

Eucalyptus rubida

Newsletter of The Centre for Ecology & Spirituality,
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Newsletter No.47

Summer 2011/2012

Left: August, and the wattles are a riot again. November
and the Bearded Orchid (below) is flowering.



Soul of the Earth

Have you ever wept with joy or compassion for the beautiful world you find yourself in? Notice I used the word 'in', because truly we are in and amongst the world and not separate from it as some cosmologies would have it. And just how are we to consider ourselves 'in' the world?

Quite a number of previous essays have looked at what we are to make of human consciousness, and some have explored notions of a greater consciousness in which we participate. I would like to look again at the ancient notion of the *anima mundi* (Latin for *soul of the world*) and Jung's collective unconsciousness.

There is increasing evidence that the human is experiencing a spiritual homecoming to our mother Earth. It has been a long journey for Homo sapiens since we left our original Eden-like consciousness many thousands of years ago, when we saw ourselves as one with the natural world, and virtually ego-less. It has been a hero's journey into desert and wilderness, marked by epic experiences across cultures as our ancestors struggled to cope with the emerging ego-consciousness with which the human was gradually endowed. It was only about 40,000 years ago when, science tells us, the human pre-frontal cortex of the brain allowed us to develop language, and thus a new way to deal with the exciting experience of human mindfulness.

Once again, and this is an idea I return to frequently, evolution has a seamlessness about it, in that novelty does not arise from nothing, but gradually emerges from a primordial state. In other words, the experience of the human is continuous (ontologically) with the experience of the world. Our experience is the external manifestation of the 'innerness' of the universe.

I do not need to remind some readers of the thinking of Teilhard de Chardin about the inner aspect of all matter. Readers of previous essays (see [Rubida no.41](#)) might recall the title of Jean Gebser's magnum opus *The Ever-Present Origin*. We have already referred to the collective unconscious of Jung. I have previously noted the implicate and explicate orders of quantum physicist David Bohm, and how he continued the ideas of mystic St Nicholas of Cusa's ideas about the *implicatio* and *explicatio* of the divine (see [Rubida No.40](#)). Readers of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme will remember the idea that we are the universe come into conscious awareness. Process theologians like Alfred North

Whitehead, Charles Hartsthorne and John Cobb have written about the notion of a primordial (transcendent) godhead and well as a consequent (immanent) godhead. Rupert Sheldrake has suggested the idea of morphic fields which manifest themselves in a species behaviour.

Maybe it is the time to look at another implication (pun not intended) of this style



of thinking. To put this on a temporary theological level, I think we are on the cusp of a rediscovery of the Gods. As our human consciousness developed through its Archaic, Magic, and Mythical stages (see [Rubida No. 41](#) article on the website), we - the universe - have been a participant in the process by which the core and ground of our being has come into conscious self-awareness. We are the Great Soul of the World come into ego-awareness. It is this inner divine-ness that we are dealing with all the time. And it is this divine realm that is continuous with, and the ever-present source of what we call our life.

I simply must quote here a favourite passage from Teilhard de Chardin which to me shows this great mystic gradually drawing aside the veil of mystery which surrounds us.

..And so, for the first time in my life perhaps (although I am supposed to meditate every day!) I took the lamp and, leaving the zone of everyday occupations and relationships where everything seems clear, I went down into my innermost self, to the deep abyss whence I feel dimly that

my power of action emanates. But as I moved further and further away from the conventional certainties by which my social life is superficially illuminated, I became aware that I was losing contact with myself. At each step of the descent a new person was disclosed within me of whose name I was no longer sure, and who no longer obeyed me. And when I had to stop my exploration because the path faded from beneath my steps, I found a bottomless abyss at my feet, and out of it came - arising I know not from where - the current which I dare to call my life. (The Divine Milieu)

Even Vatican II speaks of the inner dimension: *God dwells in the innermost depths of the human heart and awaits our discovery of him there. (Gaudium et Spes)*

And what do the poets say in their vision of the unity of things. Rilke speaks of the shepherd:

*With slow and steady strides, his posture is pensive
and, as he stands there, noble. Even now a god might
secretly slip into this form and not be diminished. (Trilogy 3)*

David Whyte in his *Self Portrait* hints at the mystery of which we are speaking.

*. I want to know if you are willing
to live, day by day, with the consequence of love
and the bitter unwanted passion of your sure defeat.*

I have heard, in that fierce embrace, even the gods speak of God.

What are the implications of such thinking? Put quite simply - no man is an island - we are not alone - we all come from the very same source - the kingdom of God is within. We try our best to describe this in words, and always fall short of the task. Pondering this in a recent visit to the Flinders Ranges, where ancient nature is eloquent, the following lines arrived for me.

The Secret

*Time is not something you can buy in a shop.
Time is something you use when running a race.
It is always there, waiting for you;
It is free, and anybody can have it;
Time is the space where you become;
Time and space is a happy marriage
And the offspring is now,
Is you, holding in one moment
The origin and destiny of the universe;
But holding it sacredly, lovingly, pregnantly,
This is the secret.*

Trevor Parton

Dear Readers,

So we come to the end of another year – another cycle of seasons, and a further flowering of our emergent universe. What have we all done to further the end of greater wholeness? We are all probably embarrassed to think about it. The beauty is that it looks like the universe is going to give us another year to do our best. Bottom line is we all need to assess our role with critical awareness.

Glenburn has been blessed with another inspiring year of people coming to the Centre with their gifts in spirituality, and eager to imbibe the atmosphere of the environment. A major part of working with people at Glenburn is to engage in conversations about the topics that people are interested in or are troubled by.

There is always interest in retreats about the mystics, and how we can nourish the mystic within ourselves.

We thank the people who answered the survey we sent out during the year. Already we have restructured the program for next year to reflect the preferences of the respondents. All we want now is for you to come to the retreats whose themes you suggested.

We have added both mens' and womens' weekends. We have added retreats on Teilhard de Chardin, Heart Spirituality, and the New Consciousness. We have added Art and Poetry weekends.

We recently said farewell to Sr Colleen King-Turner who returned to New Zealand after a six-month internship at Glenburn. The place has never looked so good, and Colleen was an asset in so many ways. Thank you Colleen.

Eight of us travelled to the Flinders Ranges for retreat in October and enjoyed once again the inspiring landscape and animals of this ancient place. Brachina Gorge (photo) contains fossils of the earliest forms of multicellular life. It is a privilege to see them.

The Sacred Earth course is now a twelve-week course and it commences in early February. Several workshops are available for others to attend (see the Program on p.3), though places are limited. International participants continue to apply for the course which



is very re-assuring for us, and indicated that the course is well-aimed at current needs.

At Glenburn we continue to celebrate the earth in various ways as well as engage in some small activism and political debate around the unsustainable logging of the Toolangi forest near us. (see p.4)

The following is a list of Earth Seasonal Days, which many people still celebrate.

The Earth's seasonal days for 2012 are:

Feb.4th

Lammas

Mar.20th

Mabon - Equinox

May 5th

Samhain

Jun.21st

Yule - Solstice

Aug.7th

Imbolc

Sep.23rd

Eostar - Equinox

Nov.7th

Beltane

Dec.22nd

Litha - Solstice

Rain has been good this year. The tanks and the dam are full, and the Swamp Gums have never had it so good. It has also been an excellent wildflower year with some flowers appearing first time for several years. The local Landcare group came along one Saturday for a tour of our wildflowers. We were able to show off about a dozen specimens.

Many thanks for the donations received. They go a long way towards our annual postal bill.

If you are 'snail mail' recipient of Rubida and have gone over to broadband recently you might like to be moved from the postal list to the email list. Please phone or email.

Mary has prepared a gift set of Lettercards based on some of our best photographs at Glenburn: 6 Letter cards for \$12.50 posted. See some of these photos in the Photo Gallery. Email or phone to order. Trevor's book of poems, articles and photos still available at \$30 (posted).

The staff and residents of Glenburn wish all our readers at home and overseas every blessing of heaven, sky and earth this Christmas. Let us all give our beautiful planet and its inhabitants the Christmas present of our love and compassion.

Leonard, Mary, Rod, Trevor



SACRED EARTH 2013

It is now a little late to apply for the 2012 course here at Glenburn, but it is probably the time to look ahead to 2013. This program known as Sacred Earth is a 12-week residential course in ecological spirituality held at our beautiful Glenburn centre. This residential course can be a landmark event in a person's appreciation of their life and their place in the Universe. If you are interested, come along and see the Centre or make enquiries at Glenburn. Further information may be found on the website www.edmundrice.org/glenburn or you may send for a Sacred Earth brochure which has expanded details about the course.

www.edmundrice.org/glenburn



PROGRAM - 2012

FEB 5 - APR 28

SACRED EARTH

Sacred Earth is an annual twelve-week residential course in Ecological and Holistic Spirituality. Details are available in a separate brochure and on the website.

FEB 11

SILK SCARF PAINTING WORKSHOP

Basic and advanced techniques. Take home 3 scarves. With Trevor Parton and Mary White. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Lunch provided. (\$50)

FEB 17

PERMACULTURE WORKSHOP

A day on the basics of permaculture design. With Leonard Sheahan. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Lunch provided. (\$40)

MAR 3

HARVEST FESTIVAL (EQUINOX)

A day of planting, harvesting and ritual. Vegetarian recipes. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. (\$40)

MAR 10

DRUMMING WORKSHOP

Drumming workshop with Christina Green. This workshop allows you to participate and experience the heartbeat of the universe. Drums supplied. Book early. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. (\$50)

MAR 12

WALK THE LAND - GLENBURN

Bushwalking in the hills near Glenburn; then a shared picnic lunch and a discussion. Optional pick-up by minibus at Lilydale Station at 10am. Please notify if pick up is required. (no charge)

MAR 17

ART AS SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP

A day exploring spirituality. Art helping to sharpen our spiritual vision. No artistic ability required. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Lunch provided. (\$50)

MAR 21

COUNCIL OF ALL BEINGS

A Deep Ecology workshop where participants role play life forms in a parliamentary setting. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. (\$40)

APR 14

SACRED DANCE WORKSHOP

For millennia, dance has been used in ritual and worship. Mary White revisits the creativity of movement. 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Lunch provided. (\$40)

APR 30 - MAY 9

LAKE MUNGO/FLINDERS RETREAT

Ten day Tour/Retreat. This marks the end of the Sacred Earth course but is open to other participants. See website for more detail or ring Ph: 5797 8532 Fee: \$1320 (\$1200 GST exempt)

JUN 1 - 3

POETRY RETREAT

A weekend to enjoy poetry old and new, and to stimulate personal expression in poetry and other forms. Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

JUN 10 - 16

THE NEW CONSCIOUSNESS

A six-day retreat covering the spiritual insights of critical modern thinkers including Teilhard de Chardin, Joseph Campbell, Jean Gebser, Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Saturday. Fee: \$540

JUN 29 - 30

EARTHSONG SYMPOSIUM

The Annual EarthSong Symposium. Bookings through EarthSong. See www.earthsong.org.au (Ph: 8359 0106)

JUL 1 - 7

JOURNEY OF THE UNIVERSE RETREAT

The astounding nature of the existence of the universe continues to reveal itself. Brian Swimme's latest work facilitates a paradigm shift in consciousness. The relevance of these discoveries impacts our own lives. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Saturday. Fee: \$540

JULY 13 - 15

EARTHSONG RETREAT

A weekend retreat at Glenburn conducted by the EarthSong Presenters Group, complementing the programs provided by the group. Bookings through EarthSong (Ph: 8359 0106 - see also www.earthsong.org.au) Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday.

JUL 22 - 28

HYMN OF THE UNIVERSE RETREAT

A six-day retreat built around the spiritual classic of the same name written by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, that inspired many of us years ago. There is still ample inspiration in looking again at this mystical writing. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Saturday. Fee: \$540

AUG 5 - 11

THE WOMEN MYSTICS

There is a profound knowing that comes through the writings of the Women Mystics. The writings of Julian of Norwich, Catherine of Siena, Mechtild, Teresa of Avila, Hildegard and some contemporary women have much to offer reflecting through their wisdom on themes of prayer, images of God, Jesus, sin, freedom and mission. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Saturday. Fee: \$540

AUG 17 - 19

ARTISTS' WEEKEND RETREAT

A weekend at beautiful Glenburn and in the nearby Toolangi Forest. Lots of free time alone or working in groups. Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

AUG 24 - 26

MENS' WEEKEND RETREAT

Two days of reflection for men looking at what it means to be male in the modern world. Time to nurture both the male and female within us. A great time for conversation with others. Arrive Friday evening and leave after

lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

SEP 2 - 10

FLINDERS RANGES RETREAT

Six nights in Shearers' Quarters in the Flinders Ranges. See website for more detail or ring 03 5797 8532. Fee: \$1045 or \$950 GST Exempt

SEP 21 - 23

WOMENS' WEEKEND RETREAT

On this beautiful weekend it's time to put time aside to recharge, rejuvenate, and re-center ourselves within the Universe. Together we will walk the labyrinth, share in earth based rituals, experience a singing bowl meditation and so much more - Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

SEP 30 - OCT 6

HEART SPIRITUALITY

Spirituality of the heart has a long tradition in mysticism, and is having a revival in the present age. This is an opportunity to tune in to a very beautiful mode of spirituality. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Saturday. Fee: \$540

OCT 21 - 27

THE MYSTICS RETREAT

Extending the popular mystics retreat to include the mystics of many traditions and times. Spiritual exercises and practices to nurture the mystic within us. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Saturday. Fee: \$540

OCT (DATE PENDING)

DRUMMING WORKSHOP

Novice or skilled drummer, come join the fun and friendly atmosphere. Express yourself on the drum, under the skilled guidance of Christina Green. Drums provided. Cost \$50. 10 am - 3 pm. Lunch provided.

NOV 9 - 11

FIRE, EARTH, AIR, WATER WEEKEND RETREAT

These elements are the heart of matter. Joanna Macy says "To be alive in this wonderful self-organizing universe, involved in the dance of life with senses to perceive, with lungs to breathe, with organs that can obtain their nourishment - this is a miracle for which there are no words." Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

NOV 11 - 15

POWERS OF THE UNIVERSE RETREAT

A 4-day retreat on the noted series of talks by Brian Swimme. All creativity and all consciousness arises in some mysterious way, from the depths of the earth itself. Discover the powers working within us individually and collectively. Arrive Sunday evening and leave after lunch on Thursday. Fee: \$360

NOV 16 - 18

FOREST RETREAT

Come stand in the midst, awe and wonder the Toolangi Forest. Experience the breathtaking grandeur, natural wonder of the region. Myrtle Beech and Mountain Ash trees, gullies, Leadbeater possum and Lyre Bird habitat await. Come experience her abundance. Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

NOV 23 - 25

LABYRINTH WEEKEND RETREAT

Let the Glenburn Labyrinth hold you this weekend. Walking the labyrinth is a reflective journey of the spirit. Each time you walk the labyrinth you become more empowered to find and do the work you feel your soul reaching for. Arrive Friday evening and leave after lunch on Sunday. Fee: \$160

DEC 22

DAY OF REFLECTION (SUMMER SOLSTICE)

A day of reflection and review for the year. May be used as part of the pre-Christmas Retreat. (10.00 am - 3.00pm Lunch provided) (\$40)

DEC 18 - 21

3-DAY RETREAT

An opportunity to spend a day or three at the end of a busy year in some quiet and reflection as a preparation for the Feast of Christmas. Relax in the pleasant Glenburn surroundings. (\$95 per day)

RETREATS AT GLENBURN

Enjoy a restful and reflective retreat at the Centre for Ecology and Spirituality at beautiful Glenburn. Compassion and care for all life, social and ecological justice, a new mystique of Earth, and an ecological conversion of mind and heart, are examined through scripture, reflection, dance, ritual and immersion in the beautiful forests of the Great Dividing Range. Linen and meals provided.

PRIVATE RETREATS

Many people ask about coming up to do a private retreat. These can be done individually or in small groups, and spiritual companionship or other inputs are available. Catering can be provided or retreatants can self-cater. A self-contained flat is available for anyone wanting to make a quiet retreat surrounded by the beauty of nature. The flat may also be used for an extended stay by someone wishing to take some sabbatical time, or by married couples or a small family group. Normal daily rate is \$95 per person. Please enquire

OTHER PROGRAMS

The Centre also cooperates with other Centres in providing programs that people can attend in Melbourne. See:

EarthSong: www.earthsong.org.au

www.centresofspiritualityvictas.com

VISITORS

Visitors are welcome to come and share community life with the resident members, either as part of an organised event or individually for some quiet time. Day visitors are also welcome to come and inspect the Centre - please ring 03 5797 8532



Sylvia Creek (collage) not far from the logging coupes

ECOJUSTICE

We can relate to Earth in two ways. Either we can act as tourists and look at the Earth as a source of goods and services for our use, pleasure and enjoyment, or we can act as Earth pilgrims and treat the planet with reverence and gratitude. There is no question where the role of ecojustice sits within this scenario. As pilgrims there is an inherent need to respond to the injustices occurring on the planet by governments and economically hungry business needing to radically strip our natural resources.

We continue to support and involve ourselves in the work of a local non-profit organisation MyEnvironment Inc. (www.myenvironment.net.au) On the 6th February 2012 the Supreme Court will hear the case to save Sylvia Creek. Under state and federal legislation, VicForests must assess forests before logging to check if the area meets 'zoning' requirements for endangered species including the Leadbeater's possum. The basis of this claim is that VicForests did not undertake adequate pre-logging surveys prior to logging in an area that MyEnvironment claim meets Leadbeater's habitat and therefore should not have been logged. Even if the case is successful, the government may still change the law. So, MyEnvironment is working rigorously in developing educational incentives teaching people how to value the forests and the ecosystem services they provide. None of this great work happens in isolation and funds are needed, so any contribution you can make is greatly appreciated. (www.myenvironment.net.au)

Mary White



If unclaimed return to 183 Burns Rd.Glenburn 3717