

## Jesus in the Cosmos

In April 2007 I attended the Spiritual Director's International conference in Vancouver and heard Brian Swimme speak. Swimme's presentation challenged my theology and view of the world. To be invited into the cosmos story completely changed the way I saw God and our place in the world. I entered into the story of the universe, the miracle of life, the mere fact that we are here and all that came before us for us to be standing here. One of the unexpected things that came from this was the question of where Jesus might be in this cosmic story. Did I need Jesus, could I not go straight to the source of all life, the Creator God, what role did Jesus have for me and my faith? If I didn't see a role for Jesus could I still call myself a Christian?

I recently went to a workshop with Trevor Parton from the Centre for Ecology and Spirituality ([www.earthsong.org.au](http://www.earthsong.org.au)) at Wellspring and I was sharing this struggle a little with him over morning tea. He then said two things which were very thought provoking. The first thing he said was to see Jesus not outside the enfolding story of the cosmos but as a part of it. The other thing he said was that Jesus came to be a salvation to mankind but he probably would have come anyway! Wow, what a statement! It caused me to reflect on what we have done to the person of Jesus, the sorts of things we have done to his image.

A number of authors recently have been attempting to re-discover the Jesus figure, Deepak Chopra in "The Third Jesus", Richard Rohr in "Things Hidden" and John Carroll in "The Existential Jesus", they are all looking to find a the spiritual Jesus. One of the themes that emerge from these books is the idea of the oneness of creation, the interconnectedness of all of us. The concept that we are all one. This isn't a new concept, the church has been teaching this for millennia but I wonder what it would be like to fully embrace this as your overriding motivation in life, not as a token idea. What if when Jesus said "the father and I are one" he meant that as a universal teaching that we are all the father? What if we embraced the idea of us being God, spiritual beings on a human ride? I have been engaging in this idea and here is what I have found. It changes the whole way you see the world. If we are all one, then there seems little point in hurting others because it means we are only hurting ourselves. If we are all one, how can we allow some to go hungry or be persecuted because that means part of us is in need, so you begin to look at the whole rather than the selfish me. If we all saw ourselves as one, would we stand by and allow such appalling violence in Zimbabwe?

You tend to have more patience with others, for example people who are rude or cut you off in the traffic, after all it is just a part of us doing this. I have found that it leads to more honesty with others. You really do want to treat others as you yourself would like to be treated. If you like people to be straight with you, then you tend to be straight with others. What is the point of lying or deceiving others and therefore ourselves?

These three authors, as well as several others such as Eckhart Tolle, Maryanne Williamson and Neale Donald Walsch speak of a 'spiritual awakening' a new way of seeing and being in the world. They see the illusion of separateness as being the cause of all of our problems (I am paraphrasing and generalising a little). They all invite us to see ourselves as part of God and connected to each other.

But I keep finding myself returning to the Jesus story, not so much to see him as the only path to God, but more as the invitation to see God in new ways. Jesus shows us God's love in justice, compassion and grace. We see Jesus as the model for living in oneness and harmony with God. Jesus keeps inviting us to put aside our doubts and trust in God's love. It is such an interesting journey, this journey with Jesus.

– Kristen Hobby