

# Refresh

The background of the cover is a night sky. The upper portion is filled with a dense field of stars, with a prominent, colorful aurora borealis (Northern Lights) visible in the center-right. The aurora displays shades of purple, pink, and blue. The lower portion of the image shows a dark, silhouetted landscape, possibly a coastline or a range of hills, with a faint glow of light on the horizon.

Journal of Contemplative Spirituality  
Volume 20, Number 2, Summer 2019.

# Cosmos



Volume 20, Number 2. Summer 2019. ISSN: 1176-3477  
Published by: SPIRITUAL GROWTH MINISTRIES TRUST.  
36 Buller Crescent, Manurewa, Auckland 2102, New Zealand.

Spiritual Growth Ministries is an incorporated trust registered with the Charities Commission on 17 June 2008 (cc 26037). Donations to 03 0166 0198782 000 and on our website <https://www.sgm.org.nz/donate.html>

Spiritual Growth Ministries [SGM] is a network of people from diverse Christian traditions and experience who find depth and meaning through the whole Christian heritage of contemplative spirituality. The Spiritual Growth Ministries Trust aims to enable people to develop spiritual resources for life and work by deepening their relationship with God in Jesus Christ through spiritual direction, training, retreats and other experiences of prayer.

© 2001 Spiritual Growth Ministries Trust

**Disclaimer:** The articles in this journal are the opinions of the authors, and are not necessarily those of either the Editor or Spiritual Growth Ministries Trust.

SGM Trust is happy for any part of this publication to be duplicated, distributed and used for training or information. Please acknowledge the authors and Spiritual Growth Ministries when using our material. We ask that no part of this publication be changed or altered in any way without permission from SGM or the authors.

SGM Contacts [www.sgm.org.nz](http://www.sgm.org.nz)

**Admin:** Joanne Garton, 36 Buller Crescent, Manurewa, Auckland 2102; 09 2675957  
[admin@sgm.org.nz](mailto:admin@sgm.org.nz)

**Workgroup Convenor:**  
Jane Wilkinson, [janeinwelly@gmail.com](mailto:janeinwelly@gmail.com)

**Spiritual Directors Formation Programme Coordinator:**  
Fran Francis, 14 Oruamo Place, Beach Haven, Auckland 0626; 09 4191152; [fran.francis@sgm.org.nz](mailto:fran.francis@sgm.org.nz)

**Desktop Publishing and Printing:**  
Advocate Print, Rotorua

**Refresh Editor:**  
Diane Gilliam-Weeks, 32 Kauri Street, Eastbourne, Hutt City; 0274978374; [dianegw@actrix.co.nz](mailto:dianegw@actrix.co.nz)

**Cover Image:**  
© Barbara Lee [www.leewayimages.com.nz](http://www.leewayimages.com.nz)

**Find Refresh on Facebook and 'like' us!**

## Contents

Cosmic by <i>Graham Millar</i>	3
Patterns of the Cosmos by <i>Jill McLeod</i>	7
When we are the spectacular by <i>Donna Lusby</i>	8
Head of a pin by <i>Donna Lusby</i>	9
YHWH by <i>Joy MacCormick</i>	10
Cosmos by <i>Kenneth Tanner</i>	11
The limits of cosmology by <i>Bruce Hamill</i>	12
Location, location, location by <i>Bruce Hamill</i>	13
Science, Theology and God by <i>Maurice Dagger</i>	17
Noticing Gaia by <i>Elinor Galbraith</i>	19
The pale blue dot by <i>Lesley Ayers</i>	20
Don't be afraid by <i>Luka Love</i>	22
Resurrection by <i>Joy MacCormick</i>	23
Awesome by <i>Andrew Dunn</i>	26
Creating God, You are here by <i>Andrew Dunn</i>	29
Cosmic beginnings by <i>Joy McCormick</i>	30
An experience of a life-time by <i>Alan Upson</i>	31
Everything is interconnected: Completing the Works of God by <i>Kathleen Rushton</i>	34
Psalm 96:4 by <i>Anna Johnstone</i>	38
Creation Hymn for the Season of Creation - Music: Vivien Chiu, Words: Susan Jones	39
In our world we find delight - music	41
SGM News	42
In loving memory of Andrew Pritchard	43
Books for the journey	44
The Last Word	46
The tulips were apricot by <i>John Howell</i>	47
Contributors	48



Nearly a million seconds of observing time with NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory reveals a spiral galaxy similar to the Milky Way.

## Cosmic

by Graham Millar

This sticky layer of life  
smeared on a globe,  
like child's fingerings  
on a rubber ball,  
can this be all  
the meaning  
of a universe?

Four or five decades ago I wrote this when I was struggling with these thoughts –  
and I still am.

Genesis chapter one used the best science of the day,  
Babylonian, to explain the universe.

Greek thinkers moved beyond this, but the Church didn't.

It made sense to think of the sky as solid, the earth flat, and God as a person outside this  
who made it all happen and controlled everything. The Incarnation was not understood  
as meaning 'God died into humanity'  
though humanism helped change the value of humans  
from disposable objects to having their own intrinsic worth.

We and our descendants can no longer dispute current thinking  
about the nature of the Universe with any integrity. Our galaxy looks milky to us,  
so the word 'galaxy' meant all the stars we could see.

When I was at school, Galaxy and Universe were the same.  
Then big telescopes made us realise the Milky Way is only one of a trillion galaxies.  
And they probably make up the Universe,  
unless there is a multiverse, or some other explanation.

Summer Holidays 1957 at Ocean Beach freezing works in Bluff,  
I read Fred Hoyle's *The Nature of the Universe*.  
Since then the Cosmos has thrilled and scared me.

But Christian worship and teaching still tended to be based on a medieval,  
pre-Copernican, three-tier cosmos.

God as a theistic being 'up there' – making and controlling our Earth,  
then became 'out there' beyond the Universe which 'HE' designed and made.  
Like many, I find that God so distant He's totally irrelevant to my life.  
As J.B. Phillips put it, 'Your God is too small'.

Gradually I discovered thinkers who managed to make sense  
by accepting cosmic and evolutionary findings of science, and at the same time maintain  
a deeply spiritual understanding of matter and life.

Chris Skinner's song, *God of our island home*, makes deep sense to me.  
The divine is here, and maybe elsewhere in the Universe.

Teilhard de Chardin helps me grapple with the inner dimension of matter,  
and find the divine energy there.

I try to understand what Albert Schweitzer means by 'reverence for life'.

A quote I discovered in 1983, never leaves me:  
'You have achieved the ultimate  
when you feel you are part of the life force of the universe,  
and have learned to love the one, the many, and yourself.'<sup>1</sup>

So, the wonderful discoveries which pour into our human thought world  
every day  
are as exciting as any 'spiritual' tomes.

Each day  
thousands of tonnes of matter and energy  
fall on to our planet's atmosphere and filter through.  
Some of the molecules from supernovas are as complex as amino acids.  
One detected in nearby space had a formula similar to coffee!

Did life start on this planet, or in stellar explosions?  
How many other exoplanets are there in Goldilocks zones  
where water is liquid and life possible?

For the universe to be expanding and yet not flying apart,  
astrophysicists conclude the stars, gases and other traceable matter  
only account for 4% of the mass of the universe.  
Dark matter makes 23%, and dark energy 78%.  
What are they? No one knows.

And there seem to be 108 black holes in OUR galaxy (which has a trillion stars).  
The Universe Story, as it keeps evolving, is far more exciting than the ancient myths.  
How do we fit our theology around it?  
With difficulty.

But it's not hard to feel awe, mystery, identity, and wonder.  
So, the spirit can feed without having to hang on to the old explanations.  
And caring for our planet and ALL its life, matter and energy is the logical response.  
In fact, the arrogance of humans, particularly those who feel specially favoured by their  
god, is the most dangerous threat to all life on the planet.

And  
as yet we don't know if there is any other life in the universe,  
nor are we likely to know.

Our comforting Christian theology also has a lot of putdowns in it.  
Every prayer of confession seems to assume we start off bad  
and only become acceptable because God killed his Son  
because that's what we deserved.

And this implies that the rest of humanity is going to the rubbish heap – Gehenna.  
Not a helpful theology in this Trumpian age.

But my heart lifts up when I look  
at stars and planets  
(especially Mars at the moment),  
and the mysterious beauty of our wet planet,  
and living beings.

Are there really more bacteria in 1 cm of my bowel  
than all the people  
who have ever lived on Earth?  
Did early lifeforms ingest heavy metals  
resulting in all the mineral deposits that humans mine?  
How many living beings became absorbed into larger ones  
in the evolution of our species (e.g. mitochondria)?  
Will this brief galactic moment of human existence soon be over?

I don't want to make up new doctrines.  
They are out of date as soon as they are written anyway.  
I want to live with the mystery, the awesome awareness of our universe,  
the conundrum of consciousness, the human imagination –  
the little bit of the Universe Story I can grasp.  
And experience the divine in as many places and people as I can.

i Weinger and Rabin, in *The 5c Psychiatrist*

# Patterns of the Cosmos

by Jill McLeod

I've been having an awe-inspiring time, rollercoasting around the Universe!

I discovered Fibonacci numbers – first recorded in the 13th Century by Leonard of Pisa. The Fibonacci sequence of numbers is an expansion pattern, found not only in the population growth of rabbits (!! ) but everywhere in biological systems. A configuration used instinctively by painters, sculptors and architects - the Golden Spiral, the Golden Section, bringing perfection and elegance.

Observing patterns of growth in trees and flowering plants, gathering shells on the beach and in the garden (snails!). Behold, the golden spirals, the ever-expanding patterns of petals, leaves, seed-heads, the koru of fern, the curves and coils of shells.

I delved more deeply – discovering the double helix of our DNA, the whorls of our unique fingerprints, the convolutions of the outer ear.

Then I swooped around the spiral galaxies of the known, ever-expanding Universe:

WE live in a spiral galaxy! Like each created thing, every galaxy following its own God-given rhythm.

I looked back into history: there was the double spiral engraved on stone and pottery by ancient cultures; the Celtic triskele bringing new meaning as the symbol of the Trinity.

So many wonderful words: whorls, wheels, whirls, volutes; convoluted, curling, gyrating in God-given pattern, movement and rhythm. The poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins, knew: 'Each mortal thing does one thing and the same: deals out that being indoors each one dwells; Selves-goes itself; myself it speaks and spells Crying What I do is me: for that I came.'

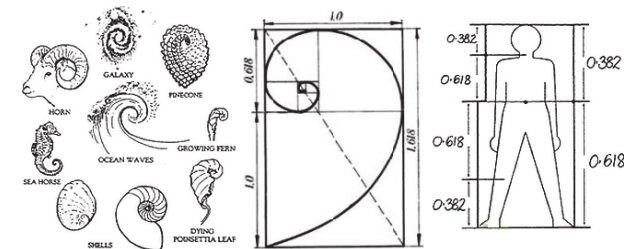
Rippled sand left by ebbing tides is seen also in dunes on Mars and on the windblown piles of the Sahara. The surface of each planet and moon is its own echoing the familiar patterns of earth.

The Universe shows God's everlasting, unstinting glory; order – not chaos – despite the constant movement of birth towards life towards death.

The Golden Spiral is the age-old intuitive symbol of spiritual development – continuing to gleam and whirl in my soul, carrying me onward.



© Evan Davies





© Donna Lusby

## When we are the spectacular

by Donna Lusby

The stars are here  
To remind us of our place  
Pinpoint us out to ourselves  
listen quietly to their thin song  
coming at you from light years before

How do I bring myself  
Back down to size  
Back inside my skin  
Sinew, bones  
A temple perhaps

Our place, our days  
Suddenly shrunk to size  
Or blown up to bigger than  
Our minds can contain

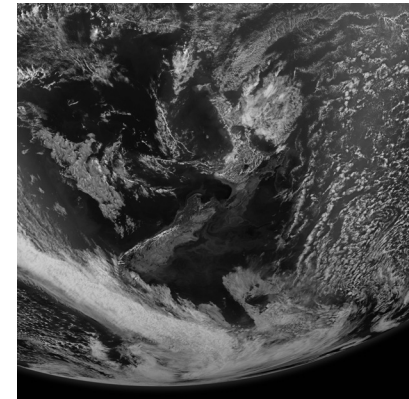
He is all at once  
Spinning plates and planets  
The infinite presence  
Reassuring in the vastness

Feel your feet, hands  
The ground and the sky holding  
You between  
Trust can be here  
Infinite in our most finite of frames  
We go on, we hope,  
Once our time is done,  
To the spectacular

## Head of a pin

by Donna Lusby

All life dances here  
The measurement of constraints  
And analysis broken open  
By ecstatic life  
Dance while we can  
Small as people on a planet  
Each cell holding hope curled  
Wide as the universe, vast as the sea  
Each drop a constellation  
Do not cut me down to size  
Or retain me in the cells of opinion  
For the infinite one  
Is smaller and larger than we know  
The expanse within the embryonic  
We sway alongside the atoms  
Our life dance thrumming  
Stop still here  
Let your jaw drop wide  
Arms akimbo  
Mind reeling  
Know, breathe, live, laugh  
Take it all in if you can  
Breathe  
Connect  
For you too  
Are here.



© NASA

## YHWH

by Joy MacCormick

God.  
Creating, unifying,  
more verb than noun;  
moving towards fulfilment  
all that is.

God.  
Essence of life,  
wild cosmic energy,  
sustaining, ever changing,  
ever constant.

God.  
Known yet unknown,  
transcending definition;  
within whom I live and move  
and have my being.

God.  
Three letter word,  
so small yet signifying  
more than the human mind  
can comprehend.

YHWH – the unpronounceable name of holy mystery, beyond definition yet rooted in the verb 'to be'. (Exodus 3:13-15)

When the word 'God' is used, there's usually an assumption all who hear will know what's being talked about. The reality is each person's concept of God may be very different.

Meister Eckhart (1260c – 1329), mystic, prophet, philosopher, preacher, theologian and poet wrote: 'What is God? God is! Creation is the giving of Isness from God.'

According to Richard Rohr (Franciscan priest, author and international speaker) the word YHWH is a breathed prayer – requiring no shaping by lips tongue or voice. References to God as breath or wind are found throughout the Bible, from creation (Genesis 1:2) to Pentecost (Acts 2:2) and carry a sense of ever-moving power which is not static and cannot be limited or directed by human action.

Find yourself a quiet space and centre your heart and mind on God – whatever that word means to you. Relax, and steady your breathing. Be aware of God's presence in every breath you take. With lips slightly parted draw in God's spirit. Without moving lips or tongue gently breathe out the sound 'Yah'. Draw in your next breath with the sound 'Weh' – again without moving lips or tongue. Repeat until this feels natural and let yourself be filled with the divine presence beyond all naming. Journal your experience.

First published in Moments of Grace

## Cosmos

by Kenneth Tanner

The cosmos—superclusters of galaxies, delicate wildflowers in countless meadows, every ocean that teams with life, thrives on one source of energy: a hidden force of charity that does not seek its own, a Person with an unremarkable face who came not to be served but to serve.

When I talk about this personal force that John calls Love, I often describe it as did some of the first Christians – naming his passion for everyone and everything in creation 'extreme humility'.

The biggest challenge presented by Humility's gospel is our mistaken projection that what drives the universe is an unbridled might – that rules by fiat. It's the only form of power we humans recognize. So, we make our gods in its despotic image: brute force, cunning strategy, ruthless competition and above all else 'winning.'

To accept that the power that binds all things together – from subatomic particles to intergalactic distances – is measureless, self-sacrificial Love – just seems to go against everything humanity has ventured and built. Yet, 'If you cling to your life, you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it.'

Jesus isn't talking about our mortal existence, but describing how \*everything\* works.

The losers don't 'win' in this scenario of the Christ – but instead come to participate forever in the life of the one who lays down his life for the life of the world and by a great humility redeems the cosmos.

Trusting that to give your life away is to keep your life, doesn't get you anywhere in the world humanity has made. In fact, if you act on it, you'll likely be crucified.

Yet, you can serve the crucifying world – the world Christ loved before it loved him – by embracing his sacred path of humility, by renouncing all other ways and means of power.

Political. Military. Physical. Technological.

The real power that holds everything in movement and in life is an indestructible Love in human flesh that has no beginning and no end precisely because it has been crucified.

And this is how Jesus has the authority in the face of death – his enemy and ours – to give us his favourite commandment, 'Do not be afraid'.

**The real power that holds  
everything in movement and in  
life – is an indestructible Love...**

## The limits of cosmology

by Bruce Hamill

The question for us as Christians might well be, how do we understand the limitations of cosmology, for all its amazing achievements? In what ways does it fail to provide a theory of everything?

Cosmologists who understand what we mean by God must admit – if God exists then scientists are in no position to do science on God. God is beyond their purview. Those theologians who see their work as a discipline may sometimes refer to it as a kind of science, but will immediately admit it's a very different kind of science, with a very different kind of method to physics and cosmology.

This is hardly surprising.

So at least, from a theological perspective, cosmology can never be a theory of everything. Inasmuch, however, as theology might have to do with that diverse panoply of creatures that make up ancient cosmology (which for my purposes here might be represented by angels and demons) the question arises whether these creatures, as part of the created order, are also part of the subject matter of cosmology. What would we make of the idea of scientific demonology or angelology? How do we respond to those who produce demons/angels-of-the-gaps rather than scientific research? If we reject such cosmological elements, is it because of science or is it because our science has limitations?

I have limited my comments to a somewhat negative discussion of the boundary conditions of cosmology. On the other hand, I'm sure a journal like Refresh will be much more interested in cosmology within a theological vision. Like many before I am inclined to see in the history of the cosmos and thus in cosmology further confirmation of the beauty of God demonstrated in the peace-making of Jesus the Anointed.

'Quantum physics tells us that a single thought changes the universe.

This is an insight into what the mystics have always understood. Divine love has to manifest itself. It waits for us to give its immense energy an occasion to flow. When people saw [Jesus' miracles], they wanted to make Jesus a king. He did not have the slightest interest in being a king. He fled to the mountain because he was sent to manifest love, not political ambition. He would not do what he was not sent to do... to show love without limit and awaken others to its presence in them.'

Thomas Keating  
The First Step, *Reawakenings*

## Location, location, location

by Bruce Hamill

A sermon on 2 Corinthians 4:1-11, Acts 11:1-18, and 2 Corinthians 4:1-11

I want to pick up the theme of missional church from where Susan left off two weeks ago. 'Missional church' sounds like theologian's jargon...that's because it is. So let's start with some definition groundwork. Missional church isn't a building...a building you go to. It isn't the people ... the people who go to church. Missional Church is something God is doing...It's work. God's work. Last week we baptised Emily – not into a building, not into some people, but into God's work.

The idea of missional church is the idea that God is gathering a bunch of people together for the sake of the world and for the sake of a new world. To be more specific. Jesus is gathering a bunch of misfits together ... for the sake of the new world that God is creating. Missional church isn't a particular kind of church. It's much more important than that. It is what Jesus is doing in the world...

Now that we've got that out of the way...

I want to take you all back to two weeks ago when Susan preached. She took us in our imagination into Auschwitz where people were being hanged as an 'example' and the inmates are standing forced to watch. And one man asked, 'Where is God in this?' And Susan reminded us that if anyone can respond to this question it should be Christians. After all we have a God who is on the gallows. We have a God who suffers with us. Susan suggested God is with us on the gallows... hanging... The God we have encountered is suspended by nails.

She also suggested that if we're going to hear this cry of suffering and desperation (where in this hell! is God) without sinking into hopeless cynical despair, if we are not to lose faith, we don't just need a God who suffers, who empathises, we also need to have a God who can do something about it. What we need is a God who is doing something about all the Auschwitzes and the lynchings and all the land wars and so on. Those who suffer also know that just because someone else (even if that someone is God) is suffering doesn't necessarily help. We will not be saved by empathy alone.

When we hear that story of the man at Auschwitz asking the question from the crowd, if you're like me, you can immediately imagine yourself in the shoes of that man in the crowd.

When God suffers (on the cross) God puts us in another set of shoes. He sucks us out of the shoes of the man in the crowd and he puts us in the shoes of the prison guard. Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be the prison guard, or even the officer in that camp?

God has spent millions, even billions of years creating this enormously complex world through evolutionary process.



We can barely imagine it. We like to think we'd be the courageous ones who stand up to the forces of evil swirling around our families and friends and society. We like to think we'd be different. But statistically the odds are really against it. Most people just don't have that kind of courage. Most people are too busy doing their job.

Jesus' closest friends didn't have that kind of courage either. Everybody ultimately colluded in the crucifixion of Jesus. He was alone.

What that means is we have to put ourselves in the shoes of the prison guards, just a little. For God does not just suffer in our world, God suffers the world.

Let's put that in a big context. God has spent millions, even billions of years creating this enormously complex world through evolutionary process. Establishing creatures with enormous, beautiful brains, hardwired with the infrastructure for love, and community.

And yet in its fragility (and I'd argue this fragility is an unavoidable cost of the beauty of creation itself) God now has a community – which rather than delighting in love – is trapped in patterns of violence and scapegoating.

This God does not merely suffer *in* the world. God suffers the world. And we are part of that world.

And by suffering the world, God turns the spotlight on the world. God opens our world up – to be seen as though from outside. As if for the first time. The world of violence has been exposed. Ultimately, it's going to die of exposure.

God isn't merely empathising. God's doing something about this world.

God hangs with the poor... and turns the spotlight on the rich, the powerful and the system itself. Paul tells us God's chosen the weak of this world...why? To shame the strong.

God wants to do some shaming.

Mary sings of a God who's 'brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly'.

Every world has its victims. The Romans found their conquered peoples to enslave, and then they found Christians to feed to lions. The Christians found their Jews and their Muslims and their witches and their gays. The Americans found their Blacks. The Nazis found their Jews. The British found their Maori and their Aboriginal. The Maori had their own slaves. The poor will always be with us – this side of final redemption.

But God has a way of shining a light in darkness that refuses to admit it is darkness. God has a light which breaks open the darkness so it's never the same again...the darkness that wants to think it isn't darkness – now has a light shone on it.

Imagine Auschwitz is the modern world in miniature. Today the people on gallows and crosses live in the third world or social housing complexes. They are the ones being excluded.

Surely, it's not that bad, I hear you say.

We don't live in a twilight where all cats are grey. I can't really be comparing our world to Auschwitz. Sure. It's not the same. You're right. Things are more subtle these days.

We keep the poor out of sight. We separate ourselves from them in the way the market separates producers from consumers. We're a much more sophisticated form of Auschwitz nowadays. We crucify more slowly these days. There are real differences.

But those who have seen the light of God in the crucified Jesus, also know God is shining the same light into the system we live in. This kind of system needs to be exposed.

God is gathering a bunch of misfits. To find their place with other misfits – those being crucified slowly. God is gathering them to shine a light in the darkness.

Those who've seen this light – and it's shone right into the depths – are becoming a people who no longer need scapegoats. But instead – are prepared to abandon their security to find their life with the poor and the excluded ones. To follow Jesus to a contemporary kind of cross – and yes maybe it takes a life time to shine into the depths of our existence.

Missional church – a.k.a. God's work – is to recreate the world. But not from the top down – from the bottom up. It's throughout the gospels and the NT. For our sake he became POOR (nowhere to lay his head). He preached as gospel for the POOR ('good news' for the poor) about a kingdom inhabited by the POOR ('blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom'). He lived with the excluded and marginalised. He trained his disciples to be defined by their relation to the POOR (sheep or goats?).

So...we have located 'missional church'. God's work in the kosmos – the world. God's spanner in the machinery of violence.

Where is God... among the poor and excluded? What is God doing there? Gathering missional church. Drawing them towards the fringes, to be misfits among misfits.

What does the light say?

The light that shines from the Cross through the resurrection – tells us God is different (that's what the word holy means: different). And God invites us to a different way to be together – to become misfits for the sake of God's life, God's kingdom, among those who don't fit.

The light begins to shine when people realise they fit too well into the darkness – and they're part of the problem.

'For it's God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness" – the same God who shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

'Arise, shine for your light has come.'

I'd argue this fragility is an unavoidable cost of the beauty of creation itself

# Science, Theology and God

by Maurice Dagger

*The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, we shall have discovered fire.*

*Pierre Tielhard de Chardin*

As a young person I lived in a small rural community. My parents had a small holding stud farm of Jersey cows. Dad worked the farm before and after his paid job, and on the weekends. Neither of my parents had education beyond intermediate school. But in the stud jersey community there was a need for scientific method – an Enlightenment concept – to keep track of the genetics, avoid in-breeding and maximize production.

At the same time, there was the need for beauty so the cows you raised were pleasing to the eye and wanted by others. An ugly cow with good genes just wasn't going to sell. The ideal was an attractive cow that could keep the genetic line going and production up – a happy blend of art and science.

Somewhere in early to mid-secondary school I wound up in biology lab – pursuing the full science programme needed for my chosen career as a pharmacist. We sat at benches peering down the double barrel of binocular microscopes at the back of a fern frond – and in particular – the spores on its back.

**Encountering God  
in this space created  
wonderment**

I peered.

I couldn't believe the beauty or structure of the spore in my field of vision. The colours amazing – its assembly perfection itself. I'd never seen anything like it.

Oh, I'd seen plenty of fern spores, but none under that degree of magnification! With this one view, I was blown away by the beauty of art and the magnificence of architecture – all while pursuing science!

Immediately I thought the perfection I saw in the microscope's field – could neither be manmade nor the result of random selection. Such beauty must have been created by a much greater power. Was it possible – God had made it?

And this from a lad with virtually no religious education at home nor in any church environment.

I questioned my friends who went to church, but they weren't doing biology. Nor had they seen what I'd seen. I couldn't ask my parents. And in our small rural community there were no full-time 'church people' to ask.

Later, in my early twenties I discovered the social sciences – the study of people, their societies and their social structures. I was amazed to discover the similar structures were



© NASA

in so many societies when you dug right down – though on the surface they seemed so different. There had to be, I believed, some order to humankind – neither manmade nor the result of random selection. Was it possible God had a hand in it?

In mid-life, my wife started taking our children to church so they could have the religious upbringing she had. The parish needed someone to mow the lawns. My wife put her name on the roster but I'd do the work. The parish was running confirmation class. Several friends, who went to the same church, tried to persuade me to take part. I decided to dabble. To investigate if this was something I really should do.

I was confirmed and a few years later ordained. I found the answers to my earlier questions.

The world of cattle and high-school biology had stirred within me an insatiable desire to learn – about anything and everything. I started with science (where I learnt the scientific method), went to social sciences (with a more holistic approach but using the scientific method), then to theology (which is, in some ways, more holistic, and also uses the scientific method).

Through all this runs culture.

All my life I had cultural contact at the 'edges' of my resident culture. I never constrained myself but eagerly sought new information, especially at the limits where different forms of knowledge bump into each other. I love the overlaps and the gaps, seeing how things work together and how they work against each other. I love the challenge of working out how ideas on the edge can benefit people I work with.

Encountering God in this space created wonderment. But there were some bad times when I butted up against things of church that seemed not to be of God. Still, the wonderment was the more persuasive and more pervasive.

Through all this I developed the idea – surely not original – that if God created the world and all that was in it then he'd also have created the thinking processes we have. If God created these processes then surely God would want us to use them to benefit humanity.

God wouldn't have created our ability to think if he didn't want us to use it. Therefore – to my mind – our ability to think, create new ideas and discover new facts are all appreciated by God. We're told God works holistically, so, why would 'scientific discovery' be excluded.

I've come to the conclusion God wants us to pursue science for the benefit of humanity to reflect glory of God. I find a parallel in the stories of Jesus' healings and miracles portraying the glory of God.

I see no clash between science and theology. Because of my holistic approach to learning, I have no problem reconciling the Genesis story of creation and the scientific theory of evolution. I believe both are God-inspired and God-driven. Both aim to provide for God's people and to glorify God.

## Noticing Gaia

by Elinor Galbraith

As I start to write a poem  
On Christian cosmology

I think of

The moon, the seasons  
Her cycles and mysteries  
Her origin, order and destiny  
Then I remember  
I am just a mother

Cosmology is alive in my house  
I feel it

As I empty stones from my child's pockets  
Stomping in puddles  
Holding lanterns at Matariki  
And I'm reminded  
I am a mother

The earth is round like my body  
My earth is ever changing, moving  
Then I return  
I am Mother

Wise, wonderful, warm, welcoming



## The pale blue dot

by Lesley Ayers

It's a wet, wintry day and I'm away from home. I grab a hot drink in a café, I notice an older woman sipping her coffee and writing. It's not often I see people writing by hand, so I stop and say 'it's good to see this...'

She smiles. It turns out she's part of a local writing group and has a deadline to meet.

'What's your topic?' I ask.

'The street where you grew up.'

Ah, the title triggers memories. 'What a lovely idea', I tell her, I'm working on a piece of writing too.'

'Your topic?' she asks.

'The Cosmos'....

There is a long pause. She looks up, palms raised, 'I just can't get my head around that. It's so big, it's so immense!' I agreed! I'm thinking, somewhat ruefully, her topic would be much more comfortable. Yet, in my delight at this challenging, mind-blowing theme, I may never see life in quite the same way again.

But first, in all the vastness, my cry is 'where do I start!?'

The answer comes – in an image of earth from 6 billion kilometres away – sent back from Voyager 1 in 1990, as its camera turns for one last look before leaving our solar system.

It is a picture I'd never seen before June this year, yet now I've been shown it twice, in very different circumstances, by people with no idea what I was writing. Some might call this serendipity, or synchronicity – I prefer 'God's-timing'.

In the image, if you look carefully, you can see what astronomer Carl Sagan described as the 'pale blue dot'. It's just visible in the void. That dot is Earth, our home – the one planet offering an environment that supports life. In the photograph, Earth is a mere 0.12 of a pixel. Yes, we live on a pixel in the vastness of the universe.

Strangely, my response isn't fearfulness, but joyful wonder – a feeling of tenderness for this precious, lonely planet, spinning in space. And remorse – much remorse – for being part of a generation which has done so much to harm Earth's seas, and land, and people. And sadness – to think what we've done to this beautiful planet, particularly the culture of greed and materialism.

Added to all this – awe at the vastness of the cosmos, and amazement that this spinning globe is also what J B Phillips called 'The Visited Planet'. Yes, the universe is beyond comprehension – but so too is the visitation. The very idea of Jesus being 'God with us' here on our little insignificant little planet – is overwhelming.

In this cosmic perspective we have the paradox of a transcendent, yet imminent God. How can God – whose ways are not our ways, whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts – also be the one who, for a time, shared our humanity, our limitations? How can God, the initiator, the designer of the universe, be interested in our insignificant pixel of a place?

Yet I've known the reality of immanence – 'God with us' – at work in my life and in others: events and timing way beyond coincidence, encounters way beyond random chance. The word on the page that lights up as *rhema*. Comfort and hope despite circumstances. Moments when time seems to stand still – when the interface of heaven and earth seems near and I know it's Holy Ground.

How it all works? I don't know and that doesn't bother me. Mystery is a good word for it.

I don't need to know the date of the origins of Earth, nor what time the morning stars sang and the angels rejoiced. It is – as many non-believing scientists agree – mystery.

I'm content knowing that 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...without him nothing was made that has been made'. Jn 1:1, 3

As I look again at the pixel in Voyager's image, I'm reminded of medieval Christian mystic, Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love*. In a vision Julian is shown a thing small and round as a hazelnut, in the palm of her hand. The Lord tells her this was 'all that is made'. Seems like she got the view from Voyager 1, a few centuries before us!

Julian reports that 'in this little thing I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God preserves it.'

I will carry this idea with me. I've been blessed to spend time on this loved planet. I'm grateful for my one small life – at this moment in eternity – on this pale blue dot. It's 'the street where I grew up' and one thing's for sure, I now see things through new eyes.

My responsibility is greater now and the challenge to support justice and love mercy towards the land, the people, and the seas; and to walk humbly with my God.

Carl Sagan was probably an agnostic, yet he sums it up for me: '...it's been said astronomy is a humbling and character-building experience. There's perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we've ever known'.

To which I add my amen.

Yes, we live on a  
pixel in the vastness  
of the universe.



## Don't be afraid

by Luka Love

© Hone Te Rire

I was driving down a back road  
 Country highway  
 Across the plains  
 With the alps at my back  
 The fear in my head  
 A prayer in my heart  
 When the world stopped shaking  
 And my hands went still  
 And peace fell like nightfall  
 In time lapse  
 And She spoke to me  
 That Eternal Mother  
 She gave me a message  
 And it was for you too  
 And it was the same one  
 She said  
 Don't be afraid

I know you are courageous  
 You are brave beyond words  
 I can see it in your actions  
 And the way you live your life  
 But courage is not fearlessness  
 Fearlessness is foolishness  
 And I know you already know this  
 But sometimes we need reminders  
 From a back road  
 Country highway  
 Across the plains  
 Where peace fell like nightfall  
 From Her who watches over you  
 For those moments when you suffer  
 And need a reminder  
 Don't be afraid

(Dedicated to Laylita Kumari Singh, by and for whom this moment and these words came, one of the most courageous souls I have ever met.)

## Resurrection<sup>1</sup>

by Joy MacCormick

To those with eyes to see,  
 evidence of resurrection  
 is everywhere.  
 It is the basic principle  
 by which the cosmos operates.

Energy exploding  
 from the primal fireball  
 can never be destroyed.  
 It manifests itself in different forms  
 which last but for a while -  
 for all is stardust  
 and to stardust will return

Stars and galaxies appear,  
 live out their time, then die.  
 The energy of each new thing  
 emerging into being  
 has previously been expressed  
 in other forms.

The sub-atomic particles  
 vibrating in the atoms of my body  
 have been vibrating  
 since the dawn of time.

I wonder at the stories they might tell  
 of other incarnations.

To those with eyes to see,  
 evidence of resurrection  
 is everywhere.

Ancient peoples recognised humanity is formed from the dust of the earth. Today the modern sciences of quantum physics and cosmology confirm each one is stardust and to stardust will return. Without death there can be no new beginning.

The transformation of energy from one expression to another is foundational to life in all its forms. Everything that dies releases energy essential for new life. Nothing is lost; nothing is wasted; nothing is without purpose; always there is transformation. 'Without extinction the dance of life is fundamentally incomplete'<sup>2</sup>

Stories of encounters with Jesus after his crucifixion speak of this. Repeatedly he was unrecognised until some word or action sparked awareness of his presence; repeatedly the limitations of physicality were breached as he appeared and disappeared.<sup>3</sup>

### Reflection

Think back over your life. What have you lost? What died – a dream, hope, relationship, treasured pet or person? Let yourself feel the loss – then explore what change or growth has occurred that might not have been possible without it. Can you find signs of new life; of resurrection; of transformation for which to give thanks? If not, are you willing to seek for the hidden gift which waits to be discovered?

How can you celebrate this?

<sup>1</sup> Previously published Moments of Grace BRF 2013

<sup>2</sup> Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Quantum Theology Crossroad*, 1997, p180.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 24:13ff and John 20



## Awesome by Andrew Dunn

The night I first saw the Andromeda Galaxy was memorable. A colleague and his son, with keen interests in astronomy, had ground a reflective telescope lens for their home-made scope. I'd seen the moon through binoculars and followed the NASA moon landings with excitement and anticipation – but to see Andromeda is different.

For one thing, it's a galaxy outside our own – the nearest to our Milky Way. For another, it's a spiral galaxy of stars – slightly tilted towards earth so its spiralling shape is clearly visible. Perhaps the greatest thrill was seeing it through a home-made telescope!

It was the first time I'd given much thought to the cosmos that lay beyond our own massive galaxy.

In their three-tiered understanding of the heavens, the earth and what's under the earth, the writers of John's Gospel used the Greek word *kosmos*. See John 1:9 and 10, John 3:16-17, John 8:23, and John 17:5 for the whole created order. And they use *Kosmos* with slightly different emphases for 'this world' – of people.

When they decided to use the word *kosmos* to describe the world God loved so much he sent his only son to be its saviour (John 3:16) – they'd never seen Andromeda. They had no special word for space beyond their own.

They were not to know that in the distant future, philosophers and scientists would use *their* word to describe the expanding knowledge that – out there in the sky beyond this world – there appears to be no limits on size or distance. Thoughts that would boggle the mind and bring about a major rethinking that our small world is only an infinitesimally small fragment of reality.

I'm intrigued by recent discoveries of the Hubble and other telescopes – incredible images of gaseous and dust cloud nebula like the Pillars of Creation. Viewed through infra-red and ultra violet filters, the impact of their beauty is stunning. Where nothing has ever been seen before – there are now whole galaxies too numerous to count. And the realisation – that as we can tell – there's no outside edge to the universe.

There's a growing consensus it all began in a creation event known as the 'Big Bang' – and this leads to discussion about meaning and purpose. Intelligent design is raised as a distinct possibility – beyond those with a biblical view of creation as an activity of God's generosity.

We now use 'light years' to measure the distance and time light travels. In one year the distance light travels is vast – 9.45 trillion kilometres! Our Milky Way is 100,000 – 180,000 light years from edge to edge. The distance from earth to galaxies only just discovered – is beyond our ability to comprehend. What does a trillion light years mean?

At this point I must switch off my rational mind and switch on my contemplative faculty with its ability for awe and wonder at what is before me.



In Christian thinking, of course, all of this expanse is known and loved by God. All this has its origin and life 'in the One in whom all things exist'.<sup>1</sup>

And that is mind and heart expanding! Stoking the fires of imagination and delight in ways the mind alone can't do. I'd rather expand my contemplative faculty than debate the rational pros and cons. This reaps its own harvest of deepening spiritually from the faculty that functions on wonder, amazement, delight, thanksgiving, love and praise.

All this entices me to construct a theological framework for the biblical words for love – *eros*, *agape*, and *philia* – which could work for creation across the whole universe. Is God's generative creative energy at work everywhere? Does *eros* generate the rebirth of dying stars and the ongoing expansion of the universe?

Is *agape* love at work here in an all-encompassing way – to bring purpose and meaning and hope and loving – into the energy of what's going on throughout the universe?

Is God's *philia*, God's friendship and sibling love at work 'out there' as much as in human and other relationships? What is God up to with this inner theological activity working away across the enormity of space and time? No wonder some of the moon-visiting astronauts experienced an expansion of their spirituality and perspectives!<sup>2</sup>

**He who descended  
is the same one who ascended  
far above all the heavens,  
so that he might fill all things.  
*Ephesians 4:10***

## Creating God, You are here

by Andrew Dunn

with inspiration from Margaret Rizza

In imagination and artistry  
In creations and design  
In the beauty of this world  
Creating God, you are here.

In the use of every colour  
In the shape of every form  
In the beauty and the balance  
Creating God, you are here.

In the light of moon and sun  
in the darkness and the sparkle  
In the glow of near and far  
Creating God, you are here.

In the pillars of creation  
In the joy of galaxy and star  
In their beauty and their starkness  
Creating God, you are here.

In the earth and in the cosmos  
In the wonder of the planets  
In the fullness of the night sky  
Creating God, you are here.

In the love in all creation  
In your generating grace  
In the safety of your presence  
Creating God, you are here.

<sup>1</sup> Colossians 1:15-17

<sup>2</sup> See YouTube NASA astronaut spirituality



## Cosmic beginnings

by Joy McCormick

In the beginning, modern science claims,  
one great exploding fireball gave birth  
to energy and matter, expressed  
in all the universe contains and is.

I wonder how the ancients knew of this –  
for as they tell the story  
'Out of the void's deep silence  
God spoke and all things came to be.'

### *For reflection*

In the beginning when God created ... the earth was a formless void ... Then God said  
"Let there be light ... (Genesis 1:1, 3)

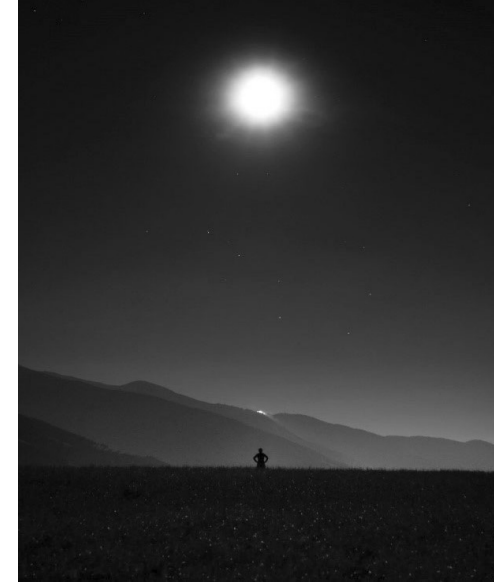
In the beginning was the Word ... (John 1:1)

What might have been the sound of God's word shattering the deep silence?

Might it not have been a 'big bang'?

How would you describe it?

*First Published in Joy's book Moments of Grace*



## An experience of a life-time

by Alan Upson

The bedroom I shared with two brothers was long, my bed being at the end by a window. At some stage I'd turned it around so that, head resting on the pillow, I could look out at the night sky.

The uncurtained window opened out and was fixed by a brass stay, so I could smell the night air or hear the cows chewing the grass in the nearby paddock. Cloudy or clear, there was always a fascinating skyscape to greet my wakefulness at any hour of the night.

One favourite nightscape was the slow-moving fractured cloud, rather like pack ice in the sky, that let the moonshine come and go as in some kind of heavenly hide-and-seek. Another was the clear cosmos where I could fix star positions in relation to the window frame or distant trees before going to sleep and see how the whole universe had moved when I woke again in the early hours. It felt at times as if I could reach out with my hand and touch the infinity there at my fingertips.

One very special night happened after the death of my eldest brother following a motorbike accident. Then aged 12, I felt isolated from family and friends – as though I were the only person in the world engulfed in grief.

One foggy night at Easter Camp on the shores of the Manukau Harbour, I went walking alone – along the shoreline, wavelets lapping at my feet.

**It felt at times as if I could  
reach out with my hand and  
touch the infinity there at  
my fingertips.**

Being Easter, the moon was full.

I found myself cocooned in a soft foggy rainbow-edged glow – moving with me as I floated, just my footsteps touching the sand. That sense of being part of the universe as I looked out the bedroom window at home, came to me in my moonlight bubble.

I found myself talking of how I loved my lost brother and the huge emptiness his death had created in my days.

The next morning, I felt different, more in touch with my friends, as healing began.

I was aware of the warmth of the sun. I could hear the laughter as others played around me. I took notice as others talked to me.

Many years later, married with two children, ordained and in my second parish, I attended the Annual Otago/Southland Ministerial Synod. At that time, Methodists had a Frankton Arm property with riparian rights beside the Kawarau Falls bridge. Meetings, meals and accommodation took place in the spacious homestead.

During the breaks we took our cups of tea down to the jetty on the edge of Lake Wakatipu, or sat at a picnic table to watch the jet boats roar past as they shot the rapids beneath the bridge.

Other times people could climb the bank or walk the paths to get an elevated view of the lake and mountains above Queenstown.

Early one morning, from the same front lawn, we saw the smudge of Halley's Comet – low over the outline of the Remarkables.

When I tired of the company and talk, I was drawn outside to soak in the majesty of the mountains. Once there was a south-westerly front on the way and a fresh, warm frisky breeze rustled through the trees. Gusts pushed my face and brushed my neck as I walked along to a hillside where pines had recently been felled.

I picked my way uphill through the long grass and shrubs, till I found a large flat stump. I imagined the huge bushy pine that must have grown there – ruling over the undergrowth in that place.

I sat down on the throne provided, legs dangling. From there I beheld the majesty of creation – imagining it uncluttered by houses, roads or people.

The lake stretched wide before me ruffled with the wind – now gusting and swirling on my exposed hillside. There was an uplifting feel to it, light, playful, exciting. The mountains – solid – seemed to soften and float gently above the water. The sky had an even, light greyness to it which merged into the darker edge of the coming front.

Just as years before, I felt I was part of it all, a spectator invited onto the stage of creation – to take part in a play of simply being.

In an instant, I was transfused into the silence of space – a different 'I', but still myself in some place quite distinct from anything I'd ever known – where the knowing no longer

mattered. Before me was the universe, with stars, nebulae, and galaxies all about me. I was awed by the immense beauty and utter stillness of it all. Completely free of body, no sense of falling or being held, I was simply gifted with being a part of creation in all its fullness. The wonder of everything enhanced with feelings of belonging and not being alone. I was just there, part of the Cosmos and in no way separated.

I have no idea how long this lasted. But just as suddenly, I came to an awareness of sitting on a tree stump looking out over a lake at the mountains of the Southern Alps.

Feelings of being free, at one with everything about me, of knowing life beyond everyday living, flowed through and about me, as if this chubby body merged with my surroundings.

I sat there relishing it all for a long time – while the Presence I'd been part of gently eased me back into the morning. Thoughts of lunch time when others would ask where I'd been came to mind. What would I tell them?

**In an instant, I was  
transfused into the  
silence of space...**

In the day or two remaining of the School of Theology, I pondered the meaning of what, for me, was a sacred moment. Where did it come from? Was it some kind of foetal memory – reset in my growing understanding of space and the universe and my place in it all? Had it something to do with the concept of being a 'Child of God'? Was it my personal version of Scott Peck's imagined heaven in *In Heaven as on Earth – A vision of the afterlife?*

I've thought about the experience every now and then, but I've felt it often.

Now I don't fear death. And for me, pain has its place in life as a ground for letting go and becoming free. I have something, not just an experience but a knowing – that all I live day by day is part of a much greater life, free of limits of space and time.

And there's a deep quiet and serenity that pervades all I am and will be – not mine but into which and within which I'll be accepted and belong.

These things were shared once in Spiritual Direction and have lain there peaceably. So why share them now? Simply so others may know that their own hidden depths – belong in 'The Kingdom of God' of today and the days ahead.

The words of Hamlet find a place in my experience: 'There are more things dreamed in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy'.<sup>i</sup> I think too of Paul's words: 'What we see now is like a dim image in a mirror: then we shall see face to face'.<sup>ii</sup>

One thing did trouble me though. Where in that experience were the people I love and the personalities and the dearly cherished moments I hold so close? But even these I let go. It's better not to overthink something so pivotal to my being. Simply – it was – still is and yet will be.

<sup>i</sup> Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act 4:166

<sup>ii</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:12

## Everything is interconnected: Completing the Works of God by Kathleen Rushton

*The Fourth Gospel plunges Jesus into God's interconnected cosmic story*

'Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of... global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity.<sup>i</sup> is the last sentence in *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*.

Like the divine Persons – all that is – reflects the divine pattern. All that is – is a web of 'any number of constant and secretly interwoven relationships.'

This 'leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections' but to discover the key to our own fulfilment. Human persons grow more, mature more and become whole/holy more – to the extent they enter into relationships. Going out from themselves to live in communion with God and all creation: whakawhanaungatanga – te tangi o papatūānuku me te tangi o hunga rawakore: making right relationship by hearing the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

We need to enter into the moral drama of life – with understanding and empathy and allow it to enter us.<sup>ii</sup>

Interior knowledge is about absorbing, taking time to allow and adjust to good news and new reality. It might mean sitting with what we may resist.

In the same way, we appropriate the reality of injustice. We absorb its impact. Feelings and thoughts arise by 'sitting with' it. The experience reshapes us. Working with it, leads us out of ourselves and moves our hands and feet to act.

For Dean Brackley, '...sitting with reality, allowing it to work on us, working through the feelings and the thoughts it stirs – is what we mean by *contemplation*.' Out of our need to be in touch with the rich complexity of reality – contemplation arises naturally. In this sense, contemplation is the reverse of fleeing from reality. It is prayer. We encounter Ultimate Reality by plunging into the world as Jesus did to complete the works of God.

The prologue of the Fourth Gospel plunges Jesus into God's interconnected cosmic story and its significance for today.

By telling an old story in a new way, John provides a framework for the gospel which follows. The story of Jesus of Nazareth, a historical person, is placed in the wider context of 'the beginning' and the Word's pre-existence with God.<sup>iii</sup> The plot and characters – including the unseen God – are introduced. And we are drawn into the ever new and evolving future in *this* world.

What's more – John's prologue creates new theological nuances suggesting Hebraic and Hellenistic cosmologies: 'in the beginning' (*en archē*), the word (*lógos*), flesh (*sárx*),

i *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis: On Care for Our Common Home*, 240.

ii Drawing on Dean Brackley, *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*, Crossroad Publishing, 2004, 22-23.

iii Genesis 1

the world (*kósmos*) and light and darkness.<sup>iv</sup> Interconnected relationships between the Divine, the human, and all creation were integral to biblical and Greek cosmologies.

John's 'In the beginning' (*en archē*) echoes the Spirit in Genesis – hovering over the waters; God creating – as Irenaeus' proposed – with 'two hands' of Word and Spirit; motifs of creation, light, life, darkness, and darkness against light and life.

On the other hand – for the Evangelist's earliest audience – *en archē* embraced a multiplicity of Hellenistic notions about what 'was' before anything else existed, an explanation for the world and its phenomena. A 'beginning' without a beginning – continuing existence surrounding and steering all that is.

**We encounter Ultimate Reality  
by plunging into the world  
as Jesus did to complete the  
works of God.**

John's 'the Word' (*logos*) recalls the dynamic energy and power of the biblical word in the prophetic tradition: 'the Word of God came to...' challenging and propelling action. (Hos 1:1). The Word is a life-giving factor (Deut 32:46-47); has power to heal (Ps 107:20); is a light for the people (Ps 119:105); functions creatively (Ps 33:6). The Word has a quasi-substantial and independently active existence of its own (Isa 55:11, Ps 147:18).

'The Word' enabled the Evangelist to express the central truth of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the context of a culture that understood the world's phenomena to be living and moving images of the eternal. *Logos* simply can't be confined to the meaning of a spoken 'word'. In Greek thought *Logos* was a dominant principle for the reason underlying reality and manifest in it. *Logos* was the instrument of creation and the principle of cosmic cohesion described by Philo of Alexandria in 2 BCE.

Surprisingly, in the prologue 'the Word' does not become 'a man' or even 'a human person,' but 'flesh'. (Gr. *Sarx*, Heb. *Basar*) *Sarx* refers to flesh in the strict sense (Gen 17:11, 14) and in the extended sense of man and woman being 'one flesh.' (Gen 2:24-25).

The Psalmist longs for God spiritually and physically – my soul, my flesh (Ps 63:1). Significantly then, *sarx* signals the interconnection of the incarnation of Jesus, not only with humanity but with all life. 'Flesh' is often used in scripture with 'all' as in 'all living creatures'. (Gen 6:13, 17, 19). God sustains 'all flesh' (Ps 136:25) and 'all flesh' praises God (Ps 145:21). Likewise in classical Greek writings, *Sarx* has a range of meanings among including a strand which links human beings with other living creatures.

In Old Testament Hebrew, what we'd call 'the universe' is described as 'heaven and earth' and is created by God's word. In John's Gospel, *kosmos* or 'the world' (1:9-10) expresses the Greek understanding of the order of the universe. *Kosmos* is the reality that God so loved – that God gave the Son (3:16).<sup>v</sup>

iv See my 'The Cosmology of John 1:1-14 and Its Implications for Ethical Action in this Ecological Age,' *Colloquium* 2013: 137-153.

v For an earlier version, see my article in Tui Motu June 2014: 26-27 which draws on the three meanings of "the world" in Sandra M. Schneiders, *Buying the Field*, Paulist Press, 2013, 23-56.

The expression 'comes into the world' signifies then the physical universe associated with Jesus – the light who has 'come into the world' (1:9; 3:19; 12:46).

Another take on 'coming into the world' is like a technical term for the mission of Jesus as Messiah. (6:14; 9:39; 11:27; 16:28). 'To be sent into the world' is used of Jesus' mission (3:17; 10:36). The disciples and Christians today are drawn into this mission when Jesus prays: 'As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world'. (17:18)

For John, there's a sense in which 'the world' (*kosmos*) reaches beyond the physical universe to a universe which relates to humankind; suggesting a creation that is able to respond. 'The world' finds expression in humankind created in the image and likeness of God and in relationship to God and to each other.

It seems to me this Johannine *kosmos* is what Teilhard de Chardin evokes when he speaks of evolution coming to consciousness in the human person. He understands the human person to be the arrow of evolution – the direction evolution will take because of human creativity and knowledge.

As well, 'the world' can refer to society or what we call humankind – and the shadow of rejection is there from the beginning. For Jesus came to 'his own and his own received him not'. (1:11) This isn't simple rejection. In the second half of the Fourth Gospel, opposition and hostility accompany the use of 'the world'.

This helps to clarify for our contemporary world what we mean by 'sin' and the 'structures of sin'. Personal sins can cause or support or exploit evil. Or by omission when we fail to avoid, eliminate or at least limit social evils out of laziness, fear, silence, complicity, indifference. Or take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world and thus sidestep the effort or sacrifice needed. In this way, individuals comprise and support the structures of sin.

The coming of Jesus 'the light', made a decisive difference between the past and the present – for darkness had been the prevailing atmosphere (1:5).

Each person – and consequently humankind – chooses light or darkness: 'the world' chooses to believe or not to believe. Faith and action are connected. There is no list of 'dos' and 'don'ts'. We who are present in 'the world', judge ourselves in the now by choosing light or darkness (3:19-21).

That there is no description of Jesus' future return or of the heavens opening or Jesus coming down on the cloud of heaven in judgment is striking. Instead, John's language is relational: 'I ... will take you to *myself*'. (14:3) This promise centres on a person – on relationship rather than place.

Being with Jesus is about enduring relationships of abiding (14:10; 15:4-10).

In the outpouring of the Spirit who 'abides with you and will be in you' (14:17) and the work of his disciples, the risen Jesus continues to abide in the world which God loved. This is what the Trinity is about – relationship.

The Eastern Church has a word for this - *perichoresis* (*peri* around; *chorea* dance) which suggests a being-in-one-another, a continuous dynamic interaction between persons mutually permeating each other, interdependence, interconnection, the divine dance, the mystery of the one communion of all persons in diversity, divine as well as human.

For Catherine Lacugna, the doctrine of the Trinity isn't ultimately 'a teaching about "God" but a teaching about *God's life with us and our life with each other.*' Further, this gospel tells of eternal life being experienced now, in the world God so loved. In relationship to the world in all its senses, humankind has the potential to respond with awe and wonder. Such a response to beauty changes those who see 'the now' in new perspective, fires our human imagination to make connections, to abide in, care for and protect the Earth – and the whole Earth community – by completing the works of God.

And what is God's work which is Jesus' work and our work? Well, many strands of creation and re-creation tell the story of the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus. We hear how the works of God are to come to completion in Jesus. Jesus explains his work as God's work. His food is to finish the works of God (4:34). God gives him works to finish (5:36). God working through him (14:10) and those who believe in Jesus 'will do the works that I do and, in fact, greater works than I do'. (14:12)

The theme of completion is especially present as Jesus' death approaches. John writes, 'Jesus knew all was *finished*' (19:28). His last words are, 'It is *finished*'. (19:30) Echoing Genesis: 'God rested from all the work God had done in creation'. (Gen 2:2) A completed creation is sealed by Sabbath rest, yet God's work is incomplete. Jesus continues God's work, healing and re-creating even on the Sabbath.

This 'leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections' but to discover the key to our own fulfilment.

Underlying Jesus' promise in John 14, is the assurance that when he's absent in the flesh, he'll be present through the Spirit. It could be said the climax of the passion is when he says, 'It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave the Spirit' to the women and to John. (19:30)

This promise of re-creation centres on a person, on a relationship, on interconnection and on finding Jesus – in the present, in this world.

In our plunging into the world to complete God's work of ongoing creation and re-creation, '...the Spirit, infinite bond of love, is intimately present at the very heart of the universe, inspiring and bring new pathways'.<sup>vi</sup>

vi Laudato Si', 238

## Psalm 96:4 by Anna Johnstone

*Psalm 96:4 For the Lord is great beyond description, and greatly to be praised.*

It's natural to want to describe you  
to talk about you in a way  
that makes you accessible to  
those who don't know you  
But how and  
where to start?  
The fact that you're Spirit  
for one thing, is hard  
for most to swallow  
Maybe forget about that for now  
What next?  
Do I concentrate on you  
as this world's Creator  
the One with a brain  
bigger than the universe  
who dreamed up this  
amazing place we inhabit?  
The One who's been here  
through time as we know it  
all the billions of years the  
scientists tell us about?  
Maybe that makes you  
seem too far off  
and way out  
How about as a Dad  
with a Son he loves  
with all his heart?  
That's more like it  
everybody likes  
a family story  
It all boils down to the  
caring, devoted Father  
whose face we see  
in yours, Jesus  
I can stop worrying about  
my inadequate brain  
forget about having a  
thesaurus in my head  
I only need this  
growing love  
in my heart

## Creation Hymn for the Season of Creation

This hymn is intended to be sung in a 'kitset' fashion. The first and last verses are always to be sung. In between, insert, from the remaining verses, as many verses as you wish to match the week's Creation theme.

This music and these words can be freely reproduced for use in worship.  
Please acknowledge Vivien and Susan as the composer and author.

Music: © 2016 Vivien Chiu

Words: © 2017-18 Susan Jones

1. **In our world we find delight  
For creation, day and night  
Brings us solace, joy;  
Spirit grows, refreshes, gleams  
as the earth fuels richer dreams  
just by being here;  
*May this beauty never end  
May this solace always be here  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion.***
2. Maui dolphin skims the waves  
Gray and sleek, graceful at play  
Aotearoa's child;  
Paua clings beneath the tide  
Hiding beauty deep inside  
Aotearoa's jewel;  
*May this beauty never end  
May this blueness always be here  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion*
3. Dark to light flies on the moth  
Mottled, marked, like linen cloth  
Only found right here;  
Hiding in the darkest nest  
Kiwi like the night the best  
Only found right here;  
*May this beauty never end  
May this brownness always be here  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion*
4. Kauri reaches to the light  
Strong and powerful, full of might  
Giant of the trees;  
Delicate, the orchid climbs  
Over branches, green moss-lined  
Swaying in the breeze;  
*May this beauty never end  
May this greenness always be here  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion*
5. Tui, iridescent coat,  
Singing from a trembling throat  
Crowns New Zealand's bush;  
Kereru with mighty wings,  
Blue and purple plumage brings  
To New Zealand's bush;  
*May this beauty never end  
May this iridescence stay here  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion*
6. Storm brings dark clouds, waterfalls  
Lightning's crash astounds us all  
As the front rolls in;  
Rain that lashes window panes  
Brings new life to parched farmland  
Rehydrating fields;  
*May this beauty never end  
May this rain continue watering  
May the human race take notice  
And show divine compassion*

7. Mountains march to distant heights  
Wilderness tests all our might  
Where the tussocks blow;  
Windswept tors define the land  
Desert plateaus, mountains stand  
Old eruptions' scars;  
*May this beauty never end*  
*May this rock and earth remain here*  
*May the human race take notice*  
*And show divine compassion*

8. Looking into starry skies  
Galaxies defeat our eyes  
Distant stardust glows;  
Spinning planets circle suns  
Stars are born, supernovae stun  
Cosmos is our 'hood;  
*May this beauty never end*  
*May this universe remain here*  
*May the human race take notice*  
*And show divine compassion*

9. Water trickles, rushes, spouts  
Deep calm lake drains to river mouth  
Power wrested from snow;  
Humans, animals and plants  
need hydration, need the chance  
to refresh and grow;  
*May this beauty never end*  
*May this water last for everyone*  
*May the human race take notice*  
*And show divine compassion*

10. Planet Earth spins like a jewel  
Let us care and not be cruel  
To this treasured gem  
This blue teardrop hanging there;  
Children's children need a share  
We owe this to them;  
*May this planet always flourish*  
*May its children still inherit*  
*May we help this star to shine bright;*  
*Show Earth divine compassion*

11. Let's endorse humanity  
Part of Earth's full family  
All made welcome here  
Many genders, races, tribes  
Personalities that jibe  
All are welcome here;  
*May all people feel accepted*  
*Nations show true understanding*  
*May all humans love each other;*  
*And show divine compassion*

12. Skies stretch over all our lives,  
Prides of lion to bees in hives  
All bask in the sun  
Clouds race through as gale winds blow  
Cirrus high and stratus low  
Skies are bright or glum;  
*May the air be always fragrant*  
*And its clarity untainted;*  
*May the human race take notice*  
*And show divine compassion*

13. Land provides our standing place,  
hills through which the rivers trace,  
give us space to be;  
Ground which holds us, gives us base,  
needs our care, through all our days  
so it will survive;  
*May this place continue standing*  
*May this earth continue holding*  
*May our feet be ever grounded*  
*Held in divine compassion*

14. **It's a mystery who made this -  
evolution, hand-made care -  
multiple ideas.**  
**But it's not a mystery who**  
**Needs to care for green and blue -**  
***We have all been charged***  
***To make sure this never ends***  
***That this beauty does remain here***  
***That the human race takes notice***  
***And shows divine compassion***

## In our world we find delight

$\text{♩} = 102$

Words Susan Jones. Music Vivien Chiu



(first vs) In our world we find de - light for cre - a - tion, day and night,  
(last vs) It's a mys - tery who made this - e - vo - lu - tion, hand - made care -



brings us sol - ace, joy; Spir - it grows, re - fresh - es, gleams  
mul - ti - ple i - deas. But it's not a mys - tery who



as the earth fuels rich - er dreams just by be - ing here; Will this  
needs to care for green and blue; we have all been charged. To make



beau - ty ev - er end? Will this sol - ace al - ways  
sure this nev - er ends, that this beau - ty does re -



be here? Will the hu - man race take no - tice And  
- main here, that the hu - man race take no - tice and



show di - vine com - pas - sion.  
show di - vine com - pas - sion.

## SGM News

### SGM Spiritual Directors Formation Programme

Participants access materials (modules, workshop documents and videos) through a members' only section of the SGM website. As of September Workgroup, graduates from any era of the programme may have ongoing access at the rate of \$50 per year, or \$250 for lifetime access. Contact Joanne Garton [admin@sgm.org.nz](mailto:admin@sgm.org.nz) if you're interested.

### Behold

Are there too few contemplative events in your area? Do you know 'spiritual but not religious' people who'd like a 'quiet day' – but nothing's available in your neck of the woods? Would you like to lead days like this but don't know where to begin?

SGM can help!

In partnership with the Spiritual Directors Formation Programme, we invite you to one of two Behold workshops, led by Kerryn & Peter Christensen. May 11 in Christchurch at Mt Pleasant Community Centre or May 18, following the 5-day SGM Supervision Training Course advertised below. Why not do both while you're in Auckland? Cost: \$100 (includes access to online training materials, lunch, tea and coffee) Time: 9.30am - 4pm.

A Behold workshop will empower you to promote, lead and resource others for a restful, creative day of reflection. Who can attend? You can! It's a great opportunity for anyone who's completed spiritual director formation and for ministry leaders, chaplains, clergy: anyone who'd like to encourage others in Christian contemplative experiences. Register your interest and we'll keep you in the loop [pkaj.christensen@gmail.com](mailto:pkaj.christensen@gmail.com).

### Supervision training

May 13 to 17, 2019! Including a one-day refresher for existing supervisors and another focussing on supervision of SDs in the SGM formation programme. Venue: Mercy Centre, Auckland. For more information please contact Jeannie Martin-Blaker [j.martin-blaker@gmail.com](mailto:j.martin-blaker@gmail.com). These training days are open to trained spiritual directors and/or supervisors. Tutors are Jane Wilkinson and Jeannie Martin-Blaker.

That's your professional development for 2019 sorted!  
Questions and enquiries are always welcome [www.sgm.org.nz](http://www.sgm.org.nz).

### Goodbyes

To all our readers, Sue Pickering writes, 'After over two decades on Spiritual Growth Ministries Workgroup, I've retired, with great confidence in the current leadership to deepen and broaden the work of SGM in the future. Although it's sad to say 'au revoir' I'm just so thankful for the opportunity to have been part of the lives and formation of so many through the formation programme, retreat workshops and SGM road trips in 2015. Now it's time for me to attend to what calls me into my eighth decade: grandparenting, learning te Reo, and writing, as well as doing what I can to support the spread of the Gospel in Taranaki and further afield. May the Loving Presence, who calls us into fullness of life, be with you all. With love, Sue.'

## In loving memory of Andrew Pritchard

With Sue Pickering, who created this tribute to Andrew, it's SGM's privilege to give thanks for his profound contribution to our work over more than three decades, and for his care and support as a dear colleague and friend. And to his beloved Lynn who enabled him to share his gifts with so many over such a long time.

For a moment, let's imagine each one of us plodding through the ups and downs of everyday life – we discover a campfire – a place to be warmed by the Spirit, tended by someone who knows how to listen deeply, who helps us see more clearly the pathway that leads to life. Someone who encourages us to keep trying.

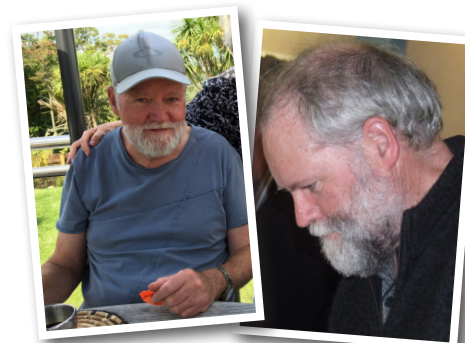
Andrew, you're the one who tended the campfire for many of us – you've been a compassionate spiritual director, a wise supervisor and an encourager. We've all benefited from your consistent trust that God is at work in us, no matter our circumstances or state of belief. Even in your dying, you and Lynn modelled that trust – in your end is indeed your new beginning.

For more than thirty years you kept the campfire burning – as a core member of SGM Workgroup and the spiritual director formation team. You creatively led us in worship; gently but firmly streamlined our meetings and enhanced our group effectiveness. Your wisdom and hard work behind the scenes enabled us to navigate budget challenges and the passing of friends; you helped us reshape and refresh the way we do things – to keep our work relevant and responsive to God's leading. And always there was your commitment to waiting upon God and deepening our Workgroup relationships.

Your safe, skilled presence was essential to our pivotal week-long residential training events at Waikanae. Your deep respect always in evidence for an individual soul challenged to grow, or for the efforts of the team – whether sending trainees on their 'Contemplative' exercise the first morning, or presenting meticulously researched sessions on discernment, praying with icons, or role-playing what a competent director looks like. And in the midst of all that – you managed practical things like the threat of flooding or awkward dynamics among the trainees.

Andrew, you modelled contemplative spirituality by giving space for your own soul to flourish. This enabled you to be there for others as a non-judgmental, and non-anxious presence. In you, we've seen the fruits of the Spirit come to maturity in this world. Above all your mission was to help others draw closer to God.

Andrew, your mission is accomplished. It's time to draw around you the campfire blanket which carries your life stories along with our love and thanksgiving.



We will tend the fire.

E kare, haere i runga i te aroha;  
haere i runga i te whakaponu;  
haere i runga i te rangimarie.  
Kororia ki te Atua. Amine.

## Books for the journey

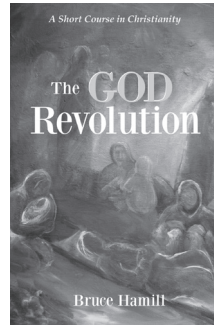
### The God Revolution

A Short Course in Christianity by Bruce Hamill  
Reviewer André Muller

I commend Bruce Hamill's fresh introduction to Christianity. Not just for its clarity in setting out the gospel, but for its invitation to those who find themselves adrift on the restless sea of late modernity: You've tried nothingness and it's not satisfying. Why not try God? The only thing you have to lose – is nothing. To a world in despair, The God Revolution presents the invitation compellingly.

This echoes the Old Testament's persistent invitation to choose God or die. There is nothing else. The idols you worship are made by human hands, says the Psalmist, using material God himself has provided. They won't save you. To turn from the creator is to turn from the source of all life to the nothingness from which we have been summoned.

In a world where people think of life as merely 'the arbitrary freedom to make "choices" in a meaningless universe' – Christianity offers a radical shift in the way we understand ourselves. The God Revolution is timely when many in the West no longer understand themselves to be open to, formed and informed by, the One who is incomprehensibly expansive and inexhaustibly lovely. Isn't this odd? For the contemplation of God is the chief end or perfection of humankind. It is what we are made for.



### The Stardust Revolution:

The New Story of Our Origin in the Stars Jacob Berkowitz,  
Prometheus NY, 2012 Reviewed by Trish McBride

This book broadened my horizons – or more accurately blew them to smithereens! A literal horizon is the boundary line between earth and the heavens, and this book is the story of the dismantling of that boundary by recent astronomer-scientists. The book is an astonishing feat of accessible narration. Berkowitz calls his story extreme genealogy: the primary question is 'where did we come from?'

I'd been thinking of Earth as a hunk of rock, where life mysteriously began in a soup, evolving with Divine guidance. But Berkowitz and his gallery of star-gazing scientists caused another big bang in my awareness. He traces the discoveries that in their birthing and dying, stars manufacture the basic chemical elements of which absolutely everything is made – water, all earthly elements and organic traces. He posits life was probably seeded onto primeval earth with this dust. That we are thus literally made of this stardust. That the hunt is on in 'Goldilocks' (not too hot, not too cold) zones for an earth-like planet where life could



be possible. God does get a respectful mention or two along the way. One scientist is quoted as saying if God didn't do it like that, He (sic) missed a good bet.

For me the profound moment comes when the author asks a scientist if he could define Life. The reply: 'Life is love.' The impulse to connect and combine is 'built into' the components of atoms, and thereby into everything else, including humanity. All the Christian injunctions to love God and neighbour steer us into living in harmony with this cosmic process. How does this new knowledge get incorporated into the on-going Christian story? How does it modify or affirm the language that is traditionally used to transmit this story? How can Cosmos be articulated in our liturgies when they have been traditionally worded around the ancient three-tier universe's geography of heaven, earth and hell?

If the life of Jesus is pivotal to the human story, he is an evolutionary turning point. He reveals our essential one-ness with each other and with God – counter to inter-tribal and inter-personal struggle. Now science is providing the hard-wiring for all that.

Thank you to the patient, methodical men and women, past and present, who study stars. And thank you to Jacob Berkowitz for one of the most exciting bits of learning I've had for years! It has left me, two readings later, with a high of cosmic proportions! And an even greater awe for my God as Transcendent, as all-permeating Life-force, as the Power of Love.

For your daily dose of awe, check <https://apod.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html> - Astronomy Picture of the Day

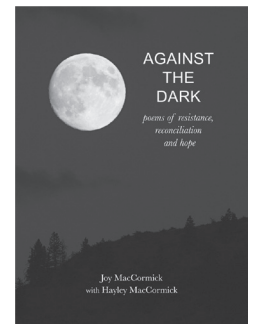
### Against the dark

poems of resistance, reconciliation and hope  
author Joy MacCormick with Hayley MacCormick  
\$25 from [evbookshb@gmail.com](mailto:evbookshb@gmail.com)

When clouds obscure the sun, or the darkness of the night of pain or grief seems impenetrable or never-ending, it can be hard to hold on to hope that beyond the clouds the sun still actually shines. The poems in this collection name our resistance, reconciliation and hope. They articulate our blocks to life: our failure to recognise the bigger picture.

They speak of reconnection, reconciliation with self, with Creation, and with God. And they invite us to be open to hope – hope in the irrepressibility of life, and hope in the uncontainable goodness of God.

This book is notable for many reasons, not the least courage. Joy's poet granddaughter Hayley introduces each section. Through this literary companionship, the reader is invited to open themselves to the mind and soul of a poet, prophet and priest.





## The Last Word

Dylan Morrison (Irish writer-poet) reminds us, 'The link between energy and matter within the Cosmos is a harbinger of a much greater connection. Namely the relationship between Spirit and spirit spark, the interface between Divine Love and the human essence. One to be felt in the Deep Silence of solitude.'

I'm in awe at the chord struck by our 'Cosmos' theme. Some writers were driven to investigate the known cosmos for the very first time. Others report they fell like shooting stars into deep space when they were young. It's clear to me the cosmos within is as vast as the one beyond our skin. I want to thank everyone who wrote this time – for sharing their encounter with the One the Cosmos cannot contain.

To keep our content 98% indigenous to New Zealand, I don't go searching the galaxy for writers. I wait for God to nudge someone who lives near our beaches, under our mountains or strides our paddocks. Offerings come.

Maybe God will nudge you to write for our next Refresh!

*Blessings*

*Diane [dianegw@actrix.co.nz]*

## Winter 2019 Refresh theme 'Joy'

**Deadline March 28, 2019**

New Zealand poet, Ana Lisa de Jong pens, 'How can I contain this joy? How can I contain this beauty? I drip with it like the trees.'

Occasionally, God whispers a challenge to us like: 'Share my joy!'

What!? At such a dark time in world history. Why? How? And yet, 'the joy of the LORD is our strength!'

How does our contemplative practise enable us to experience joy or to tap into God's joy when everyday we're confronted with evidence of injustice and suffering? How do we hold the paradox of desolation and joy in our human experience?

What might give joy to God? What does joy feel like? How is it different from happiness? How might God's joy give us strength and perspective?

**Guidelines for writers – please, please, please!**

*keep contributions to fewer than 2000 words*

*use single quotation marks*

*be conversational in style*

*use conjunctions wherever possible*

*use endnotes instead of footnotes*

*use inclusive language wherever possible*

*ensure any images you send are larger than 2MB.*

## The tulips were apricot

by John Howell

The tulips were apricot and light was striking  
the blue vase, roughcast its collar;

collar as a stillpoint, like a torii.

The tulips are open, and light is striking

olive green leaves and rose hips red.

Apricot, red, green fracture the light.

Rose hips and olive green leaves lift the tulips,  
whose cups turn to sunlight.

The lips of the petals become light red.

The tulips light red when the light is striking.

© John Howell

17 Aug 2018

A **torii** (鳥居, literally bird abode, is a traditional Japanese gate most commonly found at the entrance of or within a Shinto shrine, where it symbolically marks the transition from the mundane to sacred.



© John Howell

## Contributors

**Graham Millar** is a granddad, gardener and guide.

**Jill McLeod** is delighted to have celebrated her 80th birthday in reasonable health. She enjoys living in Thames with her husband Alec and long lazy days for ladylike gardening, and lots of interesting reading. Jill's glad to live in this amazing age of discoveries not thought of 50 years ago!

**Donna Lusby** lives and works at a community garden in Christchurch where she has ample opportunity to glean ideas and images for poems. She is a trumper, a cyclist, an explorer, a grower of food and flowers, and a student of how to live lightly on the earth.

**Joy MacCormick** is an Anglican priest who for the past twenty-seven years has worked in parishes, hospital chaplaincies and a Retreat Centre leading Retreats and Quiet Days. Now retired from active roles, she continues to offer Spiritual Companionship. Joy is delighted to see people grow through resistance, reconciliation and hope into new appreciation of – and honesty in – their relationship with that Holy Mystery in which we live and move and have our being.

**Kenneth Tanner** is pastor of Church of the Holy Redeemer in Rochester Hills, Michigan, where he lives with his wife and four of their seven children. His writing appears in *Mockingbird*, *Books & Culture*, *Huffington Post*, *Sojourners*, *National Review*, *Christianity Today*, *Behemoth*, and *Real Clear Religion*.

**Bruce Hamill** currently works alongside members of Island Bay Presbyterian Church as a Community Minister, predominantly in social housing complexes in Wellington. His blog is <https://dbhamill.wordpress.com/> Boo to a Goose.

**Maurice Dagger** is a non-stipendiary Anglican Priest who is retired from secular employment and lives in Porirua City. He's particularly interested – and involved in – cross-cultural theology, both Maori and Pasifika.

**Elinor Galbraith** is in her first year of Spiritual Direction training. She's mother of three children 4, 12, 17 and wife to Glen. Elinor lives in sunny Motueka where she loves walking, biking, ice creams and her pastoral care role at her child's school. Elinor also loves creating women's soul events for her friends – to share and eat cake.

**Lesley Ayers** lives in Tauranga with her husband John. She is glad to have time to share her love of books, art, music, nature and God with her grandchildren. Nowadays she will often be found outside at night, looking up at the beauty and immensity of the night sky.

**Luka Love** is a writer and craftsman from the Ngāti Te Whiti hapu of Te Atiawa from Parihaka. He's travelled and lived all over the world but is now settled on the portside hills of Otautahi where he traces the footsteps of his tupuna and works with stone and language.

**Andrew Dunn** lives and works at Oasis, Albany, and enjoys their covenanted bush which adds to the wild link between The Ark in the Park in the Waitakeres and the Tiritiri Matangi Island Sanctuary in the Hauraki Gulf.

**Alan Upson** is a Spiritual Director and retired Methodist Minister now living with wife Kerry in Whangarei. Interests include camellias, trains, walking, classical music, fixing things, historical crime fiction, church, family and friends.

**Anna Johnstone** loves the freedom of life and the ever-deepening mystery of the Trinity. She is enjoying writing for her next book. [www.annajohnstone.com](http://www.annajohnstone.com)

**Susan Jones** serves as minister at St Andrews on the Terrace Wellington. She's a strong social justice advocate and published poet. A trained spiritual director, Susan taught Theological Reflection for the University of Otago's Master of Ministry programme while serving in congregations in the south.

**Kathleen Rushton** of Nga Whaea Atatwhai Sisters of Mercy, lives in Otautahi Christchurch where she tends her vegetable garden, researches, writes and works a little in spiritual direction. Her research and publications in the gospel according to John include the implications for ecological and social justice. Her focus is on making sound biblical scholarship accessible and linked to everyday faith and spirituality.

**John Howell** is in his re-wirement after parish ministry. Today John focuses on writing poetry and following the ethics of climate change. Last year, his book of poems *Homeless* was published by Submarine Press to favourable reviews. He's currently working on a paper 'Faith and Spirituality' for publication next year. He lives in Ngaio with his wife Alyson.

