

The new story, the dance of the Cosmos

James Hindson passionately argues for living according to nature's systems (Learning from Creation, p4); Tony Emerson rejects investing in money to make more money and advocates investing in the soil, Slow Money, p.7); Ann Parker articulates the process of learning a new language appropriate for a simple, low carbon life style (In Transit, p. 9); CEL's presence at Greenbelt, Pray like a prophet, pp.10-14 and items in CEL News (p.18) tell stories of change and resistance to an old outmoded mindset about creation which defines human beings, at best, as managers who stand over and above creation and, in fact, as exploiters and destroyers of the natural world.

Thomas Berry, geologist and Catholic priest envisioned the telling of a new story of the universe. He often worked with Brian Swimme, mathematical physicist and cosmologist and together they championed a new way of embracing the heart of the universe. Now that story has been told in a book and a DVD (see p. 16). These are tools offered to help us to embrace the story of the developing universe as our own. The new meta-narrative accepts that we live in an evolutionary universe. There is no reason why the science of evolution and the theology of Christianity should have to occupy separate domains.

'Science and theology represent two different ways of knowing – one focussed on the exterior dimensions of reality and one that includes the physical world but also validates, celebrates and develops the interior, non-material realm of human experience'.¹

'The great story of the universe reveals that there is no disconnection anywhere in the universe. We are cousins with stars, giraffes, amoebas, bananas – let alone monkeys! We share an unbroken lineage of all life. To modify the central image of Jesus' teaching, we are kin with all that is in the kingdom of God. We share a single energy with every form and every mode of consciousness in the universe'.²

'To acknowledge that the human being emerged out of the adaptive resilience and struggle of all the creatures that came before us is to assume a more humble place in the scheme of life. Gratitude replaces arrogance as we realise that our challenge is not to have dominion over creation but rather

to assume our proper place in our one Earth community'.³

The new story includes the 'understanding that our identity consists not so much as being creatures living on the earth but in being creatures of the earth'.⁴ The earth has become conscious of itself through the human form.

It would appear that our language for interpreting the Bible, for our prayers and liturgy has become anachronistic. 'Our images and models of God, the way we worship, the songs we sing, our prayers to a satellite God – whom we expect to beam back answers from some location outside the universe – just don't fit for the spiritually inclined'.⁵

It follows that 'If God as immanent Spirit is manifest in the intelligent consciousness of all creation, then what we're all involved with is a relationship between different modes of consciousness – divine, plant, animal, and human. It's a communion of subjects, a dance'.⁶

It is our vocation to learn the dance, to embrace the new cosmological story and to 'become reacquainted with the Spirit of God moving in and through the very dynamics of the unfolding universe'.⁷

I have extensively quoted from Bruce Sanguin whose books I have only recently discovered. Bruce is Minister of Canadian Memorial Church and Centre for Peace in Vancouver. His passion is that the language of our worship and prayers would echo the telling of the new sacred story of the universe. I hope that in some small way *Green Christian* will continue to play its part in forming a new language to fit a new way of being, not *on* the earth but *of* the earth.

I agree with Ann. If we are learning the language, we must use it. Let's learn the dance...and dance.

Chris Walton

References

1. *If Darwin Prayed; Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics*, Bruce Sanguin, 2010 p.xxi
2. *Ibid*, p. xxiii
3. *Ibid*, p.xx
4. *Darwin, Divinity and the Dance of the Cosmos*, Bruce Sanguin, 2007. p. 22
5. *Ibid*, p.27
6. *Ibid*, p.38
7. *Ibid*, p.29

Word Incarnate

John 1:1-5, Baruch 3:37

O Immanent One,
Word made flesh,
ever present as Sacred Wisdom in all creation,
in supernovas seeding the universe with all the elements of life,
in primal lightning sparkling life into being on our beloved Earth,
in our bacterial kin,
fixing oxygen levels fit for our lungs,
and in Gaia, Mother Earth
tending our home with loving care.

We open to you
with humble hearts,
and minds incapable of containing mystery yet with hearts that can hold the wonder,
spilling out everywhere, in every moment,
for those with eyes to see, and ears to hear.

Lift the veil which keeps the radiance at bay,
that we might see in each other's faces
your immanent glory
and that we might glimpse
the miracle and magic of this holy happening
which is our life.

Yes, liberate us, before another minute goes by.

We are imprisoned by preoccupations
in the windowless cell of fret and frenzy;
end our solitary confinement
so we might come rejoicing
into the radiant communion of life.
Amen.

(A prayer from *If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics*, Bruce Sanguin, 2010, p.179).



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Next January we will send out our *Storm of Hope* pamphlet. Please begin to think about taking extra copies of the pamphlet to explain and promote the work of CEL. If you would like more copies than what you usually receive, please ring Jo Abbess our Information Officer on 0845 459 8460, or email info@christian-ecology.org.uk by Monday 9 January 2012.