On a cold damp Melbourne June day, around a hundred people of all ages stood silently in a large circle in front of the State Library. By-passers paused to look: what was going on here? We stood in silence, compassionately holding in our hearts our refugee brothers and sisters held in detention. We stood in silence to protest against our government’s asylum-seeker policies. We stood in silence, hoping our silence would penetrate where our voices had not. We stood in silence in solidarity with other circles of silence gathered in other places. It was a deeply moving experience.

What took place in that circle of silence is what CEN members do daily in their contemplative hour. Is it effective? There is no indication that the circles of silence have been heard by those with the power to change Australia’s asylum seeker policies. There is no way of measuring whether our daily hour is bringing about peace or changing the injustice in the world or that it is healing the wounds of the victims and perpetrators of violence. And yet.....

We continue to unite with each other in our daily silent hour because we recognise that what happens to anyone anywhere touches everyone everywhere. In the Gospel we hear Jesus saying in various ways: Whatever you do to another, you do to me. This is no metaphor. The other is not a proxy for Christ: from a Christian perspective, the other is Christ. The other is also me.
“How can this be?” we might well ask. We live in a world, a culture, a society that presumes individual autonomy. It concerns itself about me, my community, my nation, my property, and so on, without realising that none of these can exist without being part of something larger, part of a network of beings that is the universe. If a network is broken, every part suffers. The greater our conscious participation in this network, the more we influence the consciousness of the whole. This has proved to be measurably so when large groups of people meditate for peace.¹

Mystics throughout the ages and from many faith traditions have intuited the oneness of all that is, human and other than human. They recognised that the oneness that binds us to every other, at the same time sets us the free to be fully who we are. This oneness, which is the life that energises the Cosmos and every part of it, Christians name the Christ. A similar insight in the Hindu tradition is called Brahman. In the Taittoriya Upanishad we read:

That from which beings are born,
that by which, when born, they live,
that by which, when dying, they enter,
that you should desire to know:
that is Brahman. (TU III, 1)

The Gospel according to John describes the source of our oneness:

“In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it…..
And the Word became flesh
and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father’s only son,
full of grace and truth”. (John 1: 1-5, 14.)²

In the Christian tradition, Christmas celebrates the birth of the eternal Word become flesh in Jesus. We call this the Incarnation, meaning in-flesh (caro in Latin), which took place in a unique way in Jesus. Christians are very familiar with this. What is less well recognised is what John expresses in this hymn: “the Word was made ‘flesh’ from the beginning”. The opening chapter of Genesis describes the process of creation as coming from God’s Word.

“That from which beings are born,
that by which, when born, they live,
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“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth,
the earth was a formless void
and darkness covered the face of the deep….
Then God said, ‘Let there be light’
and there was light.” (Genesis 1: 1-3).
Throughout this creation hymn, God speaks, *let there be...* and whatever God said, that’s what it was. This is the greater understanding of the mystery of the incarnation. Before ever the Word was made flesh in Jesus, the Word gave birth to stars and galaxies, to Earth and all that lives on Earth. As we read in John’s Gospel, ‘the Word is the life of all people’, of all beings. This is the sacred dignity of every person and of every part of creation.

From a different perspective, scientists are discovering what mystics have intuitively known: that the entire cosmos is one living evolving being in which everything is interdependent with everything else. Furthermore, they are discovering that matter itself comes into being out of *consciousness*.iii We human beings don’t simply have consciousness, but we participate in cosmic consciousness.iv

Some weeks ago, I was with two senior parishioners preparing the liturgy for Trinity Sunday. I asked, “What comes to mind when you think of God as Trinity?”

One woman said, “God as Trinity tells me that God is relationship, relationship within the three Divine Persons and relationship with us and all creation.”

The other said, “I think of it like a circular wind (gesturing with her hand in horizontal motion), that moves from God and returns to God, catching up all of us and everything that exists in its movement.”

Where did these women learn these profound insights? Neither of them has studied theology. But they are in touch with, aware of, and moved by the Spirit of God which we believe is the life coursing through all creation. They have experienced the oneness of everything. They know it as deeply personal and also profoundly social.

The Contemplative Evolution Network is rooted in the same awareness of the oneness of everything. We sit in the silence of our daily contemplative hour, aware that we are intimately related as parts of a body, all of us together making up the network of life and being which is the Cosmos.
In our daily contemplative hour we form a virtual Circle of Silence. This Circle does not stop with CEN members. We unite intentionally with all people who meditate to heal the world. Together with them, we form one great Circle of Silence. We believe that, imperceptibly, our contemplative silent consciousness can, and does, affect the collective consciousness of humanity. As we compassionately hold our violent, hurting world, we help to grow our collective human consciousness of the oneness of everything, until we transform the world through Love.

Corrie van den Bosch mss

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1 See e.g. John Hagelin, a Quantum Physicist’s, brief talk on [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVFa6Wjuxu8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVFa6Wjuxu8)

2 The New Revised Standard Version translation is used throughout this reflection.


4 See e.g. Stanislav Grof, a psychiatrist, spent a life time researching human consciousness and has numerous books on the subject.