



Dear friends,

We have decided to send a print copy of the May eLetter as well as on-line to all our supporters that have given us an address and would love your feedback as to whether this was helpful.

Our theme this month is the continuity of consciousness beyond death, following our Conscious Conversations in April where Janice Dolley spoke on our life and our death as two great adventures. We start with an article drawing together what we can learn from people who have had a Near Death Experience (NDE), and include part of Janice's talk as well as a link to a recording of it all. Following the theme of the March eLetter there is a book and a film review concerning the divine feminine, and Mary Magdalene.

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WE DO NOT DIE by Jane Upchurch



I have always believed in life beyond this one, in 'heaven'. It was a theoretical concept that gave hope but no substance. It became more real as I experienced living in the presence of God here and now, and has been fleshed out by reading or listening to accounts of people who have had near death experiences (NDE's). I am not in a hurry to go, but I am looking forward to it. I am sharing some of the things that have helped or interested me which I have gleaned from others' stories. This is just my understanding, and is not a comprehensive review. Do follow these accounts and others up yourselves, there are references at the end.

The next world is not the same as this one, but when we try to imagine or describe it we can only use words and concepts that work here. Whatever we say cannot fully communicate that other reality. As Paul said, '*For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face*' (1 Cor 13.12). There is no top or bottom, it is a place of vibration not of matter and yet things can be perceived as if physical. There are different 'regions' with portals between so one description does not cover all, and those who go have not had the same experience. But this is some of what it is like.

It is more real than here, as if this is the dream and that is the substance. There is often an experience of light and of music. And it is immediate. Seeing and hearing are not separate, you can hear the beauty and see the joy, the music, as if you become part of it while remaining distinct. Any thought is immediately known although perception is beyond words. And so the unconditional love that envelops and fills everything is known and felt in a way we can never experience here. This is why so many do not want to return. Love can be seen as the basis of everything, there and here.

[Click here to read the whole article](#)

From 'The Prophet' by Kahlil Gibran

Life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one. In the depth of your hopes and desires lies your silent knowledge of the beyond; and, like seeds dreaming beneath the snow, your heart dreams of spring. Trust the dreams, for in them is hidden the gate to eternity...

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?

And what is it to cease breathing but to free the breath from its restless tides, that it may rise and seek God unencumbered?

Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.

And when you have reached the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.

And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then you shall truly dance.

Death the Great Adventure by Janice Dolley



Cana was started thirty years ago as a group of “Christians Awakening to New Awareness.” This was then shortened to Cana which, synchronistically, was the occasion of the marriage when Jesus transformed water into wine. So the two tasks of expanding awareness and of transformation have been interwoven all along. I hope that this article will both expand our awareness a little further and, at the same time, help us transform any fear we may have of either death or the convergence of so many difficult issues in life today.

We are living in a time of great change in which our horizons are expanding in many directions. One of these directions is that our ideas about death are changing as we release the mediaeval ideas of death, the dust to dust and ashes to ashes in the liturgy that is used, and the Victorian ideas of the black solemnity of grief. Understandably an increased fear of death has been evident during the pandemic. We mostly all love this life even if it has challenges but in this talk I'd like to show how our ideas about death and dying are currently expanding.

We are beginning to see life as an ongoing series of big adventures which we can engage in whilst we are here in this material reality as well as in the reality we enter into when we die.

I'm going to draw on three sources.

The first is my own personal experience.

The second is my particular experience of afterlife conversations with my good friend Ursula Burton that started 3 hours after she had died and which are the basis of my recently published book : ["Awakening to a New Reality: Conscious Conversations across the Horizon of Death"](#).

Thirdly my key teacher, Sir George Trevelyan, who could see the future that we were moving into from a higher perspective than most of us and enlightened my generation during the 1970s and 80s until his death in the 1990s. He said *"It is essential that we recognise that we are not our bodies but that as eternal beings we live through time ridden bodies .These in the end are shed like a worn out overcoat."*

So I'm writing about death itself and the entering into another reality that we call heaven, and then looking at the expanding of our ideas in general towards a more universal understanding.

[Click here to read the whole article](#)

Praying for the Planet



Tuesday May 11th is the new moon, the day we particularly remember our beautiful planet in prayer, meditation, awareness or involvement, with love, hope and gratitude.

Our ancestors' lives were entwined with the land and its seasons. For this they needed an accurate knowledge of the sun and moon, the timing of the solstices, equinoxes, cross-quarter days, full moons, new moons and eclipses. And their stone monuments were precisely aligned to give this. The annual position of the sun is regular and easy to align with. But the moon's arc around the earth varies from month to month. (That is why we get supermoons that look bigger than usual when the moon is nearer the earth, such as our next full moon on May 26th.) The arc is slightly tilted and so the moon varies in position over a period of 18.6 years. It also has a slight wobble with a cycle of 173.3 days or half an eclipse year. Amazingly many of the stone monuments in Britain were built to calculate these such as the Aubrey holes at Stonehenge which mark the cycle of the arc. Knowledge of the moon's wobble, known and measured by the Neolithic people in Britain, was then lost until observed in the 16th century. The moon measurements obtained were engraved on markers of stone, bone or antler from 30,000 years ago and possibly as long ago as 300,000 years.

Living in tune with the moon, sun and seasons meant that our ancestors saw their own lives, and time, as cyclical whereas we tend to view them as linear. This has lead to us expecting

and wanting a steady progression of growth, and viewing anything that deviates from this negatively. We struggle with what we might call dark times whereas the dark, the time of the moon, was recognised as a generative time of insight, healing and transformation and was important. We do not view aging well but for our ancestors the older generation were the wise elders. This is particularly apparent with women after their childbearing years who were called crones. The word derives from the word for crown and she was the wisdom keeper and healer, guiding others through hardships and transitions. Now crone means an ugly, withered old woman. And we see death as an enemy to be fought rather than something to be honoured as part of the natural cycle of life.

Much of the harm we have done to nature has been because we have not understood or respected its cycles. This is the time for us to find wisdom in the old ways and learn to honour the cycles of the earth for their sake and for our own.

Reviews



'Reading presents a meeting with myself and then with others. It's a form of dialogue through time and space.'

Ismael Diadie Haidara, Curator, Fondo Kati Library, Timbuktoo.

Book Review by Jane Upchurch

Sue Monk Kidd - The dance of the dissident daughter: A woman's journey from Christian tradition to the Sacred Feminine.

This is a powerful book of the author's personal journey along with historical or theological insights that changed her life. She was a Christian writer and speaker from a Southern Baptist church and by starting to listen to the voice of the sacred feminine, found all aspects of her life, her marriage and her Christianity challenged. She is now a successful novelist so this is a well written, involving story that we can learn from and resonate with.

Film Review by Bill Upchurch

This follows the article referred to in our last eLetter on Mary Magdalene which attempted to correct some of the misunderstandings about her. [Click here to read the article](#)

The 2018 film 'Mary Magdalene' directed by Garth Davies and written by Helen Edmundson and Philippa Goslett was shown on TV recently. It is very moving, and more true to what we

now know and believe about her than I anticipated. It doesn't major on speeches but creates an atmosphere of reflection.

The Film ends by saying in 591 Pope Gregory claimed that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute, a misconception which many believe to this day. However this was corrected by The Vatican in 1969, and in 2016 she was formally identified as *Apostle of the Apostles – their equal* – and the first messenger of the resurrected Jesus.

DVD £5.99 from <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Mary-Magdalene-DVD-Rooney-Mara/dp/B07B5W1T5G>
or watch online for £2.49 <https://www.justwatch.com/uk/movie/mary-magdalene>

EVENTS



CANA CONSCIOUS CONVERSATIONS (CCC)

This is an opportunity to meet together online in small groups and share our thoughts and feelings during this pandemic. We meet in total for 2 hours with a short break in the middle. So far we have had five very successful meetings. Our last one was:

April CCC - Our Life and our Death as Two Great Adventures

Janice Dolley, a co-founder of Cana, shared her experience of ongoing communication following the death of a close friend. She explored how a shift in our perception of the continuity of consciousness through death and beyond brings us an expanded understanding of the new reality of which Jesus spoke and which we are beginning to experience now in our present life adventure. She referred to her book, published last April: ["Awakening to a New Reality: Conscious Conversations across the Horizon of Death"](#).

To watch a recording of this talk, go to <https://youtu.be/phNsjLhsNE4>

September CANA CONSCIOUS CONVERSATIONS (CCC)

Saturday September 11th 10.30-12.45 Deep ecology linking to Universal Spirituality

Two talks by Stephan Harding of Schumacher College with discussion afterwards:

- God is Nature,
- How could we pray and meditate in ways which benefit the entire biosphere?

Please email Bill at admin@cana.org.uk if you would like to join us.

CANA ON-LINE RITUAL

We are offering an on-line ritual, an opportunity to engage with Spirit and with our own divine centre communally. This is not a eucharist, there is no wine, no blessing from a priest, no Christian liturgy. But it does seek to embody some of the essence of the eucharist experience in creating a sacred space of communion but within a wider framework. Our first date is:

10.30-11.15 Tuesday July 6th.

Please email Bill at admin@cana.org.uk if you would like to join us.

CONTACT US

GROUP MEDITATION If you would like to join with us at the full moon when our focus is birthing a universal spirituality, or at the new moon with a focus on praying for the planet, then please email us.

CANA operates on a gift economy so if you would like to contribute and do not already then email us and we will send details.

If you would like to reply to any of this or have questions or suggestions for future editions, please email info@cana.org.uk or ring Jane or Bill on 01895 639476.

*May love and light fill your life and our world
bringing healing and wholeness*

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