

CHRISTIANS AWAKENING TO A NEW AWARENESS (CANA)

Founded by the Bridge Trust

News & Views

Winter 2008/9

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 of the emerging vision.

CANA recognises that we are all one through that of God within us from whatever background we come.

CANA is a group where risk becomes safe through trust and where exploration is key.

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*Look you well unto this day
For it is life, the very life of life
For yesterday is but a memory
And tomorrow is but a vision
But today well lived
Makes all the yesterdays a memory of happiness
And all the tomorrows a vision of hope
Look you well therefore unto this day.*

From the ancient Sanskrit

May each of us look well, live well, this day. It is the awareness of the importance of this day, this moment, which brought about our recent conference in London on *Awakening to the Now*.

The very title of the event is perhaps an indication that some of us, exploring the evolutionary edges of Christianity, are returning to the **now** of the times in which Jesus lived. He taught and exemplified how life and living could be an expression of the expanded consciousness of the One in which we all 'live and move and have our being'. His awareness was expanded far beyond those who heard him then but maybe, just maybe, we are now ready to really hear what he was saying:

- *I am in the Father and you are in me, just as I am in you.* Adrian Smith has written of this in his recent book *God, Energy and the Field*. Our understanding is shifting to see the depth of meaning in this. The Buddha said much the same – *with our thoughts we create the world*. So, if we think of God in a limited way, as made in our image, we cannot comprehend the vast reality of the loving, all-embracing consciousness, the beneficent energy which is the all in all we call God.
- *My sheep know my voice* – here is the secret for connection with this 'One'. It is to be still, listen and know the 'voice' that speaks within our own thinking. Inner listening can only happen in the Now. This is the living connection to what is emerging from the Now – if we pay attention. "*Attention is the transformative force that can melt down the boundaries that keep us separate, that keep us separate from the world, from each other, from ourselves. Using that welding flame – having the welding flame of attention operating through us – means to melt down, to liquidify, to dissolve old forms to get to the source essence of things, to connect to the source of emerging possibility*". Otto Sharmer
- *In my Father's house are many mansions.* In the present moment is found a multi-dimensional reality awaiting our attention and connection. At the conference I gave an example of a group of people that came together in a Wrekin Forum regional round table in South Wales. Each shared their experience of "awakening to the now". Each, it seemed, connected to a different aspect of this multi-dimensional reality including:
 - working with angelic realms in nature, clearing old energies in different places and opening up portals to the 'new'.
 - connecting with those who have transitioned from this life.
 - working with the unseen energies of the subtle realms, the medicine

wheel and the cosmic energies available to us.

- tuning into the inner voice, obeying the promptings and setting out onto unknown seas

- *Behold, I make all things new* – and once we take the jump we find that the evolutionary flow is moving fast. And we need to trust the flow – in the moment, in the now – and discover for ourselves the reality of ‘*Ask and you shall receive*’, TRUST and - *become as little children* - who live life spontaneously in the moment and act ‘as if’ everything will just work out fine.

It seems that once awakened even a little bit, we find ourselves on a fast track to shifting from self-consciousness towards cosmic consciousness and ultimately, God-consciousness. Isn’t this what Jesus was trying to tell us? But we don’t have to go it alone because we are intimately linked with others in one great living unity, manifesting in infinite diversity of forms of expression and appearance. So we are integrally linked with others and it is through co-operation with others – both friends and colleagues on earth with us now as well as friends and other beings on many dimensions of reality – that we will, together, bring about the ‘new’.

And we cannot yet know what the ‘new’ will look like, what living in it will feel like. But as we awaken as an ‘imaginal cell’ in the liquefying and dissolving forms of the ‘old’ (as in the chrysalis stage of the metamorphosis of the caterpillar to the butterfly) and link with others to form self-organised ‘imaginal clusters’ then, together, we may emerge and find ‘the Kingdom’ **has** come on earth as it is in heaven. In response to the challenge from Eckhart Tolle – to evolve or die – we are evolving to find that each of us in an expression of the One essence underlying all there is and that, together, we can set the stage for this great “multi-dimensional one-ness to reveal itself.”

Janice Dolley

AWAKENING TO THE NOW

A report on the CANA Conference in London, 27th September 2008

About 45 people gathered at the CANA conference at Essex Unitarian Church in London in September to explore what it means to live “in the Now”. There is a growing sense in CANA and in many other people that part of the New Awareness we are awakening to is a consciousness of the importance of being in now time, rather than focussing on the past or the future. We contemplated living in the Now from our Christian perspective.

Judith Seelig opened the day (and our hearts) by “sounding the call”. Her beautiful, powerful voice sang out wonderful tones which resonated with each of the chakras and lead us to be still and focus on the present moment.

Jane Ozanne introduced the day, with a reading from The Genesis Meditations by Neil Douglas Klotz (2003). We also considered Eckhart Tolle’s idea of the new awakening:

“We are coming to the end not only of mythologies but also of ideologies and belief systems. The change goes deeper than the content of your mind, deeper than your thoughts. In fact, at the heart of the new consciousness lies the transcendence of thought, the new found ability of rising above thought, of realizing a dimension within yourself that is infinitely more vast than thought” (A New Earth: 2005; p. 21-22).

Janice Dolley spoke to us about the multidimensionality of The Now. She described the soul as an “integrative heart” that makes sense of immediate, present experiences of the spiritual. We can experience the spiritual through both the immaterial and the material world, and within ourselves and outside of ourselves. Every human being has an integrative heart that can listen to what others tell us they are experiencing spiritually and grow from it. Jesus spoke of the oneness and interconnectedness of all beings when He said, “I am the vine, you are the branches”, and “The Father and I are one, even as you and I are one”

Some suggestions on how to “leap forward” into awareness of the Now:

1. Pay attention in every moment.
2. Listen to the whispers, messages and coincidences that you receive every day of your life.
3. Go with the flow of energy, and move with your intuition. Have the courage to move this way.
4. Find a spiritual friend to share experiences with.
5. Let your inner light shine. Be aware that you are one with those around you and with those people far away.

Another way into the Now is through meditation i.e. silent focusing on the breath or on a mantra.

Adrian Smith presented to us the idea of meditation as a two-way sharing of consciousness with God/ the Godhead. For spiritual growth, we need to balance between awareness and stillness. Through stillness, we become conscious of the Still Point within, which is the Centre, or the Now. Meister Eckhart said, “Nothing in all creation is so like God as stillness”. We meditated together for ten minutes, using the mantra ‘Maranatha’, which means ‘come’ or ‘hurry’.

David Storey, another CANA member, led a discussion of being in the Now in the hurly burly of life. In the gospel of Thomas, it says that it is our ability to be at rest while in the hurly burly of life that is evidence of the Father within us.

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. As with all CANA gatherings, it is so revitalizing and renewing to get together with other seekers and searchers who have roots in Christianity. And I received some practical tips on increasing my conscious awareness of the Now.

Catie Sharples

CHRIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Driven by a need to delve deeper into the beliefs of the Christian Faith, Gillian took a degree in divinity at Heythrop College, London University in 1995 and a Masters in Theology at Oxford in 1998. She now lives in the spiritual community of Findhorn and teaches as part of the Scotland Faculty of The Interfaith Seminary, by whom she was ordained as an Interfaith Minister earlier this year. Seeing theology as myth (myth can become incarnate), and passionate about the freedom that comes from seeking the meanings beneath the surface, Gillian was a member of the CANA Core Group during the 1990's, and participated in writing down some of the meanings contemporary consciousness can find behind received dogma. This article, which covers material Gillian spoke about at the CANA Conference on Christ Consciousness held in February of this year, is a reflection in the same line.

This is a personal journey of reflection about the term ‘Christ Consciousness.’ – Not so much an attempt to elucidate what it does mean, but to reflect on what it can, helpfully, mean to us in our everyday lives.

In some meditation circles, Christ Consciousness has a technical meaning, denoting a particular state of consciousness that may be experienced as a result of advanced meditation practice. However, believing that everything true finds manifest form in any level of consciousness, my question is to ask what useful meaning Christ Consciousness might have in everyday life. What is the Christ Consciousness ‘principle’?

My starting point is the theological formula central to Christian belief, that Jesus is/was fully divine and fully human. Understanding myth as a story with a deeper meaning that can help us to live more truly, strongly, madly, deeply, and understanding theology as myth, I fell to reflecting on the meanings I could find behind this formula. What, I asked myself, could it possibly mean for a human being to be divine?

Today, I would answer that question by saying that it means living from the God-consciousness within, conveyed through intuitive guidance, and cultivated through sincere spiritual practice of meditation and prayer. Once, I would have thought such a view blasphemous, but my movement from that position began when I read the view of R S Lee (one-time vicar of St Mary the Virgin, the university church at Oxford) – that the point of being Christian was to become Christ. When I first read it, that blew my mind.

The Old and New Testaments give us images of the main qualities perceived in the Divine by the Hebrew imagination. In the Old Testament we read how God created the Earth. Later on, we read about God’s justice – and judgement – and also of ‘His’ Loving Kindness. In the New Testament we read that God is Love (and also Judge). The three qualities, Creativity, Justice and Love, are all positive. But creativity can become greedy, seeking the fullest development of the self to the detriment of another (First World/Third World situation). And justice can turn into condemnatory judgement. (The God of the Bible gets away with this for many of the writers of the scriptures, but contemporary consciousness no longer worships such a god.) True Love (as opposed to the pseudo-varieties with which some people manipulate others) is always Love, incorruptible. Infinitely and playfully creative, Love expresses itself in manifold ways, its creativity channelled by kindness, willing to limit its activity when the alternative is to the detriment of another, turning into healing when the Other is hurt or in pain. Love is the manifestation of divinity in everyday life.

It is true that sometimes we find it hard to discern the genuinely loving action. Love is not sentimental. It is strong – sometimes, tough. If we could live constantly from our divine centre – and we can, Jesus promised – we could discern truly the action that would be most genuinely helpful. Unconscious drives get in the way. But the spiritual journey is to have the doors of inner perception progressively cleansed by the action of Grace, activated by prayer. Thereby we come to dwell more continuously in the divine presence, and from that place we manifest Love. This is fundamentally what it is to express the Divine Nature.

What of Human Nature? Paradoxically, I believe this is the same thing. To be fully human is to express the divine nature. This view is enshrined in language. We read of ‘man’s inhumanity to man,’ and this denotes actions without love. To be inhuman is to obliterate the divine nature. To be fully human is to be Christ.

The Christ myth contains another important aspect. Jesus died and rose again, we are told. For me, this story’s inner meaning is to emphasise the sacrificial nature of life. We constantly have to die to what is, in order to make space for what is to come. Beyond this, willingness to let go of the good for the sake of the best, is the pattern of sacrifice that Christ exemplified. That is, Jesus was unwilling to compromise the Love and Light he lived by to save his skin. The result, we are told, is that Love and Light proved stronger than Death.

The Christian claim is that this myth, foreshadowed in the stories of Osiris, Dionysus and other mythological characters, actually happened in the case of Jesus. The myth became flesh. What is true psychologically, occurred, physically. For many, belief in a real resurrection seems far-fetched. Interestingly, Tibetan Buddhists say they know about resurrection. The ‘Rainbow Body,’ as they call it, is documented as the rapid disappearance of the physical body of certain advanced sages after physical death, and the manifestation of the deceased in a new form quite different from solid earthly existence, but perceptible to human senses.

Jesus gave up human life in order not to compromise the way of life that is to be fully divine and fully human. In so doing, he revealed the true meaning of humanity. We are not fully human until we live from our divine nature.

These thoughts are expanded in CANA Discussion Paper No. 5 *Christ Consciousness* by the same author. Available from CANA Publications, 11 Brownhill Rd, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh. SO53 2EB. £2 incl p&p.

Gillian Paschkes-Bell

THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

Aware of the developing recession we asked Peter Challen for a brief comment for News and Views. Some of you will recall a CANA event a few years ago when Peter offered new insights with regard to a more just economic and financial system. Hopefully the present crisis will prompt politicians to re think the underlying structures - particularly around money creation. One sign of hope is the following petition which Peter tells us was presented on November 11th.

11 Nov 2008 Column 743

Petitions

Finance (Public Projects) 10.1 pm

Norman Baker (Lewes) (LD): I have been asked to present a petition from London Global Table that advocates a new non-inflationary financial mechanism, free from interest, and the use of national bank-issued interest-free loans is such a mechanism. It draws attention to the fact that such mechanisms are in applicable and in use in Canada, New Zealand, Guernsey and Malaysia, and urges the Government to bring forward legislation to enable the Bank of England to issue interest-free loans for public, environmental and cleaner-electricity capital projects.

Following is the full text of the petition:

[The Petition of London Global Table (an association of people concerned for Global Justice) and others of like disposition.

Declares that the United Kingdom uses interest-bearing money to fund public capital projects thereby increasing the National Debt; requires a new non-inflationary financial mechanism free from interest; the use of

national bank-issued interest-free loans is such a mechanism.

Further declares that in the past such a mechanism (using national bank-issued interest-free or low-interest loans) has been successfully used for public capital projects in Canada, New Zealand, and Guernsey and is believed to be currently in use in Malaysia .

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to bring forward legislation to enable the Bank of England to issue interest-free loans for public, environmental and clean electricity capital projects, such loans to be repaid and, on repayment, cancelled, thereby halving or more the usual cost in a non-inflationary way.

And the Petitioners remain, etc.]

[274 signatures] [P000286]

We plan to have a fuller article in the next News and Views.

The link to the segment of Hansard containing the Petition is

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081111/debtext/81111->

This link brings up several pages of Hansard which includes the petition.

WOMEN'S WISDOM CIRCLES

A Wisdom Circle is a group of women (usually between 6 to 12 in number) in the second half of life who meet in circle to share their experience, to listen and perhaps in the process to distil a little wisdom. I have been involved in such circles now for over twenty years and have also been convening them for a long weekend a few times a year with a colleague at a retreat house in Shropshire, the Grange.

A Wisdom Circle is not a discussion group. We do not react with argument to what another has said but simply listen as we try to understand, so that each can speak from the heart. We share our stories with tears and laughter.

During these sessions we explore possibilities and priorities in our own lives, (both 'doing' and 'being') as well as considering what matters most on a deeper level. One of the things which is most wanted is that children in our time and in future generations should grow in wholeness, love and peace into the abundance of life which Christ promised,

Since St Francis prayed "make me an instrument of your peace", we now feel our own responsibility and realise that men and women together can co-create the future with God. For this we need all the wisdom we can find.

When people are searching for wisdom they sometimes look back into the past to words written by men often thousands of years ago. Of course we need men's wisdom, but for most of those years women's life experience was ignored. Many would say that women's wisdom is largely common sense which indeed it is - but this is rooted in experience. Our own experience may not be significant as each life is special and different, but when we share and listen to others, we begin to understand more. At the same time such sharing generates a love and trust within the circle which enables deeper exploration.

Today there is so much potential in the second half of life. Jung pointed out that woman is the only female on the planet who continues to live after her ability to procreate has ceased. He suggested there might be some evolutionary significance in this. Could the potential for physical reproduction flip over at the menopause into a potential for spiritual and emotional creativity?

For thousands of years intellectual life has grown and flourished producing ever more amazing inventions (The Tree of Knowledge?). Yet all this time emotional life - "human nature" - has hardly developed at all. Christ told us to love one another yet we have scarcely begun to understand what this means, nor do we even have the vocabulary to help us understand love - this one word which covers a multitude of meanings. Nor have we explored those aspects of love which can be so creative and energising.

Women who have experienced two or three sessions at the Grange often join in our "Friends of Sophia" weekends in the summer when we specifically explore some aspect of love. Two years ago we looked at 'Healing Love', last year we considered 'How we cultivate love' and this year we are exploring 'Living with Love and gratitude'. These are tiny forays into an immense subject rather like paddling in the sea. Our wisdom circles are for women in the second half of life, but women are telling their stories in circles all over the world and even a few drops of wisdom may help to nourish that other tree - the Tree of Life.

Sheila Ward

See www.sophiatree.co.uk.

(This article was first printed in “Vision”, the magazine of the United Church Dorchester June 2008 and reproduced with permission)

Ref. "Towards Wisdom" by Sheila Ward, available from Green Spirit books @ £7.50 including p&p.

BOOK REVIEWS

God, Energy and the Field by Adrian B. Smith
Publisher O Books, 2008, ISBN 978-1-84694-135-1 Price £9.99

Adrian has given us a treasure trove in his latest and, he tells us, his last book. (I wonder?!) True to form he has managed to make the complex comprehensible and capture the reader's imagination as to new potentialities. The Hindu notion of God as manifest and unmanifest is one of the insights that Adrian ponders in the more leisurely tone of the early chapters. The beauty of his argument and historical reflections of the early chapters later give way to a more pungent and note making style which left me at times thinking, 'hang on a minute that's not substantiated'.

Let me give you a taste of the gems - or at least my gems (you will doubtless mine your own as you read):-

...we are not a collection of human beings, we are being appearing as humanity.

What our world needs to move towards is a shared understanding of what it means to manifest Divine life. For this purpose, the concept of the cosmic or universal Christ is fundamental.

I even found a much more exciting definition of 'metanoia' - not 'repent' but 'beyond the mind' - rather like metaphysics. "*Transcend your level of consciousness to understand the good news.*"

Adrian can throw in a nugget like Origen's '*The Spirit stands for progress, and evil, by definition then, is that which refuses progress*' as the concluding sentence of his chapter on Evil as Misused Energy. It redeemed for me what was one of my 'hang on a minute' parts of the book. However, in the midst of his argument Adrian categorically declares it to be 'nonsense' that sinfulness may sadden God. "*We are incapable of affecting God's moods*". Yet his very next sentence includes the concept of 'relationship' with God.

In the tumbling energy of his final chapters Adrian explains how,

"Solving the world's problems through a higher level of consciousness requires tapping the highest level of energy: love... Love is the deepest form of communication. Its language is silence, its expression is sharing" and that "Our next stage of evolution is 'at the heart level, at the level of a deeper consciousness. Jesus did say to his followers: 'When that day comes, you will know that I am in the Father and that you are in me, just as I am in you.' (John 14.20)

As we enter into this heart dimension is not God both manifest and unmanifest not also touched by this love? How can it not be that the essence of the cosmos is not emotionally affected?

So much is enlightening in this book - the science of fields and the notion of metaphysical fields, the research into the influence of meditation, resurrection as morphic resonance and much else. Buy it and discover your own wonders!

Sue Howard

The Yoga of Jesus by Paramahansa Yogananda 2007

The Self-Realisation Fellowship, California. ISBN13-978-0-87612-556-4. US\$14.

Yogananda is the author of the better-known *Autobiography of a Yogi*.

I have found this book immensely helpful. The author has some insightful things to say about passages of the Gospels, especially the chapter on the Beatitudes and that on the Kingdom, and all in the

context of meditation and its effects – particularly Kriya Yoga.

My only regret is that his New Testament quotes are from the King James version which I found diminished the impact of his chapter on the parables.

Nor is it without its consideration of contemporary physics. There are pages on “The Vibratory Nature of Creation” and “Science discovers Intelligent Order”.

Here is a sample passage:

Every existing substance can be reduced to a pattern or form of energy, which interacts and interconnects with other forms. Some of today’s most celebrated physicists go a step further, identifying consciousness as the fundamental ground of all being. Thus modern science is confirming the ancient principles of yoga, which proclaim that unity pervades the universe.

Adrian B. Smith

OUR IONA PILGRIMAGE - - - IT’S ALL OF US

Whether you are physically coming to Iona or not we are all part of this process of ‘going deep’ and living out whatever emerges – for we are connected in the great Mystery! I’ve just written an update for those of us who are making the physical journey to Iona and included this insight on pilgrimage which Moyna Lynch found and thought that it applies to us all:

Seven Stages of Pilgrimage – *from Sacred Britain (Martin and Nigel Palmer)*

First - involves feeling what it means to be a pilgrim and how different this is from just travelling between A and B;

Second - has to do with reading the signs, seeing that journeys are entities and that they take on a life of their own;

Third - becoming aware of our companions and why we are in the company we are. (Not always easy!)

Fourth - relates to the history, the ‘story’ we are witnessing and its social, spiritual and political implications;

Fifth - is about losing our role as observer and becoming part of the landscape, part of the story;

Sixth - leads into a more visionary appreciation of the land seeing it as a place where Heaven and Earth touch, seeing with the eyes of the spirit;

Seventh - affirmation that we are all God’s people. We are a spiritual people and pilgrimage is a way of opening ourselves up to that in a way which is both confronting and revealing.

There are still places so **it’s not too late** to consider coming – a registration form is enclosed. If you have any queries about coming do email me:

susan.howard3@virgin.net

or phone – 07932 145151.

Bursaries:

Please don’t let finance hold you back – there may be ways to help.

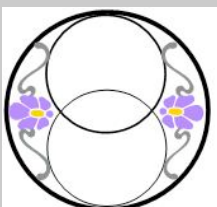
Please send any gifts for the bursary fund to our treasurer:

Celia Storey, 102 Church Road,
Steep, Petersfield GU32 2DD.

Good journeying!

Sue Howard

Christians
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(CANA)



Copy for the

Diary Dates for 2009

Wednesday April 8th to Easter Sunday April 12th - Alternative Holy Week Retreat at the Grail Barn Centre, near Bishops Castle and Montgomery on the Shropshire/Wales border facilitated by Revd. Jonathan Robinson (Anglican) and Fr. Adrian Smith (Roman Catholic).

April 28th-May 2nd - Iona Retreat - *Journeying Together - Going Deep*
It feels as though this may be a retreat where CANA as well as ourselves will be helped to move into a new phase. There are not many places left

and no single rooms but do come if you can. (see page 7 for more information and enclosed registration form).

Saturday September 26th - Diarmuid O Murchu will lead us for a Study Day on "Our Next Evolutionary Leap" at the Sion Centre, Notting Hill.

Forward Dates for 2010

March 5th – 7th 2010 - "Domus Mariae" retreat house has been booked for a residential weekend.

CANA Core Group

CANA Core Group are an ad hock group of our members who have come together over the years offering some form of help in the organisation of our network. Anyone is welcome to join us but needs to be willing to meet 3-4 times a year and willing to travel to different parts of the country.

In 2009 we are planning to meet on:

Tuesday 10th February in Abingdon

Thursday 21st May in London

21st – 22nd October in Petersfield, Hampshire

Please contact Sue Howard if you feel you would have something to offer and would like to join us.

Greetings of the Season

Dear CANA Members,

It was our intention this year to send you three newsletters. As you will realise, the year is (nearly) over and this is only the second or may be the first for 2009. We apologise for this and hope you will understand that we are not always physically able to achieve the things we would like. Our editor, Jane has been under pressure of additional work caused by a charity she is in the process of setting up, copy has been slow in coming in sufficient to make a viable newsletter and now we have lost the free facility we had, thanks to Daren, to do the printing. The latter of course will add an additional cost. One way that you would be able to help is to allow us to send your newsletter by email. If you are willing to receive it in this way please would you email me on celiastorey@aol.com and I will add your email address to the list.

Assuming that Christmas will be over by the time you receive this newsletter, the Core Group would like to send you all best wishes for 2009 and may we all grow in our understanding of how to live in the NOW so that whatever life may bring us in this troubled world, we will be able to act in such a way that right action may come to ourselves and all those with whom we are concerned.

Celia Storey