

CHRISTIANS AWAKENING TO A NEW AWARENESS (CANA)

Founded by the Bridge Trust

News & Views

Spring 2011

Christians

Awakening to a New Awareness (CANA) is a network of people exploring the emergence of humanity's next evolutionary step for which Jesus has paved the way. This requires us to risk living co-creatively through attunement to the ONE.

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

Our collective journey has no set goal. The reality of our unity may be seen to develop. But the essential nature of our journey is one of continuing exploration.

Everyone's contribution is a valued part of the whole and none is dispensable. As we leave behind the language and interpretations of the past, we are challenged to find new expressions

A A A

*"We are not
human beings on a
spiritual journey*

*We are spiritual beings
on a human journey"*

(Stephen Covey)

A A A

CONTENTS

	Page
Letter from Janice Dolley	2
Passing of Philip Sheppard <i>Celia Storey</i>	3
Current Christian Evolution <i>Adrian Smith</i>	4
"What is God?" London CANA day <i>Judy Hanmer</i>	5
Reports from CANA day	6
Oberammagau/Passion Play <i>Rosalind Werner</i>	7
Alpha: Where is it leading the Church? <i>Celia Storey</i>	8
Jesus and the Essenes <i>Anthony Deavin</i>	9
Book Review <i>Adrian Smith</i>	10
Science, Religion & Oneness <i>Harry Underhill</i>	11
Poem: Transfiguration <i>Emma Laughton</i>	12
Information on <i>Into Christ Consciousness</i>	13/14
Bits & Bobs	15
Diary Dates	Back cover

EDITORIAL FROM JANICE DOLLEY

“Through the steady expansion of consciousness from the most primitive mineral or sub-atomic conditions up through the plant, animal, human kingdoms and into the super-human kingdoms of God-men, angels and cosmic beings, life learns to become consciously self aware, to look at itself, to know itself as divine, to increasingly identify through that knowing with the one-in-all and through that to increasingly be the one-in all.

David Spangler (Letter to an Enquiring Minister 1977)

Maybe the first time one reads something like this extract it registers as a vaguely understood statement but nothing more.

We have our old fixed ideas and the concept of life evolving within each of us does not make too much sense. But evolve we do! And as our own consciousness expands and our own hunger for the unknown and the urge within to enquire grows stronger, so we find that “the Christ” is not just a world saviour of 2000 years ago but a living presence within us urging us ever onward to “greater things than I do shall you do also”. So we are beginning to understand and know “the Christ” as the “*synthesizing, guiding, evolving energy and presence*” (Spangler) with / for / within all human souls and also within the soul of the world – the *anima mundi*. Knowing this and becoming one with this energy and presence may be one way of manifesting “Christ Consciousness”.

Two thousand years ago one individual took on the full embodiment of this consciousness and so could speak as “I am”. This marked an evolutionary jump that we have been learning from and absorbing ever since. Already, within CANA, we have appreciated that it is no longer a case of worshipping what has been in the past, but more an imperative to embody this same consciousness ourselves now.

It is this imperative that awakened the inspiration within Gillian Paschkes-Bell – whilst on the CANA retreat on Iona two years ago – to suggest a conference gathering in 2012. This is now being organised and will be held at the Findhorn Foundation over Easter, 7 – 10th April 2012. There will be a few lead contributors but if you feel drawn to be with us then your

presence and energy will also be an essential contribution. Collectively, we will create a “chalice of communion” with the One life and trust that the resonating energy created will be used in whatever way benefits the whole.

We do not see these few days as a one-off event, but rather as a process that gathers insight and energy from people and groups all over these islands and beyond. To this end we are encouraging the formation of “portal groups” to explore and open to Christ Consciousness as it is with us now. Adrian Smith and others in CANA have co-written a booklet “*Christ in Us Today*”, which is a relevant aid for discussion and relates particularly to those with a church background. It is hoped to spread this widely. There is also a set of notes that Gillian has prepared on arranging a portal group.. Details of both are outlined in this newsletter. If you would like to start a portal group soon, or be involved in any other way, do please contact Richard Dell (intocc@wrekintrust.org or 01492 623752), another CANA member who is providing a secretariat for this initiative. Another CANA member has generously offered some funds to help us cover basic costs and another is helping construct a website. All of us have a part to play.

The leaflet enclosed with this newsletter is advance publicity pending publication of the Findhorn Foundation leaflet on this event. We wanted those who feel drawn to be part of this significant gathering to be able to start saving now and register for the early bird rate by end October 2011.

Page13 for more information

THE PASSING OF PHILIP SHEPPARD

I am passing through a time of great affliction. I am visibly dying and I don't want to die. Each Thursday in June I drove into Winchester, climbed the stairs of the Olive Branch Christian Counselling Service, and supervised a group of counsellors. I loved the work. It was incredibly rewarding to see the counsellors growing in competence and to see the healing and nourishing taking place in their client's lives. By the end of August everything had changed. The car was gathering dust in the garage, and rather than climbing stairs I was struggling to stand upright holding onto a frame. The subtlety of the therapeutic conversation had been replaced by typing with one finger of my left hand on a Lightwriter which gives me an artificial voice. I am dying and I don't want to die. I enjoy life here on earth and I don't want to leave. I love my wife, my home, my family and my friends and I don't want to leave them. Philomena and I are being torn apart after a lifetime shared together. Can comfort be found in all this affliction?

What is most comforting is to know that I am not alone. The main lesson life seems to be teaching me at present is that I am not alone; I have never been alone and will never be alone. Even death does not separate me from other people. We are one in death as we are one in life. We live together and we die together. Life and death are two things that we all share in common. To me it seems as if there is only one life that we all share. There is no such thing as an individual life. My life and your life are two sides of the same life. Death is where my life ends and yours begins; where your life ends and mine begins. I can't live your life and you can't live my life. The life we live together, the life we share in common, is greater than the sum of the lives we live separately. This is what comforts me most in my time of affliction; to know that my life is part of a greater whole. And the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Finding God in Myself

If I lose myself in god, I find god in myself.

Philip Sheppard, written shortly before he left this life on 31st December 2010.

It is hard to lament a man who had such a deep understanding of the closeness of life and death. Philip's release from an aggressive form of Motor Neurons Disease was, for him, a joyful move into what he truly believed to be his next stage of being. However, we can mourn our own loss of a good friend, a deep thinker and a gentle achiever of so many things – IBM and being part of the launching of the internet, local Council of Churches, as a counselor and a trainer of counselors, CANA and his deep spirituality to name but a few. We particularly send love to Philip's wife Philomena and his three daughters and grandson who we know will feel a great loss of his presence.

CANA is in the process of putting together a small booklet of a number of Philip's writings and short musings, some of which were sent in an email as the thought occurred to him. You can read some now on the CANA website www.christiansawakening.org and look in the section Key Articles where you will find a link to download his article 'Living in a More Spiritual Way', a highly recommended read.

Celia Storey

The Current Christian Evolution

From the many contacts I have with inter-Church and extra-Church groups and activities, I notice a number of “Signs of the Times” which indicate to me that Christianity at present is going through an evolutionary shift.

The great shifts of the past (the Western-Eastern schism, the Reformation) have principally been at the head level. What is happening now is more exciting because it is at the heart level. Let me list the signs, to see whether other readers have noticed the same.

- A global sense of Christianity. Seeing denominational differences in a larger context. The door opened for Catholics by the Vatican II document on Ecumenism. Collaboration between Churches.
- Recognition of the unnecessary limits Church practice puts on living and understanding the Gospels.
- The ability to distinguish the essentials from the incidentals in Church teaching and practice. Making the distinction between what are the values and what the techniques to bring them about..
- Recovery of the practice of meditation and contemplative prayer. The rise of several Christian meditation organisations.
- Biblical scholarship now being carried out ecumenically.
- The daring of more Christians to do some independent thinking and questioning.
- A switch from concern with doctrine to a seeking after spiritual experience, especially among younger Christians.
- An appreciation of the spirituality of other Faiths. For example, the fasting and prayer practices of Moslems, the meditation of Hindus and Buddhists.

- An awareness of Jesus’ teaching on non-violence and simplicity of life.
- Understanding that Jesus was less concerned with private devotion than with radical social issues.
- The growing popularity of pilgrimages and retreats.
- A re-thinking of the concept of God, from an interventionist deity to the divine presence in all creation: panentheism.
- Less concern with private sinfulness than with social sin.
- The re-introduction of Christian healing practices.
- The charismatic renewal.
- The rise of prayer groups and of basic Christian communities.
- The rediscovery of the role of women in the Church and of the feminine values as against intellectualisation and power-seeking.
- Increased lay-involvement in Church affairs and ministry.

It is seeing all these signs *taken collectively* that convinces me that there is a great shift in Christian expression and practice taking place in our world. How long before the movement replaces present structures?

I am reminded of a saying of Buckminster Fuller, the American engineer of the last century: “You can never change things by fighting existing reality. To change something, create a new model which makes the old models obsolete.”

Adrian B Smith

“WHAT IS GOD?” – A CANA DAY IN LONDON, Autumn 2010

Thirty-six of us met at the very comfortable Sion Centre in London to think about *What is God*. It was nice to see so many Cana members and to welcome quite a few people who had not been to Cana meetings before.

David Usher, a minister in the Unitarian Church, began by saying that the question 'What is God' leads to a philosophical discussion, while 'Who is God' is a theological question. God is known through our own experience and through encounter with others who have had this experience. He talked about the development of his own ideas about God, beginning in his Australian childhood with the conception of God as a sort of celestial Santa Claus open to a shopping list of goodies. In his rebellious teens he felt that the idea of God existing at all was nonsense, but when he began to study theology he saw it as the story of what others have believed, a corpus of knowledge and articles of belief to which we can subscribe, or not. There are no ultimate proofs of God's existence, but there is evidence of its possibility.

There followed a lively interchange of ideas about what God is, which led to an interesting discussion of the qualities attributed to the deity, such as omnipotence, love, judgement, all projections of the human mind. But the God inherited from Old Testament is, David suggested, a monster, a despot, a tyrant. Such a way of understanding God is, in our day, intellectually unsustainable and morally repugnant: it does not help us to be the sort of people we would like to be.

How do we arrive at our conception of what God is? We have an experience, then we try to make sense of it. But the problem is that people make sense of it in different ways.

It is the interpretation of the experience, often culturally determined, which divides us.

Theology is an attempt to explain the experience and put it into a larger context, but much of belief is non-rational, so it does not lend itself to left-brain interpretations.

The etymology of belief is a soul commitment: something you give your heart and life to.

The present tragedy that we've got to the state where we say 'you are either outside the churches or you are in; if you are in you are saved, loved, good, as long as you stand up and say you believe the right thing'.

We need to be careful when we talk about who or what God is because we can only talk about our own experience. We need to make this real in our lives, incarnated in how we live. It doesn't matter what we say we believe. It doesn't matter what tradition we do this within. We have the opportunity to make our humanity divine.

David went on to talk about how we could make God real within our lives, through consciously placing ourselves in the presence of the divine, and this theme was developed by Adrian Smith in the afternoon. Adrian suggested that we can only relate to an image of God. God is the God we have created in our own image. But we are entering in to the age of the Spirit, recognising the Christ-presence within ourselves and within all creation. This is Christ Consciousness. All forms of matter are vibrations of the Spirit and we are bringing to birth the ultimate consciousness of reality which Christ expressed.

At Adrian's suggestion we got together in small groups to discuss what Jesus represents for each of us. It was felt that Christ was a mystic who was completely in tune with the ultimate conscious awareness. He is the Way, our ultimate spiritual teacher.

Adrian explained how Christianity is evolving into something new; a new reformation is taking place, but this is a reformation of the heart rather than the intellect. We are moving from a church-centred to a kingdom-centred spirituality which is more concerned with spiritual experience than with creeds or beliefs, and as part of that we are rethinking our concept of God.

Peter Deunev, the Bulgarian Seer said '*Do not look for God outside yourself, look for God within*'. The way to do this is through silence, stillness and meditation.

Judy Hanmer

Readings from David Usher – requested to be in Newsletter

God is what gives us life: the spirit or force or energy that gives us life. I mean this not in the narrow scientific sense. God is not a chemical process that makes life possible. My grounding, rather, is in experience. It is in the experience of being given life - new life - that I find God.

I find God most reliably in relationship. This may be relationship with other people. The connections of friendship give me life. As do occasions when something important is shared between me and another person. I am renewed, given spirit for living. This may be relationship with my deepest self. In the emptiness of quiet or in the environment of safety provided by a person I trust, I find the me that exists below the layers that have accumulated over the years. When I find that self that exists within, I am given life.

This may be relationship with the earth, with the world, with the swirl of life all around me. I am given life as I explore a mountain trail, as I work with others toward making ours a better community, as I enter the excitement of a good Sunday at church. There is life all around me, and when I am in relationship with that, I am renewed. I find God.

This may be relationship with the mystery that seems to me at the centre of existence. Sometimes I catch glimpses of that. An image tells me something of what is eternal and unending in existence. An unexpected rush of emotion. The experience of being drawn towards something or someone even though I don't understand why or where it will lead. In the context of mystery the voice of God speaks, and I am given new life.

God - the force that gives us life - does not necessarily follow the rules, the guidelines, the standards we humans so painstakingly create. The voice of God is surprising and insistent and takes us in directions we would not otherwise choose. We plead, with Moses, "Why now? Why me?" But the question is before us: will I choose what gives me life, given the uncertainties and dangers that exposes me to, or will I settle?

Whenever I find myself at that question - will I choose life - then I know I have encountered God.
Bruce Marshall

LOOKING AT THINGS

*Wonder arose in me
When, a child, I discovered feathers,
Marvelling at the softness, their delicacy
of outline
But still more at the sheen and ripple
Of changing colour, blue and green and gold
gleaming across the peacock feathers I found
Not the great eye-feathers only,
But tiny ones catching the light, to change
as I turned them;
Yet never could all the colours be caught
together
The magic was in the moment, the glimpsing,
the passing enchantment,
Sweeter perhaps for the very swiftness of loss.*

*Shells with their circles of pearl
And hollowed, satin-smooth curves
Had their transient rainbows for my delight,
Shadows of rose and blue and pale sea-green;
Even the milky moonstones
Took on soft colours, like the ring of haze
round the moon.
Mystery held them, as the colours
were glimpsed, and then vanished.
I treasured the pearly shells, and the feathers*

*Even as later in life I found joy
In the blue or gold fire of opals, caught
for a moment;
Still more in the rainbow mist
Of a great waterfall, seen from afar;
Incredibly distant along a Norwegian valley;
Or the colours mingling in the flung spray
of a wave.
It is given to us to see only one aspect in the
moment,
One facet of the prism,
One colour of the spectrum;
That is enough of joy, but also enough of
blindness
To bring humility, and kindle in us faith
That one day we may see life in its fullness
In the constant light of eternity;
Then may we know the whole of love
Blended in beauty,
Even as here on earth we see, for a passing
moment
The rainbow with every colour alight in joy.*

Lucy M Green

OBERAMMERGAU and the PASSION PLAY

History of the Play

In Central Europe, the Thirty Years War (1618 – 1648) was one of the most destructive in history, resulting in widespread poverty and disease. Thirty percent of the population of Germany was wiped out. Swedish mercenaries brought the plague to Bavaria.

The village of Oberammergau, surrounded by mountains, had escaped the plague because of its isolation. They tried to keep strangers out, but a woodcarver, returning from a successful sales trip, was homesick for his family, and crept into the village by night. He brought the Black Death with him and a quarter of the population died. Not a single household escaped loss.

In 1633, after months of suffering, the villagers made a vow in the parish church that, if God spared them, they would perform a play showing the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said that no more deaths from the plague occurred after that day.

The Play was first performed in 1634, and then every 10 years until 1674, after which the performances have been held at the end of the decade.

Passion Plays have been performed at Easter all over Europe since the 13th century, and still are today; but the Oberammergau play is the most famous, and people come from all over the world to see it.

The Play is now performed 5 times a week between May and October. Initially, for over 200 years, the play took place in the cemetery next to the church (where one can still see the graves of the plague victims); then the performance was moved to a meadow. In 1815 the first permanent stage was built, enlarged in 1830, and in 1890 a new, permanent theatre was built. This was renovated during the 1990s and today the modernised, fully accessible theatre with underfloor heating can seat nearly 5000 people.

The Play is performed for the glory of God. The text, at first using a traditional mediaeval mystery play, has been revised many times, in consultation with representatives of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches and with Jewish organisations.

Passion Play 2010

This year the village performed the Play for the 41st time, and I was privileged to attend a performance on a warm, sunny day in September.

We stayed at a small family hotel run by Otto Huber, one of the Directors of the Play. He told us that everyone who goes to see the Play is changed. I found this to be true. For me, the Play was a profoundly moving spiritual experience.

Between the scenes the Chorus and Narrator comment on the action, as in Greek drama or oratorio, and a living tableau shows a scene from the Old Testament.

The Play opens with the triumphant entry into Jerusalem and ends with a symbolic depiction of the Resurrection.

For me the most moving scene was the Last Supper, the Pesach, in which Jesus used a Hebrew blessing of the bread and wine. Also the treatment of Judas as a tragic figure gave food for thought. The menacing presence of the Roman soldiers was very well done, as was the portrayal of Pontius Pilate. All in all, the acting was superb (and these are just the local villagers!). The whole production, including the music and the costumes, deserves the highest praise.

The Setting

Oberammergau is a pretty village set in the Ammergau Alps, famous for its woodcarving. There are many woodcarving and gift shops, The village is also famous for the painted decorations on its houses. The parish church is beautiful, and both there and in the small Protestant church were ecumenical hymn books in German and English which visitors were invited to take. Nearby are the beautiful baroque Abbey of Ettal (we walked there along the river) and Linderhof, one the castles of King Ludwig II.

After our two days in Oberammergau, my friend and I spent the rest of our Bavarian holiday in the nearby county town and winter sports resort of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, overlooked by the Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain.

Finally, I have to mention the warmth and friendliness of the Bavarian people --- and also the quality of their food!

Rosalind Werner

Alpha: where is it leading the Church?

I joined an Alpha Course that was being run in a neighbouring parish. My resistance had been great but our local lay-reader persuaded me saying she wanted me to speak up with my own beliefs. I was distressed by some of the statements in Nicky Gumbel's presentation (which I had been expecting) but then more so by people I knew who were there for the second and third time because "it is all so wonderful" and other's including two in my discussion group who said they believed every word of the Bible to be true. I came back from the first meeting feeling very depressed and had it not been for several good friends phoning me with encouragement, I probably would not have returned. As time went on I warmed to much of what Nicky was saying. His delivery was polished and by the use of real life stories and being honest about his own journey, he kept our interest and connected the traditional teaching with today's living.

The format of each evening was well graduated: it began with 'community', a hot meal prepared by the local worthies who had volunteered their time and ingredients – nothing to pay by the participants though donations were well received. This was a delightful opportunity to get to know the other participants. Next was 'praise', two, sometimes three videoed hymns full of repetition and accompanied by flitting scenes of our beautiful planet. As the weeks went on we were encouraged to stand and join in, swaying to the melodic chants. Eventually we settled to a half hour 'indoctrination' video of Nicky performing to an adoring congregation in his Holy Trinity Brompton church quoting liberally from the Bible, giving literal interpretation and no history of how some of the texts may have been written. Eventually we disappeared into our all too short, in the time left, small 'discussion' groups.

The 'every word of the Bible is true' contingent in my group had little idea of what the rest of us were talking about. Inevitably I was steaming with something or

other that Nicky had said. How could the Church go on implying that only Christianity had the answers? Do they know nothing of the rich tapestry of other faith traditions, many with frameworks for living every bit as strong as the Christian Catechism? One week there was out and out condemnation of all occult practices. The spectrum included channelling, healing and the weeji board. Where I might take exception to the latter, I tried to explain the importance of being aware of the spirit world and rather than fearing it, challenging and empowering the good that was offered those with the very special gift of seeing beyond our earthly plain. Not too many sessions later we were to spend a whole day on the subject 'How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?' I think we were intended to be so worked up by the end of the day that we would all be rushing round singing Alleluia but I was not aware of anyone looking particularly affected. There was a section on healing which seemed remarkably like a spiritualist séance. I was confused!

By the end of the fourteen week marathon I was sad to leave our little group, some of whom were remarkably like minded, and I hope we may find the opportunity to meet up again with the freedom that our group leader gave us to explore beyond the obvious, often using the journeys of the mystics to aid our discussion. The book *Longing for God* by Richard Foster and Gayle Beebe often came to our rescue when heading for deadlock with entrenched beliefs. We in CANA are really finding nothing new, the mystics have been there before us, it is just that today we can all be a mystic given time for silent meditation and openness to the divine. Among the Nicky Gumbel enthusiasts there is pressure for change in worship, not a popular move amongst the Holy Communion and Sung Eucharist traditionalists in our regular congregation. There were many young people who attended the course who are desperate for change to the more 'happy clappy' type of worship. In village communities comprising many retired service and business types there seems little compromise other than separate services. The Gumbel method has certainly attracted new life; two have since been confirmed, however I am not sure this leads the Church any nearer to God's Kingdom on Earth.

Celia Storey

THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS AND THE ESSENES ON HEAVEN AND EARTH

Jesus's teaching on the connection between earth and heaven is given in the rediscovered gospel (Professor Bordeaux: *"The Gospel of the Essenes"* (p.38):-

“And the morning sun encircled his head with glory as Jesus looked upon them and spoke:
“*My children, know you not that the Earth
And all that dwells therein
Is but a reflection of the Heavenly Father?*”
*And as you are suckled and comforted
By your mother when a child,
But go to join your father in the fields
When you grow up,
So do the angels of the Earthly Mother
Guide your steps
Toward him who is your Father,
And all his holy Angels,
That you may know your true home
And become true Sons of God.*”

Note: “*The lost Jesus Scroll*” (p.60), also states that the earth is a reflection of the Heavenly Father:

“*Through the sun we see the expression and power of our heavenly Father. Our Holy Earth was born from the Sun and she is a reflection, or shadow, of the Heavenly Father, even as the sun is also a reflection of Him*”

The thanksgiving psalm from the *Dead Sea Scrolls* says so much about the earth and the angels that work with it:

“*Life always begins again.
The Angel of Earth embraces the seed
And gives unto it Life.
The kiss of the Angel of Water
Awakens the seed.
The warmth of the angel of Sun
Makes the seed grow.
The little plant bends in the breeze,
The Angel of Air makes it grow strong.
The little plant is holy.
It bathes in the life stream of eternal order.*”

Anthony Deavin

Please contact Anthony Deavin (01737 842749, anthony.deavin@btopenworld.com) if you would like to see the text of a talk he gave entitled *"St Andrew's Songs of Praise"*, which ends with the extracts above.

BOOK REVIEW:

Without Buddha I could not be a Christian

Paul F. Knitter. (One World, Oxford.2009)

A word about the author first. Paul Knitter is a Catholic, ex-priest who was a member of the Society of the Divine Word for 23 years. His writing career began after he left that missionary society and has concentrated on inter-Faith studies. He has written ten books on this subject. He is currently Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary, New York.

This book, as the title suggests, is autobiographical. He alternates in the text between particular difficulties he has with Christian beliefs and practices and what he calls “using my Buddhist flashlight” to throw (for him) more meaningful explanations. A few examples.

He understands “Salvation” as coming to the realisation that we have the potential to become Christs. It is “*our own awakening Our own discovery of our divine nature*” “*A wakening up to our own unity with God, or oneness with the Spirit*”.

He quotes Karl Rahner as saying that Jesus realised the full potential of human nature. “*He remains one of us, though he ‘arrived’ way ahead of most of us.*” (pp116-7)

It is not surprising that he devotes a good portion to the subject of meditation (in the Eastern meaning of that word), though he does distinguish the Western ascetic terminology: “*Meditation is looking from the outside into the unitive experience of God. Contemplation is looking from the inside out – from within one’s oneness with the Divine, for which there are not adequate words.*” (p.139) He adds (p.154) “*Buddhism can help Christians to be mystical Christians.*” He expands on this: “*We Christians need an additional Sacrament. It is the Sacrament of Silence*”. A Sacrament

we need to receive as frequently as everyday. (p.153)

As a person who is active in Justice and Peace matters – especially in Latin America – he tackles the meaning of the Kingdom of God, (which throughout he refers to as Kindom, to be politically correct!) especially the perplexing question of its being present now and at the same time not yet. He struggles with the seeming contradiction between the Christian’s duty to bring about God’s plan for the coming of the Kingdom on earth (Don’t we pray “*Thy Kingdom come on earth*”?) with what he calls “*the starkest contrast between Buddhism and Christianity*”, that Buddhists have no eschatology: the world isn’t going anywhere. They don’t believe in an end point for history, when accounts will be settled. So how can Buddhists make the Kingdom present, he asks. He neglects to make any mention of the many researches that have found the relationship between people meditating and its effect on the environment, reducing stress, for instance.

As Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr – as well as Buddha and Jesus before them – realised, the best weapon for changing the hearts of oppressors is to love them. These words of Jesus might be quoted of the Buddha: “*Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you*” (Luke 6:27-28)

I found this a most helpful book.

Adrian B. Smith

SCIENCE, RELIGION AND ONENESS

One of the biggest obstacles to a spiritual approach to the world's problems is that of language. At a deep level people know that the consumer economy based on materialism and fed by greed, fear and competitiveness must give way to another way of being fully human, based on wisdom, compassion and cooperation. But in what language can we talk about this? To many people today, religious concepts no longer conjure up the fulfillment of life. Take for example the word "Christ". Its sacred connotation is lost – if used in speech it is more likely to be a swear word or an exclamation of surprise. The weakness of religions today is the commonly held suspicion that, whatever beliefs they teach, their exhortations simply do not seem to work in the real world – just look at today's chaos and suffering. Yet I believe that at a deep level there is an unconscious conviction that there is another and better way to fulfill our humanity.

Perhaps the most fruitful path away from materialism may be less through the language of religion than through the language of science; for science is the field of human activity which has superseded religion as the bearer of truth in the popular mind. This is not the old science as the opponent of spirituality. It is the new science which is no longer limited by the boundaries of the physical world, but refers to the use of the scientific method of an unprejudiced approach to truth through the search for evidence from whatever source or area of human experience – physical, mental, spiritual. So it is that thoughts, feelings, intention, motivation, relationship and love are central to what is loosely called 'Consciousness Studies'. The appeal of this approach is not that it is more 'right' than religion than that it is in search of the same goal – the meaning of life – without the traditional religious baggage of duality and separateness: God and Man, Right and Wrong, Them and Us. This insistence on separateness in religion is its greatest

hindrance. But the new science, being free from this baggage, can go straight towards the higher truth of oneness.

To illustrate the ability of the new science to bypass the obstacle of separateness I will turn to two issues of the *Journal of the Scientific and Medical Network*, 102, 103, Spring and Summer 2010. The lead articles discuss the different worlds which our lives inhabit – for convenience the writer (Bernard Carr, Professor of Mathematics & Astronomy) considers two worlds, the physical (matter) and the non-physical (mind and spirit). His point is that these are in fact two aspects of the *same* higher reality, and our work today is to build bridges between apparently separate worlds to reach "*a greater collective mind with no boundaries....within an undivided wholeness*" in the words of David Bohm, the great professor of theoretical physics. Page after page of these journals illustrate how the most advanced physics (quantum mechanics, relativity, etc) supports the idea of an ultimate universal oneness. This is the same oneness glimpsed by that Christian prophet and follower of science, Fr Bede Griffiths, shortly before his death when he said: "*But you have to go beyond duality and realize the transcendent mystery to which all concepts, images, thoughts and desires point – to this Infinite Mystery beyond. The human race must go beyond these dualities; otherwise we are going to destroy one another*".

Christianity as taught is based on a fundamental separateness between God and man which it then seeks to overcome through salvation. But what if the Church has got it wrong? That the ultimate basis of all things is oneness and it is we who have not yet learnt this? Christian language will not engage the masses until it renounces separateness and re-interprets the Gospel story in terms of the greater wholeness. Perhaps science is already ahead of us would-be Christians, until we learn to distinguish between conventional Christianity and the life and teachings of Jesus. The call is urgent as the destructive outcome of our present way of life is not far off – unless we accept the death/rebirth of Fr Bede by "going beyond these dualities".

Harry Underhill

TRANSFIGURATION

Entering the kitchen, family's hub,
Aegean scene of labours, daily
bread prepared, shared, washed up
uncountable conversations;
life just gone on. Today, mess
- as usual -

A glance suddenly caught
another world through the frame
dappled, sparkles, dazzling, shaded
glowing rich blue-white mystic
patterned tiles, shining rows of mugs
hanging along the diagonal.....
low slanting sunbeam....teacosy
nestled among celery and fruitbowl,
wooden doors and shelves foursquare

Moment's transport, ineffable realm

of beauty – where? Reflected
in picture glass, but no still life –
rearranged by symmetrical impossibility
my own home back to front,
here and now, and Present.

Fetch the broom and sweep the floor.

Emma Laughton



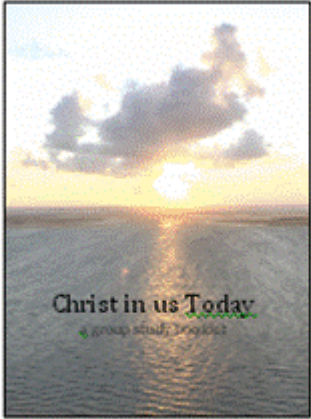
Continued from p2

Increasingly we are realising that the generations alive now are part of an 'evolutionary jump' and that "*the future is a contingency, it is not an inevitability. It depends upon our acts*" (Barbara Marx Hubbard)

So a process is underway. Despite challenging events in our personal lives there seems to be an "*uprush of love and joy to become at one with the true Christ pattern that flows through each of us and within each of us*" (Spangler). Individuals or groups who embody this consciousness – become the "new" and, like a magnetic force, will draw the "new" out of many, many others.

We too are growing into being the 'light of the world'. CANA member Revd. Don Macgregor follows in the tradition of Meister Eckhart in preaching '*You are the Light of the World*' from a pulpit (bless you Don) but gently dawning within us is the tremendous thought that as we ourselves awaken to and embody Christ Consciousness, collectively we – humanity – are the "Second Coming".

Janice Dolley

<p>Thank you for the many orders received for this booklet. Many of you will be using it in A4 format but if your group would prefer an A5 booklet, we are now selling them at:</p> <p>£15 for 10 copies</p> <p>Please send your order with cheque made payable to CANA to: 102 Church Road, Steep Petersfield GU32 2DD</p>	 <p>Christ in us Today a group study booklet</p>
	<p>£2 per copy / £15 for 10</p>

These are the kinds of questions that could be considered by such a group:

What do we understand by Christ Consciousness – does this relate only to Jesus or is it a more universal consciousness that is emerging?

In what ways might individual and collective fear of present and possible events and trends be transformed into love and trust?

What is your experience of the masculine and feminine aspects of divinity? How might these be balanced within ourselves?

Jesus the Christ described himself as Son of Man and Son of God. How might this relate to us today?

What might the term vibrational energies mean? How might we help raise levels of awareness and creative energy in our homes and local and national communities?

How might we better harmonise our relations with nature and the non-human world?

From *Rev Don McGregor*: The idea of the second coming being a movement of Christ-consciousness in the whole of humanity seems to be foretold by St Paul:

"And the mystery is that Christ lives in you, and he is your hope of sharing in God's glory." (Col. 1:27 CEV)

continued next page...

That, to me, is what the second coming is about - the realisation that the indwelling Christ nature is a potential of us all, and that when we can put aside our own egoic selves and know God in that Christ-consciousness, then humanity will ascend to a new way of being. (DMcG)

Into Christ Consciousness :
co-creating our emerging future
An Easter Gathering 2012, 7- 10 April at Findhorn

We are preparing for a co-creative event with the potential to contribute strongly to the shift that is taking place through opening to Christ Consciousness. Information about the Gathering will be available on the Findhorn website www.findhorn.org/intochristconsciousness from March 2011. Findhorn and CANA are among several groups organising the event.

We want to be among those who co-create the change that is needed in our world, not just for the sake of human beings, but for the sake of every life-form, every aspect of our planet, and beyond. There will be lead contributors, but if you feel drawn to attend your spirituality will be a vital part in the outcome of the Gathering.

Booking information:

Cost: £395. Early bird price for those booking before 31 October 2011 is £355. As Portal Groups become active, leaders can apply for a further reduction to send a representative. [Note: up to 15 Portal Group leaders for the first 80 bookings may apply for a reduced fee of £275.] Contact The Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Findhorn, Moray IV36 3TZ, Scotland.

T: 01309 690311 enquiries@findhorn.org

Another way of connecting is through:

Portal Groups:

The *Into Christ Consciousness Gathering* is an invitation for us to move forward, from our edge, our growing point. As such, it is an invitation to explore. And the exploration does not have to be undertaken alone. Would you feel drawn to getting together with others and setting up a group to explore more deeply into Christ Consciousness? This invitation is open to all, not only to those who imagine they might go to Findhorn for the Easter 2012 Gathering.

From Easter onwards, start looking out for www.intocc.net In the meantime, you can write to: intocc@wrekintrust.org for guidelines on running a Portal Group – so-called because of its potential as a new threshold. T: 01452 840033.

For May 2012, a website will be launched to support individuals and groups who feel drawn to undertake this journey.

BITS & BOBS

QUOTATION taken from The Times by Jonathan Sacks saying that Hawkings should stick to science as science and theology have different aims: “*Science is about explanation whereas religion is about interpretation. Science takes things apart to see how they work. Religion puts things together to see what they mean*”

David Storey says: I commend David Boulton’s “*Who on EARTH was Jesus?*” It is subtitled: “The modern quest for the Jesus of History”, which describes its contents well. It only tries to deal in depth with the work of historians, including those who may have other titles as well, but mostly claim to be working under the rules of historians, including the Pope. A major set of contributors featured are the Jesus Seminar participants, but many of them are also treated separately. They are offset by presentations on N T (Tom) Wright, and other Christians and Jews. Some of the radical theories are explored. The fundamental question as to whether Jesus taught his ultimate return or his post-death return and whether we are waiting for God to act or God is waiting for us or is it God and humanity who need to act together?

All this takes 400 plus pages and is well worth the £14.99 paperback from O Books.

Finances

2010	CANA Balance Sheet	2010	2009
	General Account	4,188.10	4,145.36
	Findhorn Special Account	1,000.00	
	Balance	5,188.10	4,145.36

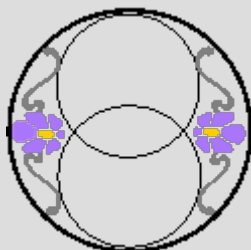
You will be pleased to see that CANA are still in funds, in fact are up around £1,000 from the previous year. We lost some money over the Chigwell weekend but, thanks to the very good response we had on the CANA Day in London, were well up over all. In 2010 we also had the expense of publishing our little booklet, *Christ in us Today*. This has been going so well that we have since been able to print an additional 100 copies.

As you see above, we have set aside in a special account the sum of £1,000 towards the cost of preparing for the Findhorn Gathering. Some of our members, in particular Janice Dolley and Gillian Paschkes-Bell, are putting in a lot of energy to make this a fruitful and successful event and this fund will help towards travel, printing etc.

Thank you for your continued membership and support. **Celia Storey** (Treasurer)

Would any artists among you like to design for a future front cover? Some clear outlines, not too fussy, would be perfect. Maybe to accompany a favourite quotation? Do let me know if this appeals. *News&Views* is **your** Newsletter...prose, poetry, ideas/thoughts, drawings....warmly welcomed.....The Editor (contact details on back page)

For more information about CANA or about attending CANA Core Group meetings, please contact Catie Sharples on 01628 529436 or email catiesharples@onetel.net



Copy for next
newsletter to:

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denise.newleaf@phon
ecoop.coop
by **mid-June 2011**

We are on the Web
<http://www.christiansawakening.org>

Membership
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Judy Turner
Flat 6, Belle Vue
House
19 Belle Vue Road
Exmouth EX8 3DR
E-mail:
Judy37@btinternet.com

DIARY DATES FOR 2011

LAST MINUTE CALL: 25-27 March “Co-Creating...in Momentous

Times @ Hawkwood College, Stroud. Bookings: 01453 759034

info@hawkwoodcollege.co.uk 40 years of Wrekin Trust – Transforum with
amazing speakers. Cost: £215/243

Sat 16 April – 10:00-5:00 pm “Evolutionary Consciousness” @

Trevaccoon Country House, Llanrhian, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62

6DP Wrekin Trust & Common Ground £15 (bring lunch to share) Contact:

Jayne MacGregor 01348 872 895 jaynemacgregor@yahoo.co.uk

Adrian Smith is leading the Holy Week and Easter retreat at Ammerdown,
Radstock, Nr. Bath. It will be rather different from what people experience in
parishes! **April 20th - 25th**. Book at Ammerdown: 01761-433-709

24-26 June “Faith, Hope & Love in Practice” with Ravi Ravindra @ The

Carmelite Priory, Youlbury, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5HB

www.carmelite.org.uk Cost: £170/£190 (Wrekin Forum c/o 66 Park
Meadow, Hatfield, Herts AL9 5HB apply Marolyn on 01707 891286

16 November – CANA day at the Sion Centre, London: “Re-discovering

Inner Ways to the Truth” with Dr Anthony Deavin. Details to follow.

We are planning to send out a revised Membership List with the Summer
Edition of *New & Views*, in regional order so you can make contact with others
if you wish. Please be sure and let the Membership Secretary know of any
hanges – we seem to have rather many incorrect e-mail addresses!