



CANA NEWSLETTER

AWAKENING TO UNIVERSAL SPIRITUALITY
Evolving with Christianity

AUTUMN 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 realm of God'.

www.cana.org.uk

CHANGING TIMES: CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

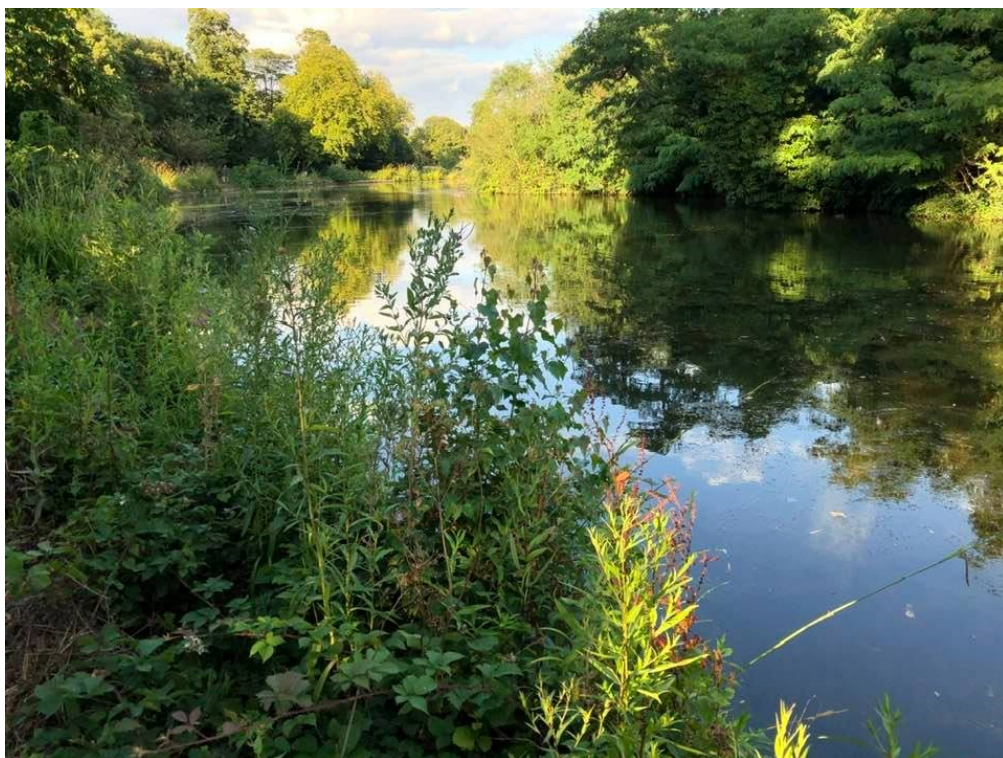


Photo taken by Janice Acquah - a local park in London "celebrating and being fully present to the beauty still possible to discover even in lockdown".

Sometimes our spiritual programmes take us far away from our inner belonging. We become addicted to the methods and programmes of psychology and religion. We become so desperate to learn how to be that our lives pass, and we neglect the practice of being. One of the lovely things in the Celtic mind was its sense of spontaneity. Spontaneity is one of the greatest spiritual gifts. To be spontaneous is to escape the cage of the ego by trusting that which is beyond the self. One of the greatest enemies of spiritual belonging is the ego "....."the ego is threatened, competitive and stressed, whereas the soul is drawn more towards surprise, spontaneity, the new and the fresh. Real soul presence has humour and irony and no obsessive self-seriousness. It avoids what is weary, worn or repetitive. The image of the well breaking out of the hard, crusted ground is an illuminating image for the freshness that can suddenly dawn with the heart that remains open to experience."

John O'Donohue
Anam Cara (Bantam Press)

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

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CHANGING TIMES, CAN WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

"If a problem is fixable, if a situation is such that you can do something about it, then there is no need to worry. If it's not fixable, then there is no help in worrying. There is no benefit in worrying whatsoever."

The Dalai Lama

From *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*; by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu. This book is an intimate glimpse into the minds of two of the world's spiritual guides, and their foundation for an attainable and practical approach to experiencing a more enriching and sustainable life of abundant joy.

EDITORIAL

For those of us who were not on the front line of the crisis, lockdown provided a pause in life in which one could home in on what was most important, building community, keeping in touch with family and friends, spending time in prayer and meditation to nurture our inner lives. There was a great feeling of kindness, of looking after each other, and many people commented on the peacefulness of roads free of traffic, skies empty of planes, the ability to pause and hear birdsong.

Now we seem to be back in the maelstrom of life, yet unable to live it as we lived before. Churches are beginning to re-open but I personally have not been aware of any robust spiritual encouragement coming from church leaders. (Perhaps I read the wrong newspapers or subscribe to the wrong social media?) However, if one knows where to look there have been some extremely inspiring talks on offer from spiritual writers and teachers of many different backgrounds. When asked what ordinary people can do to create a better future all of them seem to be saying that each of us must start with ourselves, looking inward and coming to terms with what Jung would call our shadow side so that we don't project it onto the outer world.

Begin with yourself they say, put your own house in order and the benefits of this will radiate outwards, helping to create the better future all of us long for. Details of some of the books by these thinkers can be found on page 10 and many of their talks are available on Youtube.

Our new venture into Conscious Conversations on Zoom enables Cana supporters to talk to each other about their hopes and fears for the future. Do join us, if you can, at our next Conversation on **Saturday November 28th at 10.30 am**. More information and sign up details will follow in a later email.

This will be the last newsletter that Celia and I produce; the Cana Core Group plan to send out regular emails (or letters for those who do not use email) in the New Year.

Judy Hanmer



*Don't go back to sleep, people are going back and forth
across the door sill,
where the two worlds meet. The door is round and open,
don't go back to sleep.*

Rumi

RE-LANGUAGING SPIRIT AND SPIRITUALITY

Language is always a problem in trying to communicate spiritual concepts and ideas because we are dealing with experiences of the divine that can be interpreted differently by every individual. In any system of thought or cultural milieu, a vocabulary develops to communicate in that sphere, whether it is medical terminology, the world of music, education or religious thought. Each develops its own 'jargon'. In this short article, I will illustrate this via Christianity, but the same can be said of any of the major religious and spiritual viewpoints. They all speak their own language.

Spirituality stems from human experience of the divine. We then try to put into words this numinous experience. The experience itself can be of several types

- Being taken up in a feeling and knowing of such awe and wonder that we know we are one with everything, and are held in love. It is the mystical experience of being at one with the Divine, unity awareness, oneness.
- Receiving or becoming a channel for messages from subtle realms by visions or voices.
- Intuitive understanding coming from subtle realms

These are normal human experiences, although not felt by everyone, but experienced by some for millennia, and something possible for anyone to have, given the right conditions, the right psychological and spiritual development. The experiences are then interpreted in the understanding of the time and culture and context of that person. So the articulation of these experiences takes on the clothing of the religious and moral system of the time. The problem is, we can mistake the clothing for the inner human spiritual experience, which leads us to imagine differences where actually none exist. Language is tricky.

The language of liturgical Christianity tends to come from the biblical and medieval world-view

of a three tiered universe. In this model, humanity has its fragile existence in the middle layer of the firmament, the earth, and above us are the heavens, where God and the angels live. Below us is hell or the underworld. We are all aware that the universe is not like that, but much of the language reinforces it still, as in the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father, who art in heaven", which tells us that God is still "up in heaven", distinct from us. The old language was about separateness, exclusivity, patriarchy, Almighty, Lord and Master, duality, tribal thinking. It defines who is 'in' and who is 'out'. It sees humanity as fallen, not inherently divine. It is about divine transaction, not human transformation.

But the new spirituality is developing its own language, partly scientific, partly spiritual. The core of it seems to be that we are all part of the One Consciousness which holds everything in being, permeates everything and is the One Life 'in which we live and move and have our being' – to quote St Paul! We are all one, not just with the rest of humanity, but with the whole of the biosphere. As Dr Jude Currivan says in her book *The Cosmic Hologram*, "Consciousness isn't just something we have, it's what we and the whole world are."

So the language that is emerging around this new spiritual story includes these sorts of words – oneness, interconnectedness, consciousness, source, Gaia, energies, non-duality, transcendence, transformation, awakening, awareness, evolution, initiation, gender equality, inclusion, ecology, interdependence, unity. But there are strong crossover points with traditional faiths, connecting words between the different views. The connecting words are mostly qualities, such as love, respect, honour, kindness, goodness, peacefulness, will-to-good, heart, compassion. Professor Neil Douglas-Klotz has done some very good work in looking at the

Aramaic words that Jesus would have spoken, but which were written down in Greek. Aramaic is a much more poetic language with many more shades of meaning, which his work expands into. Here is a worked example of the Lord's Prayer translated directly from the Aramaic that Jesus spoke, based on the ideas of Neil Douglas-Klotz in *Prayers of the Cosmos*.

Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.	O Breath of Life, flowing in all creation, may the light of your presence fill the universe.
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, On earth as it is in Heaven.	Your way of being come, your desire be done, in this and all realms of existence.
Give us this day our dai- ly bread,	Bring forth the nourish- ment and insight we need for this day.
And forgive us our tres- passes as we forgive those who trespass against us.	May forgiveness of self and others be our lived reality.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.	Liberate us from all things that bind us and deliver us from unhealthiness.
For thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.	For you are abundant life, creative unity and glorious harmony, through all time and beyond. So be it.

In my own book, *Blue Sky God: the Evolution of Science and Christianity*, I tried rewriting several of the traditional prayers of the Anglican Church, putting them into 21st century language. Here are two examples:

THE COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly

love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

*God of all compassion, whose presence within sees our heart's desires and hidden secrets: let your energy and light flow, so that we may know your breath of life in our inner beings, and show heartfelt praise in our lives, as did Jesus the Christ.
Let it be so.*

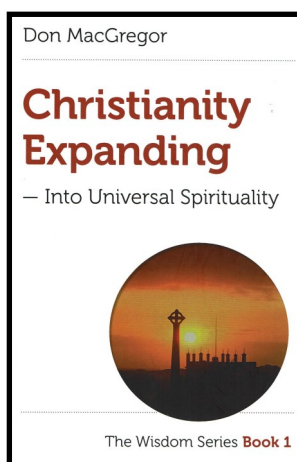
THE CONFESSION

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our fellow men, in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life, to the glory of your name. Amen.

*God of all Creation, in whom we live and move and have our being,
we acknowledge our separation from you within, our self-centeredness and hardness of heart towards others and ourselves.
We are truly sorry, and ask that you would help us to move beyond our minds into the heart of your loving presence. May we be remade in the image of Jesus the Christ, the divine human,
that we may know fullness of life in the energy of your love. Let it be so.*

We can be creative, it is why we have minds! Creativity allows modern expressions of timeless truths, which can hopefully reach new generations to inspire and encourage young minds in spiritual exploration.

Don MacGregor



Don's new book, *Christianity Expanding: Into Universal Spirituality*, is published on 30th October 2020 and is available on Amazon.

More details on page 9

LET'S HAVE A DEBATE!

Some will remember the document Exploring Ways Forward for Christianity into the Twenty-first Century, (see our website www.cana.org.uk) which Jill played a large part in creating.

Jill is responding in her local church newsletter, to a letter from a fellow parishioner. She writes "I read Anon's article about his/her dilemma with great sympathy and relief. How do you find an honest way to continue with integrity being a member of the church when you no longer believe in the traditional understanding of God or the precepts in the creed? I admire your courage in writing about it. I have shared this conflict for many years; it is very uncomfortable and dispiriting! However, I have not until now felt able to go public about my own position. I thought about writing anonymously myself but decided in the end not to do so; but the need to consider it raises a lot of issues in itself".

She goes on to say "In one respect I was very lucky to have discovered a group of Christians in a church elsewhere in the country who introduced me to liberal theology. We met on a regular basis to discuss the inspiring, dedicated scholarship of liberal Christian theologians which enabled me to interpret the scriptures and credal precepts in a metaphorical way and find their deeper meaning. I no longer had to accept it all literally. This was such a relief; I could now affirm my beliefs with integrity. I can enjoy the rituals, poetry and music of the ceremonies without inner conflict. Furthermore, I can appreciate the spiritual treasury of the Bible and the great Christian writers through the centuries. I believe passionately in a loving creative Spirit at the heart of cosmic reality (I call God); that Jesus was filled with this Spirit of love; and that he manifested it in his life and teaching. I also believe that the enlightened leaders of other great faiths manifested this love, through their different cultural heritages; and dearly hope that we can all come together eventually in the loving combined service of people and planet.

"BUT although I can share my way of understanding with other Christians in groups such as the Progressive Christianity Network, I find it impossible to be open about it in my own church. So, like Anon,

I experience the discomfort of feeling at odds with fellow congregants and the Church's public position. I don't believe that Anon and I are alone in having beliefs that are not completely in line with the orthodox. When the former vicar of the University Church of Mary's, Oxford, Canon Brian Mountford did a survey of his congregation he found that 15% were atheists!

"I believe that it would be very enlivening for our church to have an honest and open debate about people's beliefs with the objective of everyone accepting that it is all right for people's beliefs to be different. What matters is the way we follow the Way of Jesus by expressing God's love in our work together, caring for each other and the wider community. In the first instance I would like to suggest that the Parish churches arrange for groups of 6 interested people, socially distanced, to share understandings of their faith and how they see the future.

"The main reason I think it is important to open up this issue within the church is that it would allow us to reach out more effectively to the wider community with a more acceptable message. Many people don't come to church because they think they have to accept the creed literally. If we are able ourselves to be theologically inclusive and practice radical acceptance we can offer love unconditionally. Our purpose would be quite simply to provide a genuinely loving experience with opportunities for people to grow in love and service. After all the Anglican Church is meant to be for "the cure of all souls in the parish.

"I love belonging to the church because its unique non-political purpose in the community is to promote the common good and to share the love of God. I want to be part of it and I want it to be there for future generations. Therefore I hope that before reaching out to the community we can find ways of encouraging an honest exchange of views within the congregation, such as suggested above".

Jill Gant

Jill has summed up for me why I continue to attend our local church and the dilemma in doing so. While CANA continues on a path toward universal spirituality, it is good to know there are still some struggling to bring light into the Church pew.

Celia Storey

THE CELTIC FESTIVALS

The four Celtic earth festivals were followed in this country for hundreds of years and can still have a relevance for us today although most of us are not now working the land. They are on the cross-quarter days, half way between the solstices and equinoxes, when the season is at its peak.

I am drawn to celebrate the seasons of the sun, moon and earth as a way of honouring them and grounding myself. For me it is a way of experiencing our link with and dependence on the natural world, and the unity that we have with it. These festivals would have had prescribed activities associated with each in the past, but we are free to take them and celebrate the aspects, both physical and spiritual, that resonate with us.

Imbolc is the 1st February, the heart of winter, and it was the start of the lambing season. Beltane is the 1st May, the heart of spring, when livestock were moved to upland pastures. They were first driven between two fires to purify them from diseases.

Lammas is the 1st August, the heart of summer, when the grain was brought in for safe storage. This was the time for harvest celebrations with large social gatherings, a time to arrange marriages, make business transactions and legal agreements. Offerings were made to the gods in thanks for the harvest and in preparation for winter.

Samhain (pronounced sowin or sahwin) is the 1st November, the heart of autumn, when the livestock were brought in from open pastures. Some were killed to preserve the meat for winter so this was a time of feasting. It was also the end of one year and the beginning of the next so it was a liminal time when spirits and deities could penetrate the world of humans and bring chaos. This was the time when the male god, seen as the father and protector of the tribe, had sex with the female god, the mother goddess, who controlled the sustenance and the wildness of nature. This union was to ensure provision and protection for the next year. Between Samhain and Imbolc was a quiet time when the natural world was dormant.

From the perspective of the triple goddess representing the female energies, Imbolc is seen as the time when she becomes her virgin self again, the maiden. It is a time of intuition and new beginnings. Beltane is when the female and male come together so the goddess is no longer maiden. This is the time of the most expansive life energies. At Lammas the goddess is the grain mother and it is a time of gathering in and taking stock. At Samhain the goddess becomes the crone and moves back into the realm of the spirit. It is a time for inner wisdom and regeneration.

Samhain is the dark time, the season of soft leaves turning and earth claiming back its own. It is the beginning of the quiet time when sun and the sustenance of roots go far and deep, and it is the beginning of the Celtic year.

I like to think of Spring as the beginning, when trees bud and the mantle of green grows back with life and vigour. But it all starts in the dark. The dark is the ending and the beginning, the tomb and the womb.

We are at the ending and the beginning of major star cycles, of energies, of our and humanity's seasons. We can see chaos and disruption; we can see threats to the planet and its ecosystems; we can see domination, abuse and violence.

But we can also see compassion and beauty. There are signs of new ways, new awareness, new life. We can see hope. I too am part of the planet and part of humanity. I too contain the chaos and the beauty, the dark and the light.

I will lay myself down with the leaves and the sun. I will let the dark nurture what has been neglected. I will not be afraid. I will gather strength in the deep parts of me. And I will trust in the earth's turning and in the rebirth that we know in our bones is coming.

Jane Upchurch

REFERENCES

Barry Cunliffe. *Druids: A very short introduction*. OUP, 2010.

Glennie Kindred, *Sacred Earth Celebrations*. Permanent Publications, 2014.

FULL MOON IN LIBRA - 1st October 2020

I am finding it difficult to be fair in my comments on someone I only know from the opinions of others and my interpretation of what I see as his actions and opinions. Yes, it is President Trump.

I can almost not avoid having him in my mind as this month the sign is about Justice, the scales of justice, but also weighing up all the political stands that so many are taking and need to take.

I note that the element of the month is air. So appropriate as we need to breathe in air that is as pure as possible to help us clear our minds and look at relevant situations that are shouting or emerging for our attention.

The month is ideally about balance and equilibrium. How much the world needs it. As Michal Eastcott writes about this sign, we need help to resolve polarities such as positivity and negativity, selfish desires and spiritual aspirations. "Libra is also concerned with the establishing of human right relationships, and its influences work to achieve the ultimate equilibrium, the balance between soul and form." Michal makes one challenge that I need to attend to and others may choose to note: "The Libran period is therefore a good time to reorganise the structures through which we expend our life energy and the patterns and forms of the inner as well as the outer life."

She warns against the things that we need to guard against: "Indecision, fluctuation, apathy, failure to evoke the will to choose and then to follow the way that has been decided upon". (I might add there unless there is a good reason.) Things change and sometimes we have to respond to the change.

Jonathon Porritt on one of the almost daily sessions from Ubiquity University, gave a great example of balance and equilibrium in these times. *What* and *how* are important considerations.

Blessings to you all as you engage at this time with the work to develop Group Consciousness towards a Universal Spirituality – Evolving with Christianity. If you would like to receive our monthly emails for the full moon, or for Praying for the Planet on the new moon, then please email info@cana.org.uk.

David Storey

PROGRESSION OF THE YEAR

David and, on the previous page, Jane Upchurch, have written about the times of the year that our ancestors followed with great integrity. When Christian teachers came to our land, they must have been faced by the powerful nature, integral to the psyche of the people they sought to convert. It is no surprise that Christmas, the birth of Jesus, was celebrated at the time of the year's 'rebirth' into life. Indeed, for those observing the sunrise, 25th December marks the first day that the daylight hours began to lengthen.

Candlemas, held at the beginning of February, celebrates the new light. The Spring Equinox associates with Easter the time the Jews celebrated Passover, the first full moon after the equinox. Rogation fits in quite well with Beltane. It seems that Lammas became rather lost on the Christian calendar though one well worth celebrating. One year I took my grandchildren into a recently harvested field to glean remaining oats. We took it home, winnowed, with difficulty, and then milled it to make scones.

The Church recognises the autumn equinox with harvest festival. All Souls Day and All Saints Day are close to the secular Guy Fawkes taking over the wonderful fire festival of Samhain. When we lived in Chichester, following the great storm of 1987, all our neighbours came to celebrate Samhain. We burned the communal debris that was piled in our field. It was a beautiful clear night and no wind, so the wood burned high and bright. We all held hands and did a circle dance around the fire. Along with Jane's description, I think of this time as when the farmers cleared out their barns in readiness for the winter. I have already started clearing out my cupboards of unwanted clothes, to go to a charity shop. Perhaps this is also the time for some 'clearing out' of the CANA barn.

Celia Storey.



THE TRANSFORMATIONAL JOURNEY FOR OUR TIME

OUR PRESENT SITUATION

"This is a time of great peril, but also of unparalleled opportunity. Never before in a species memory has there been this collective opportunity to change course before it is too late. We need to understand why we have lost touch with nature, why we have learned so little from the spiritual traditions that we are prepared to destroy God's Creation with our nuclear weapons, whose very existence pollutes the Earth." (Anne Baring)



This statement was part of a presentation *A Crucial Time of Choice* given for Humanity Rising, August 11th 2020. Anne continued by saying that we have been on a path "which is on the knife edge between the conscious integration of new vision on the one hand and the virtual extinction of our species on the other. Which path will we choose?"

Fifteen years earlier Eckart Tolle gave us a similar challenge "to evolve or die?"

"When faced with a radical crisis, when the old ways of being in the world, of interacting with each other and the realm of nature doesn't work anymore, when survival is threatened by seemingly insurmountable problems such that the individual human or a species will either die or become extinct, or rise above the limitations of their condition through an evolutionary leap. This is the state of humanity now and this is its challenge." (Tolle, Eckhart, *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life Purpose*, Michael Joseph, 2005)

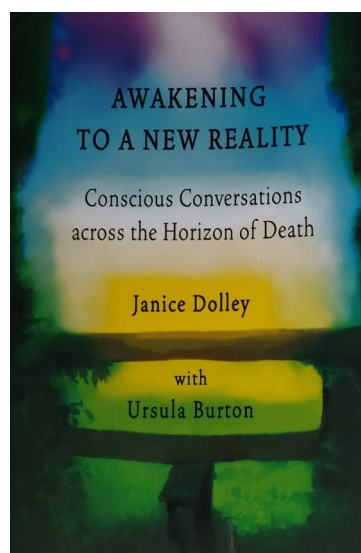
This is the state we are in, dear friends. We are a

people in a vital transition process which requires us to shift from an old negative consciousness of conflict, violence and war. This pandemic has given us time to pause and awaken to a new vision. This is a vision of new world and new possibilities so that it is pressing us to move onto a new track of loving interconnectedness with all life, of compassion, kindness and caring for the greater whole. It has taken us 2000 years to wake up to the full implications of the teachings that Jesus came to bring. So let's pray that we make a leap in sufficient time because it is our choices now that will define our future. And let us understand what has brought us to this choice point and how we might shift into a new direction...

[The rest of this interesting article can be found on the CANA website www.cana.org.uk and click on 'Posts'.]

From this point, Janice goes on to look at how we can understand the roots of the present state of humanity, considering the masculine archetype and how it is crumbling, sources of the darkness that we find upon the earth, and the choice of path that we have. She points out that the time of transformation is upon us if we can remember the 'I Am' presence is available to us all when we know Christ as a Cosmic Universal Spirit. Awakening is happening, and signs of it are springing up worldwide, the veil is parting and we are awakening to the possibility of co-creating a better future. Do go on the website to read the full article www.cana.org.uk.

Adapted from article by Janice Dolley



Janice's book, *Awakening to a New Reality: Conscious Conversation Across the Horizon of Death* is published by Sleepy Lion Publishing.

CHANGING TIMES FOR CANA IN 2020.

CANA is run by a small Core Group of people who give their time and energy to the vision of bridging from traditional views of the Christ event to emerging paradigms of interconnectedness and oneness. Initially (back in 1991), it stood for Christians Awakening to the New Age, then became Christians Awakening to New Awareness. It now has kept the CANA acronym, and is also about Awakening to Universal Spirituality and the transformation that is necessary within humanity for the race to have a sustainable future.

As a result of shrinking numbers in our Core Group, we are revisioning and reassessing our priorities. To this end we shall be focussing on four particular areas

1. Communication

This Autumn newsletter may be the last one in this printed format. Next year we will be sending a regular *CANA Letter* instead via email (or printed for those without email). It will contain news and articles we hope may be of interest. These will also be on the website www.cana.org.uk, which we shall keep updated with news. If you join the mailing list (by entering your details in the right hand column of the website pages) you will automatically receive updates.

2. Books

Two new books are coming soon, *Voices of Contemporary Christians*, by Janice Dolley and Heather-Jane Ozanne, and *Christianity Expanding: Into Universal Spirituality*, by Don MacGregor (published 30th October). We hope to publicise and distribute these. Don's book is already available to pre-order on Amazon, or signed copies can be obtained directly by contacting him on donmacg@live.co.uk. We will also continue to promote Janice Dolley's book, *Awakening to a New Reality: Conscious Conversations across the Horizon of Death*.

3. Conscious Conversations

This online Zoom event has been well received, so we hope to continue it. It offers a space for meeting in small breakout rooms and being able to share insights and ideas with each other, which has been much appreciated. The next one will be on **Saturday**

November 28th at 10.30am (more information and sign up details will follow in a later email'). It will feature an interview with Don MacGregor about his new book, followed by conversations about topics within it. Here is part of what it says on the back cover.

Christianity Expanding – Into Universal Spirituality takes us on a whistle-stop tour of the areas that need updating if Christianity is to flourish in the 21st Century. New science, ecological concern and the need for new theology are all converging into a maelstrom of change. With broad brushstrokes on a big canvas, a path of personal transformation is charted, drawing on the mysterious Perennial Wisdom teachings that have survived down the ages. Pulling no punches, Don MacGregor delves into typically taboo subjects such as reincarnation, drawing a distinction between Jesus and the Christ. This dynamic first volume of The Wisdom Series is an initial outline of areas that demand ongoing exploration.

"Christianity is evolving rapidly today. Don MacGregor's book is a lucid and thoughtful guide to this process, and shows how the essential core teachings of Christianity can be disentangled from unhelpful interpretations that stand in the way of a living Christian faith in the twenty-first century."

Dr Rupert Sheldrake, author of *A New Science of Life and The Science Delusion*

4. Holding the energies

By this we mean to hold in prayer and meditation the highest intention for the good of humanity and the planet. As we feel this is critical at this time, the Core Group will do this in meeting together as well as individually, and we encourage others to do so.

Join Us?

If anyone would like to join the CANA Core Group at this important time of change then do let us know at info@cana.org.uk or ring Jane Upchurch on 01895 639476. At the moment we are meeting by Zoom about 4 times a year but hope to have at least one actual gathering annually in the not too distant future.

Don Macgregor

BRINGING SPIRITUALITY HOME –

exploring the ways in which Spirit is finding new life within the home and local community

The word ‘home’ is a simple yet deep idea. It points towards rootedness – in a building, in a place, in a community, in a faith or tradition, in a culture, in a nation. It makes us think of relationships which are harmonious, or at least seeking harmony, with other humans, with other life-forms, with the past and the future. It implies anchorage or anchoring within these various spaces of meaning and consciousness – not necessarily physical anchoring, since we can be at home within a culture or tradition that is nomadic. And this idea of anchoring stable and meaningful relationships also points towards the ways in which we seek to anchor Spirit/holiness/wholeness within our lives. Our homes are spaces which, in various ways, we seek to sanctify – whether through decoration, ornament, dedicating specific parts to certain rituals etc.

Rituals are one of the ways that help us to remember that we are all deeply connected to each other and to the web of all life. They can be as ordinary and humble as making and eating food. They can be complex, involving many people and their differing ideas of what ‘sacred’ means, like the communal altar assemblies that can accompany meetings of those who are seeking new ways of understanding Spirit in the world.

In our homes, we have our own altars, sometimes not immediately recognisable, or even thought of as altars. A bookshelf can be an altar; so can an apparently random selection of ‘knickknacks’; so can a vase of flowers beside some gems. As former orthodoxies expand to embrace an awakening consciousness of the interconnectedness of all life and religious and spiritual symbolism is seemingly in flux, old symbols are being re-imagined, and new ones hover tentatively on the edges of perception, waiting to be invited in to shoulder their burden of meaning, acting as bridges to that which transcends meaning.

The pandemic lockdown has probably made us more sharply aware of the significance of home and family, of rootedness, and of finding ways to

anchor Spirit in our lives. We may have re-connected with, or even noticed for the first time, how a ‘home’ is something that is made, by many decisions, both small and large. How a family is made, by constant tending of relationships. How a community can be made through attending to the needs of others and recognising universal values. There is an opportunity now to co-create new customs and experiment with ways of re-connecting with the greater One Life of which we are each a part.

Dominic Dibble
Co-ordinator of the Lucis Trust

BOOKS AND SPEAKERS

Richard Rohr:

The Universal Christ (Blackwell's)

Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life (Eden Co. UK)

Richard Rohr is an American Franciscan whose life-enhancing daily meditations are tuned into by people all over the world.

Ravi Ravindra: *Whispers from the Other Shore – Spiritual Search East and West*

Ravi is a Hindu who is deeply versed in the Christian and Jewish scriptures.

William Meader: *Shine Forth: The Soul's Magical Destiny* (Source Publications 2004)

Don MacGregor writes: This book is a profound teaching about the path to attaining a Soul-infused personality. Meader uses the term 'magic' which is really describing the role of co-creation and the use of intention to create thought-forms which effect change in material reality. It is a very good introduction to the whole Ageless Wisdom Esoteric Philosophy, with overviews and summaries throughout.

Serge Beddington-Behrens: *Gateways to the Soul: Inner Work for the Outer World* (Simon & Schuster)

Serge is a transpersonal psychotherapist who asks questions like ‘How can I bring more being into my life instead of incessant *doing*?’ ‘How can I deal more effectively with change?’ ‘How can I become more mindful and live more harmoniously?’

Judy Hanmer

REWILDING OUR IDEAS ABOUT GOD

It has always been my habit to listen to Sunday Worship on BBC radio on Sunday mornings and during lockdown when churches were closed this has become even more important. The service broadcast from the Greenbelt Festival made a particular impression on me, with its theme of re-wilding our ideas about God and about ourselves as spiritual beings.

I wondered if some of the points made by the preacher that day might fuel our ongoing debate within Cana about how our ideas of God and spirituality can be expanded in the future. Here are some of the points I jotted down; do feel free to respond, either by writing to Jane Upchurch (address on page 12) or by posting on our website www.cana.org or by joining our Cana Conversations.

We have tamed our notions of a God who meets us in the wilderness and wanders with us. Perhaps this is what Jesus has to teach us? We have tamed our notions of God, downplayed the wilderness. A life of faith is a life out of our personal control – yet we want to control our faith by understanding it. The idea of re-wilding has been taking hold in ecological circles: allowing nature to make a come-back after years of strict control, so can we take this as an example and begin to re-wild our notions of God, who, like nature, is at the heart of our world?

A re-wilding of self is a re-enchantment of the natural world; a re-animating of our senses and intuition; a dissolving of false boundaries between ourselves and each other; between ourselves and our earthly home, a re-kindling of our sacred connection to the earth. God is always urging us towards more generous, more just, more joyful and more creative ways to live. Have we forgotten how to love? How can we be more creative, give the heart more space? The greatest spiritual teachers, like Jesus and the Buddha, were able to empty themselves of worldly power so as to create space for those around them to embark on their own journey of transformation.

Judy Hanmer



Chalice Well, Glastonbury

*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?*

Rabindranath Tagore

NEWSLETTER PRODUCTION

Editor: Judy Hanmer

Layout: Celia Storey

Production and Distribution: Bill and Jane Upchurch

AUTUMN
2020

AWAKENING TO
UNIVERSAL
SPIRITUALITY
Evolving with
Christianity

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CANA NEWSLETTER

BOOK REVIEW

Keeping Alive the Rumor of God When Most People Are Looking the Other Way

Martin Camroux (2020 Wipf and & Stock, Oregon)

Despite the American publisher and spelling, the author is the best of English, now retired. He is a distinguished minister of the URC, who won Preacher of the year in 2001 from the London Times, and here writes brilliantly, and deserves an international audience for this gripping book that needs to be read by people of all churches. It lifts the lid on where the churches and particularly theologians have been misleading people despite prophetic voices amongst them.

This should help everyone to be clearer about the nature of God including those who loudly denounce the concept. He makes clear that we all need to recognise experiences of God, and the impossibility of proving the existence of God. We have gone through two millennia of people misunderstanding the messages and teaching of Jesus. Martin helps us as a friend beside us rather than an academic above us or priest or minister or well-intentioned Christian trying to put us right.

I particularly appreciated his teaching on the message of Paul Tillich who was deeply affected by his experiences as a padre at the front in the first World War. His empathy for Tillich teases out the essence of Tillich's message particularly from his sermons, which are much more accessible than his theological works. Martin's writing is helped by quotations from poetry, both old and new.

For those of us immersed in theology, I hope many will relax and discover new insights, and for those without any exposure to theology I assure you that you will find a blessed companion with patience and clarity creating insights. I will close with the last paragraph of the book:

"It is not easy to keep the rumour of God alive. Honesty requires us to acknowledge that the traditional picture of God has collapsed, often for good reason. Most of us are looking the other way anyway. But where images and doctrines collapse, the God above God touches our lives with love's amazing grace. The moments of wonder are real, the experience of transcendence is real, and the prophetic passion is real. The spiritual is there for us to rediscover".

David Storey