

CANA eLETTER JULY 2022



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Our theme this month is love, following from our last CCC. What is love? For me love is a liquid field, filling and energising everything, although I am not always aware of it. I can choose to tune into it by opening to it, welcoming it with joy. It is in me and I am in it and I feel my heart expand. Sometimes I sit with my dogs and let it grow from the love I have for them. But there are times I am feeling too chaotic or broken, and knowing it is there is a comfort, an invisible net of love and support, although I cannot feel it. Then I am helped by the love of others. For me, the love that is God holds us lightly, it is a freedom and allowing, not possessing and controlling that we can sometimes see in human love. God is not a person like us, but this is what God's love can feel like.

The emotions of God?

What are the emotions
of God? What are the tides within
the navy night of soul that carries
God's name? Do they feed
each other, joy playing banjo
on sorrow's strings while love holds
anger like a crown?
What are the swellings of breast that charm
the bees upon the blossom, that fire
the voyagers' return?

I have heard it whispered
that night after night
God sits holding tenderness
on soft knees
while murmuring our name.

Jane Upchurch

What is Love?



Don MacGregor

Love is a much misused word. We express it in so many different ways. I love my wife. I love my children. But I also love a good book, or a bowl of rice pudding! I love a beautiful sunset! But Christianity is based on Jesus's teaching to love one another and even to love your enemy. This is unconditional love, not dependent on the response of the other. Inherently, we know that love expressed towards all other beings is the way to growth and to higher ways of being. But this isn't just human sentimental love, this isn't love just as a feeling. This love is the divine power that creates, it is the driver for evolution. The way I see it, love is a universal quality of bringing things into relationship, an *attracting* force driving the evolution of the universe. There is *something* which has drawn everything into deeper relationships as the universe has developed and evolved. We tend to call that something *God*.

Love, to my mind, is a force of attraction that brings things into further and deeper relationship. Going back to the big bang, when this universe came into being, quantum particles were brought into relationship to form atoms, simple ones like hydrogen and helium at first. But then other relationships formed, and other elements came into being. These elements started to interact to form molecules, and a complexity of relationship developed. Eventually, this driving evolutionary force of attraction into relationships formed organic compounds, which then came together to form simple, single celled organisms, living beings, reacting to their environment. But it didn't stop there. Deeper relationships formed, multicellular creatures that could reproduce, at first just by copying themselves. But eventually, sexual relationships came about, and love, as attraction between the sexes, came out into the open, and developed qualities of nurture and care. And it is love that has driven forward this ever deeper, more complex relationship structure. Love is an evolutionary force underlying the formation and continuity of the universe.

I can still love a bowl of rice pudding, but what I mean is I *like*, or *am fond of*. We need to use more words in English to differentiate between liking, fondness, attraction, caring, nurturing and compassion. Altruistic, unconditional love is a sense of wanting the best outcome to happen for all relationships, and then nurturing it into being – and maybe that is what evolution is, love working its way out, love in action. Just turn round the first four letters of evolution and what do you get!! *Love-ution!*

What is Love? To realise that God is one and I am one in this One.
Meister Eckhart (Meister Eckhart's Book of Secrets, eds M.Burrows, J Sweeney, p. 84

Love as the unifying energy in our world



Janice Dolley

When our first daughter was just turned 2 years old my husband and I had the idea, unusual in those days, of a camping holiday in the South of France. We invested in a tent and set out on this adventure. As we drove up the Southern Alps and had just reached the top our small daughter gazed at the sparkling Mediterranean Sea below and exclaimed: "Oh look, what a lovely big puddle."

She could only perceive its vastness in terms of what she already knew. How difficult then must it have been for Jesus to try to explain the vastness of the cosmos and the powerful love of the creator that sustains all people who only know a microcosm of this vast One Life. This was my first lesson in comprehending the love that 'binds together the sun and all the stars' as well as we ourselves.

My second lesson came later when this daughter was playing in our garden with her sisters and I found a quiet spot in which to meditate away from their games. In a moment I can never forget I experienced a shift of vision and saw, with both an inner and an outer eye, the dance of living energy through every blade of grass, every bush and every insect as well as through myself, and I knew with an inner certainty that this energy was Life itself and that it was totally loving and beneficent. An experience like that can sustain us for the rest of our life but it also brings with it a compulsion to explore further and communicate to others the depth of meaning that has been conveyed.

This meaning propels us to a deeper understanding of theological ideas such as the Trinity in which we perceive God the Father as the driving force behind creation, God the Son as the relational force of love behind all living things and the Holy Spirit as the intelligence of the One Life. How then could Jesus convey this to people 2000 years ago who knew only a few neighbouring villages but could, as the psalmist perceived, look up at the vastness of the night sky and ask "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"

Today science is providing us with the evidence that all life is an expression of one vast consciousness and that as Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin realised:

"Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity we shall harness for God the energies of love and then for the second time in the history of the world humanity will have discovered fire".

The depth of this fire of love calls us from our burrows of separateness into a journey of discovery of the vast Oneness of all life, the universality of the messages and demonstrations of love that Jesus brought us and the subtle threads of love that are the relational links between all living things

Whether we experience this love in the birth of a baby, a near death experience or by gazing at the dance of love between a bee and the blossoming flower, at this critical time of choice for us all on Planet Earth it is the immensity of this love that is propelling us to transcend any anxiety and give our all in whatever way we feel called, and to include the advice of the Sufi teacher Hazrat Inayat Khan that *"the first condition of being useful to humanity is to keep our heart open"*.

Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has born? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palm of my hands. (Isaiah 49.15)

God as Love



Judy Hanmer

I have heard many people talk about God as embodying love and have wondered what they actually meant by that. In English this one word can stand for so many things. In his book *The Hidden Gospel* Neil Douglas Klotz says: 'The English word 'love' has become so influenced by popular and cultural notions of romance, sexual politics and consumerism that we hardly know what it means any more'.

For me God's love feels like an answer to a longing for something greater than one's small, ego self. It has been mediated throughout my life by people who demonstrated what it was to be loving and who led a life of integrity which I could respect.

In his book *The Four Loves* C S Lewis explores four Greek terms which describe different kinds of love:

Sorge is a bond of empathy, a liking for someone through the fondness of familiarity. Lewis describes it as a dependency-based love, the sort of love we have for our parents and parents have for us, but he comments that this sort of love can fade if its needs cease to be met.

Philia is the love between friends – a strong bond between people who share common values and interests. If one sees this in terms of human development *Philia* is involved when children begin to form relationships outside the family circle and friendships formed at this stage can last a lifetime. There is something here about shared interests, loyalty and mutual support.

Eros for Lewis is the sense of 'being in love'. This is the love of maturity and Lewis makes a distinction between this 'delighted preoccupation with the beloved' and sexual desire, which he calls *Venus*.

Agape is the love that Lewis sees as closest to the love of God. It is offered unconditionally, regardless of changing circumstances. He feels that the other three kinds of love, which he calls 'natural loves' should be subordinated to the love of God as they are not self-sufficient. I am not sure about this: modern psychology suggests that in order to reach a state of wholeness we need to integrate all aspects of ourselves and perhaps we need to bring together all these forms of love within the context of a loving God.

In discussing what we might mean by the word love I still haven't discovered what people mean when they say *God is love*. Perhaps Acts 17:28 contains the only satisfactory answer: '*God is the love in which we live and move and have our being*'.

The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus and Lau Tzu



Brian Holley

Jesus is recorded as having said something that seems contrary to the thinking of every culture on earth. "*Do not resist evil.*" This amazing statement is found in the Gospel of Matthew chapter five verse 39. Well you have to resist evil, don't you? Didn't Paul speak of 'putting on the whole armour of God'? What about the end days when the four horses of the apocalypse ride out to bring destruction on all those who opposed God? In wars we ask our priests to bless tanks and guns as we go into battle – of course we must resist evil, mustn't we?

I had a real problem with this verse, especially as an ex-serviceman, until I read the Tao Te Ching. I think Jesus and the legendary Lau Tzu would have got on like the proverbial houses on fire. For instance, Lau Tzu says, "*My words are easily understood, and my deeds are easily practised.*" Jesus says, "*My yoke is easy, my burden is light.*" Lau Tzu says, "*One can know the world without leaving home. The Way (Tao) can be recognized without a window.*" Jesus says, "*If you think the Kingdom of God is above you, then the birds will find it first. If you think that it is in*

the ocean then the fish will discover it before you do. Look . . . the Kingdom of God is within you and all around you."

Might the Sermon on the Mount be the standard against which all other teaching ascribed to him or about him (e.g. in the Epistles), should be judged? But what was of greatest importance of that which opened to me was that the Sermon is not a list of instructions about how to behave, but an insight into the very character of the God of Jesus. This inkling came from verse 48: *"Be perfect therefore as your Heavenly Father is perfect."* The word 'therefore' seemed important here. It indicates that this is not the behaviour we should be striving to achieve as followers of Jesus, but as children of God we have God's nature. In other words, this is the way we will be when we fully realise that in our relationship to God we are perfect, complete and finished (the implications of the word *τελειοι*, perfect). This seems to be emphasised by the use of the word 'Be' (*εἶναι*) rather than 'Become' (*γίνομαι*).

Lau Tzu's equivalent of Matthew 5:39ff is

"Always remember the following:

A good man's disposition is never aggressive or violent.

Just as a good fighter's disposition is never angry or mean,

a good winner doesn't hold a grudge, and a good leader acts humble.

This is teaching the virtue of non-striving, which teaches you how to manage power.

If you learn this then you will learn to become one with the very origin of Heaven."

Passage 68, D.W. Kreger

Just as Jesus dealt with a Roman Centurion with compassion not criticism, so Lau Tzu's attitude to warriors is one of acceptance rather than condemnation. Yet it is clear from other passages in the Tao Te Ching that he, like Jesus, was a pacifist and did not advocate violence of any kind.

Lau Tzu taught the path of 'non-do' (*wu wei*) which is reflected in the famous passage in Matthew chapter six: *"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these."*

Both Jesus and Lau Tzu taught that the Way, (a name also used by the early disciples) is one of active and total abandonment to the laws of nature by which 'God' or 'The Tao' enables all things in love. It is, I believe what Jesus was demonstrating during his trial and crucifixion. He was fulfilling his own teaching expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. So, what do you think?

Aligned with the One are those whose lives radiate from a core of love; they shall see God everywhere (Mat 5.8 - Aramaic translation by Neil Douglas-Klotz)

No expectations – Rumi

A spirit that lives in this world
and does not wear the shirt of love,
such an existence is a deep disgrace.

Be foolishly in love,
because love is all there is.

There is no way into presence
except through a love exchange.
If someone asks, But what is love?
answer, Dissolving the will.

True freedom comes to those
who have escaped the questions
of freewill and fate.

Love is an emperor.
The two worlds play across him.
He barely notices their tumbling game.
Love and lover live in eternity.
Other desires are substitutes
for that way of being.

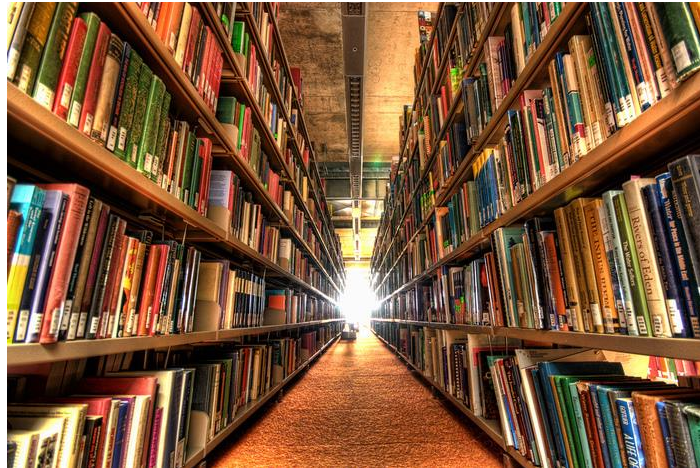
How long do you lay embracing a corpse?
Love rather the soul, which cannot be held.
Anything born in spring dies in the fall,
but love is not seasonal.

With wine pressed from grapes,
expect a hangover.
But this love path has no expectations.
You are uneasy riding the body?
Dismount. Travel lighter.
Wings will be given.

Be clear like a mirror
reflecting nothing.
Be clean of pictures and the worry
that comes with images.

Gaze into what is not ashamed
or afraid of any truth.
Contain all human faces in your own
without any judgment of them.
Be pure emptiness.
What is inside that? you ask.
Silence is all I can say.
Lovers have some secrets
That they keep.

BOOKS



***Opening Doors Within: 365 Meditations from Findhorn* by Eileen Caddy (Findhorn Press)**

Eileen was one of the founders of the Findhorn community and this little book of daily guidance, first published in 1987, has been translated into 30 languages. I bought it several years ago and it took me a while to get used to the idea of Eileen receiving direct messages from God/the universe/the creative source of our being (simply referred to as 'me') but I found the messages contained therein always worth pondering on and each year they seem to nurture me at a new level. Sometimes, at first, the messages seemed almost too simple, yet I find that when I take them into my morning meditation new ways of being and seeing the world open up for me.

I am writing this on June 5th and the entry for today is:

'Do you know what it means to love, to feel your heart filled with such joy and gratitude that you cannot contain it, and it has to bubble over and out to all those souls around you? It is a glorious feeling of well-being and of being at one with all life. All fear, all hatred, jealousy, envy and greed disappear when love is there, for there is no place for those negative, destructive forces in the presence of love. When your heart is cold and feels no love, do not despair, but look around and find something you can love. It may be some very small thing, but that small spark can ignite your whole being until love is aflame in you. Only a small key can unlock a heavy door. Love is the key to every closed door. Learn to use it until all doors have been opened. Start right where you are. Open your eyes, open your heart, see a need and answer it.'

Judy Hanmer

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Opening-Doors-Within-Meditations-Findhorn/dp/1620558637/ref=sr_1_1 £12.48

The Lord your God loves you. Whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. (Deut 23.5; Zech 2.8; Zeph 3.17)

Love is his meaning: Understanding the teaching of Jesus by Keith Ward (SPCK) (97 pages)

Keith Ward is a distinguished theologian who launched this book in 2017. Jesus said 'Everything follows from loving God and your neighbour as yourself' ie Love is His Meaning.

In this book Keith ward shows that if we take the message of God's love as primary then it challenges several traditional Christian doctrines such as hell and an exclusive salvation for Christian believers. An amazing and inspiring book and one of the most important I have read for setting me free.

Bill Upchurch

Book https://www.amazon.co.uk/Love-His-Meaning-Understanding-Teaching/dp/0281077630/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0 £7.57

Video of Keith Ward talk Love is His Meaning from St Pauls Cathedral Crypt when he launched the book <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcTFlqOx9aI> 1 hour

The book of longings by Sue Monk Kidd (Tinder Press)

This is a novel set in Galilee and Alexandria at the time of Jesus. Through it we meet Jesus and Judas, but it focuses in the women and their strength in a male-dominated world.

Jane Upchurch

https://www.amazon.co.uk/Book-Longings-author-international-bestseller/dp/1472232518/ref=sr_1_1 £6.59

EVENTS

An Introduction to the Wisdom Tradition Within Christianity



Revd Don MacGregor continues a series of three talks over the year on the Wisdom Tradition. They will all be on Zoom and will give space for questions and discussion after each talk. All those on our events mailing list will be notified and given the zoom link to join the call if they would like. Please book the dates in your diary.

Talk 2: Meditation and the Heart of Wisdom – drawing on the Bible and other religious traditions, Don will look at how the opening of the heart is an essential part of the journey of awakening, and how a transformed mind is developed through meditation and contemplative prayer.

Thursday July 7 2022, 8pm-9pm

Talk 3: The Wisdom Jesus Path – Don explores four breakthroughs in recent understandings of Christianity, the role of Jesus as Wisdom teacher, the Cosmic Christ and the movement towards a more universal version of Christianity.

Thursday November 17 2022, 8pm-9pm

Revd Don MacGregor is a retired Anglican priest living in St Davids, Wales and a member of the CANA Core Group. He was a science teacher for 13 years before ordination, and his Christian journey has moved from evangelical and charismatic to mystical and esoteric with aspects of contemporary holistic spirituality, and an emphasis on meditation and contemplative prayer. He is passionate to find a new way forward for Christianity which incorporates twenty-first century science and worldviews, blended with the wisdom teachings of all ages. He is the author of *"Blue Sky God: the Evolution of Science and Christianity"*, of *"Christianity Expanding: Into Universal Spirituality"* and of *"Expanding Scriptures: Lost and Found"*. As well as being very involved with CANA, he is an active member of World Community for Christian Meditation, the Progressive Christianity Network and the Scientific and Medical Network

Cana Conscious Conversations (CCC)



ENERGIES, ANGELS & ELEMENTALS

Living in a multi-dimensional world

Saturday 1ST October 2022, 10.30-12.30

Led by William Bloom

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

I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Eph 3.17)

The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay

Cana has been approached by one of the trustees of The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, just South of Oxford. The Abbey was founded 40 years ago by two visionary Christian priests Bishop Stephen Verney and Fred Blum. It is a registered charity and a point has now been reached when there is need for an infusion of a new energy to take forward the vision of the renewal of spiritual life in the world. The trustees feel that this could best be found in developing a partnership with a like minded organisation with greater resources in terms of youth and enthusiasm, so it could become a centre for the renewal of spiritual life

There is the possibility of a resident community and the establishing of a wide range of programmes. They asked anyone interested would contact the chair of trustees by e-mail in the first instance: brad.strachan2@gmail.com, but as I have found it to be a lovely space for events please feel free to contact me: janice.dolley@btinternet.com.

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.

DONATIONS

CANA operates on a gift economy so if you would like to contribute and do not already, then email or write to us and we will send details, or go to the page on our website [Donate](#)

If you would like to reply to any of this or have questions or suggestions for future editions, please email info@cana.org.uk, ring Jane or Bill on 01895 639476 or write to them at 20 Manor Road, Ruislip, Middx HA4 7LB.

*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