Editor: Judy Hanmer

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Production and Distribution: Bill Upchurch

Please send contributions to future newsletters to Judy at jhanmer789@btinternet.com

Many thanks to the above and to all those who have contributed articles for this edition. Ed.

Spring
2020

**TOWARDS
UNIVERSAL
SPIRITUALITY
Journeying with
Christianity**

Copy for next
Newsletter to:

admin@cana.org.uk &
jhanmer789@btinternet.com

by mid August

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CANA NEWSLETTER

CANA TOUR 1 April 27-30 2020 - South East

NEW INSIGHTS FOR CHANGING TIMES A DAY OF EXPLORATION AND DISCUSSION

(See page 11 for details about the says)

Monday 27th Steep

10-4.30 Day Session at The Tithe Barn, 102 Church Road, Steep, Near Petersfield GU32 7DD with Celia & David Storey - 01730 265591 or storeycelia@gmail.com

Tuesday 28th Emsworth

Afternoon Session 1.30-4.30pm at The Hayloft Centre, Palmers Road, Emsworth, PO10 7DL
Dinah Lawson: 02392 412412 dinahlawson42@gmail.com

Wednesday 29th Canterbury

10.30-4.30 Day Session at Quiet Valley, adjacent to 146 The Street Kingston Canterbury CT4 6JQ
Rev. Lizzie Hopthrow: lizziehopthrow@btinternet.com 01227 830 070

Helen Carmichael to act as 'booking person'
helen15@hotmail.co.uk 01227 832174

Thursday 30th Bexhill

10.30-4.30 Day at Friends Meeting House, 15a Albert Road, Bexhill on Sea, TN40 1DG . Booking:: Marie Miller, 8 Clock Tower Court, Park Avenue, Bexhill, TN39 3HP Tel 01424 214327

Booking for all the above should be with the host.

THE THEME OF OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER IS TRANSFORMATION: HOW WILL CHANGE COME ABOUT?

In 1992 CANA was at the forefront of Christian organisations keying into the impetus of the New Age. We had opened to alternative therapies, Eastern mysticism, organic farming and sacred pilgrimage. Our understanding of God had become that element which runs through everything. In the ensuing years, have we experienced transformation in our lives? Where do we go now? Is there still a need for CANA? If CANA were to continue, who should take it forward or should it merge with other organisations? These are some of the subjects we have considered over the years: A Consultation Day on the New Spirituality; Spiritual Living for the 21st Century; Thoughts on the Leading Edge of the Church; Towards a Holistic Christianity: Taking the Christian Heritage into the Next Century; Dwelling Deep in the Heart of Love; Moving Towards a Universal Christianity; Into Christ Consciousness: Co-creating the Future; We are all One - Towards Spirituality: Journeying with Christianity. In two years' time CANA will be thirty and some of us who were there at the beginning are still in the Core Group. Perhaps it is time for change.

Please feel moved to send us your ideas for an invigorating next edition of this newsletter to the editor Judy Hanmer jhanmer789@btinternet.com

Celia Storey