

'IN EO VIVIMUS' (*In Him We Live*)¹

*'God is as pervasive and perceptible as the atmosphere in which we are bathed.'*²

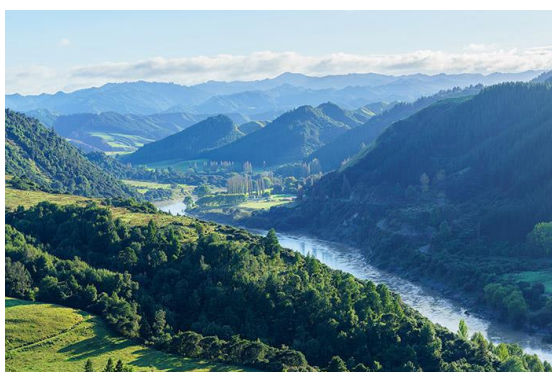


This article refers to a painting entitled "[Victory Over Death 2](#)" by Colin McCahon. It hangs in the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. Click on the link to view the image.

This painting is a national treasure and hangs proudly in the national gallery of Australia in Canberra. It was offered as a gift to Australia in 1978 by the New Zealand government. At the time our NZ Prime Minister, Rob Muldoon expressed embarrassment at the gift, being quoted in newspaper articles as saying; 'We mustn't think much of the Australian people to give such a gift.' He had little appreciation of the artist, Colin McCahon or his work. McCahon has since been recognised as one of New Zealand's greatest artists.

The painting is titled 'Victory over Death 2', is two metres high and nearly six metres in width. Painted on a black canvas which I suggest depicts the abyss or emptiness. Barely visible, unless standing close to the painting, on the far left in black on black large lettering is '**AM**'. Clearly in light lettering; '**I AM**', stands out with a large bright '**I**' in the centre, fading a little to the '**AM**' on the right. There is much of McCahon's own search for meaning in this work. However, I suggest this painting invites us into a new consciousness.

The '**I AM**' of course is the divine identity revealed to Moses at the burning bush as the name and nature of God. Jesus is completely attuned and identified within himself with this source, that he calls '*Father*'. He refers frequently to his '**I AM**' identity in John's Gospel, an identity we are each invited into experientially, to wake up as Jacob did to see that this world '*is a holy place and I did not know it.*'³ McCahon introduces in his art, this universal Christ consciousness, which I suggest is experienced in embodied ways as interconnectedness and interrelatedness at every level.



NZ native Maori, and many other indigenous peoples understand in an embodied way their deep connectedness with the land. For example the Maori word for land is *Whenua* - the same word means *Placenta*, sacred to Maori, as are the mountains, land and rivers. The Whanganui river is now, in NZ law, a legal person. *Ko au te awa ko te awa ko au* expresses for local Maori tribes the inseverable connection they have with their ancestral river. In English it means; *I am the river and the river is me*. There are many examples of this embodied connection with nature for Maori. Imagine the global impact when women and men everywhere act out of awareness that, *I am the earth and the earth is me*. When we realise that the destruction of species, of life, is self-destructive, and caring for the earth, is caring for self and others in a tangible way.

¹ Teilhard de Chardin., *Divine Milieu*,(DM) (Fontana, GB, 1957) 45, IN EO VIVIMUS is a core insight of Teilhard's spirituality.

² DM, 46

³ Genesis 28:16

I live quite close to Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch. As I write we are remembering 51 people who were killed while at prayer there and in the Linwood Mosque. Our prime minister spoke to the nation on 15th March 2019 and one phrase she used is indelibly written in our hearts; 'They are us,' frequently simplified to 'we are one.' This compassionate expression of interrelatedness is expressed in this image of our prime minister taken this time last year.



New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern hugs a mourners at the Kilbirnie mosque in Wellington, New Zealand, on Sunday. Photograph: Hagen Hopkins/Getty Images

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2019/mar/17/new-zealand-attack-christchurch-in-mourning-after-mosque-massacre-latest-updates>

An 'I AM' consciousness of interrelatedness, means there is only us, we are one. Women and men awakened in this awareness and living out of it, spearhead this evolutionary movement to a new awakened consciousness. In this unfinished universe this awakening develops with contemplative practice. Practice that awakens the heart to this truth as it is in Jesus.

The 'I AM' consciousness of interconnectedness and interrelatedness is explicitly expressed at Easter where Jesus empties himself, out of love for the mystery he calls 'Father'. Motivated by this love and his desire to share with us this love, his deepest secret, he walks intentionally into emptiness, paving a way for us to follow. Nature abhors a vacuum - God loves emptiness. The emptiness is a hospitality of God. The word hospitality includes *host* and *hostile*, a welcome and vulnerability. Teilhard writes of his own experience of the abyss; 'I felt the distress characteristic of a particle adrift in the universe.'⁴ Waiting in the tomb is waiting in emptiness, and we don't like emptiness we want to fill it with things. The emptiness is experienced in the body as vulnerability. As we wait in the emptiness, a powerful light emerges, depicted by McCahon as the large bright 'I' in the middle of the painting. And Teilhard testifies to this; '...speaking to me from out of the depth of the night: **ego sum, noli timere** (It is I, be not afraid).'⁵

Kevin Gallagher 15 March 2020

⁴ DM 78

⁵ DM 78