

New Story November News

A monthly compendium of meeting announcements and other events that may be of interest to the New Story group. Compiled by Cornelia Parkes at new-story@fmcquaker.com

Celebrating Old Growth:

A Conversation with Robin Wall Kimmerer, Robert Macfarlane, and David Haskell

Monday, November 22, 7:00 to 9:00 pm on Zoom

At the next meeting of the New Story Group, we will watch this webinar hosted by Mary Evelyn Tucker. Robin Kimmerer is the author of "Braiding Sweetgrass," Robert Macfarlane wrote "Underland: A Deep Time Journey," and David Haskell wrote "The Songs of Trees: Stories from Nature's Great Connectors." You can find the recording of the webinar [here](#) and read Mary Evelyn's introduction [here](#). We will not watch her introduction together.

To participate in this Zoom meeting [click this link](#) or call 1-646-558-8656 and provide the Meeting ID 875 6881 1869 and passcode 101225. To be placed on the email list for New Story News and notices of future meetings contact Cornelia Parkes at new-story@fmcquaker.org

Join us for another transformative evening with the New Story Group. Are you new to the New Story? Read our one-page introduction "[Welcome to the New Story](#)." Come at 6:30pm for fellowship and to get acquainted.

The Depth of our Belonging Book Group

Thursday, December 2, 7:00-8:30pm on Zoom

Welcome to the third meeting of the group reading *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics, and Healing* (Producciones de la Hamaca, 2021) by Mary Conrow Coelho. This book is both a personal and sacred story. We will explore and celebrate changes in worldview that are a gift to Quakerism. There is no need for special knowledge of science. We will seek to enter deeply into a sacred story that includes the natural world. We will learn from the text and our discussions and from Mary's beautiful watercolors that decorate the book using the practice of *visio divina*, sacred seeing, or seeing with the heart.

At our third meeting we will discuss Chapter 2, "A Transformed Understanding of Matter" pages 26 to 38. When you read, underline passages that stand out for you and bring these and your questions the meeting. This is your time to share. We will have another exercise of *visio divina* with one of Mary's watercolors. You are welcome even if you missed the discussion of Chapter 1.

Mary's book is available from Amazon or on order from your favorite bookstore. The group is led by Cornelia Parkes and Mary Coelho and sponsored by the FMC Adult Spiritual Education Working Group.

To participate, [click this link](#) or provide the Meeting ID 836 1037 8563 and passcode 628182 (if requested) on [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us), the Zoom app, or after calling 1-646-558-8656.

More New Story News

Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul:

Celtic Wisdom for Reawakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World

By J. Philip Newell (2021)

Mary Coelho writes:

I have to tell you about reading J. Philip Newell's new book *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul*. I've read about half of it. It means a great deal to me because he describes the Celtic Christian tradition's knowing and witnessing so persistently and movingly to the sacred in nature, a subject over which it was distinct from Rome as well as in other ways. The book fits so well with the physicist's discovery (Swimme's and others) of the presence of the non-visible energetic ground in all matter. It seems to me to be a very significant book (especially in conjunction with the new story) as it so well describes and documents the ongoing the Celtic Christian tradition that has persisted over centuries. I don't know how strongly it persists today given the dominance of Rome. It is present at Iona and Newell is certainly bringing it forward. The congruence of insight about nature between the Celtic tradition and the new story is remarkable. Perhaps most important is the Celtic sensitivity to nature but it is also a way of assuring contemporary Christians that the new story is not in contradiction to Christianity although expressed somewhat differently. It is great to have a per-during tradition that has existed with some remarkable famous theologians (as Eriugena). The congruence of this tradition and the new story discoveries are most remarkable and heartening. It confirms or better articulates the significance of our work as the Celtic Christian tradition was so per-during and beautifully articulated.

Should this be a New Story program or a separate reading group?

The Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

[New Website](#) on ecojustice.

I am hopeful. I have been in this work for a long time. What gives me hope is that we have an intergenerational movement and young people who are not old enough to vote who are working on these issues, working for environmental and climate justice.

Dr. Robert D. Bullard

The site has links to Ecojustice resource lists for each religious tradition. These resources will be updated periodically. If your organization is involved in work on religiously-engaged Ecojustice and you would like to be listed, [contact our webmaster](#). Is this an invitation for Quakers?

From the other side: *The Economist*, October 16, 2021, has an obituary for A.Q Khan (85), who brought nuclear capability to Pakistan in 1998. His reason was, "If Christians, Jews, and Hindus had the bomb, why should the Islamic civilization not possess full nuclear capability too?"

Ecological Civilization: From Emergency to Emergence by David Korten

[Posted on 11 November 2021](#) by [Mattie Porte](#) in [Ecology](#)

“We must act now with what we have while initiating the transformational Emergence of the new.”

Drawing on the work and insights of many colleagues and from ongoing conversations, David’s paper, “Ecological Civilization: From Emergency to Emergence,” was written in an effort to connect the dots and engage a serious conversation about the causes of the existential crisis we face, while bringing a message of hope and possibility....

Deeptime Leadership Program is Underway

(Modules 2 and 3 are Open for Registration, with Teacher Permission)

One hundred and eight people are in the nine month [Deeptime Time Leadership and Personal Empowerment Program](#) from countries around the world: Uganda, Malawi, Tanzania, South Africa, India, Turkey, New Zealand, Australia, Ireland, Philippines, China, Canada, Mexico, US and more. The first module, *Introducing the New Cosmology*, covers four Deeptime principles of context, matrix, interiority and action with lead teacher Stephan Martin, and presenters including Brian Swimme, Imogene Drummond, Marianne Rowe, Ursula Goodenough, Matt Cobb, Orla Hazra, Herman Greene, and others. **The second module, *Applying the New Cosmology*, starts January 12th** and is open to others who would like to register with teacher permission. A third module, *Deeptime Leadership Practicum*, in which participants work on projects and support each other starts April 6th. For more info about the nine month program and individual modules, [click here](#).

Binsey Poplars

by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844 – 1889)



*My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;*

[Click here](#) to listen to the poem.

Musings on “Conscious self-awareness”

Cornelia Parkes

November 11, 2021

Conscious self-awareness is a good thing, right? We seek to be more consciously self-aware even if we may have different ideas about what the self is that we want to be more aware of. I want to be more aware of my “true self” as described by theologian Paul Knitter in this quote from Richard Rohr’s blog on Buddhism and Christianity:

The underlying reason why people keep causing themselves and others so much suffering . . . is because we are ignorant about who and what we really are. Our problem is not an inherent sinfulness but an inherited ignorance. . . . But—and here is the really good news—if ignorance is our fundamental problem, we are dealing with a fixable problem. This problem is not within us as part of our human nature. Rather, it’s around us. . . . The antidote for the ignorance that causes suffering is to wake up to what we really are.

So, what are we really? . . . Following especially Tibetan and Zen teachings, we can say that our true nature, our real nature, is Buddha-nature. [Richard: what Thomas Merton called the “true self” or Christ-self.] Our real self is not our individual self. Our individual small minds are really part of a big Mind.¹

The “Buddha nature” or “Christ-self” is what Quakers call the “God within.” That is my true self. So, when I am consciously self-aware, I am aware of that of God within me and this is a good thing. Awareness grows. I’ve experienced this awareness as growing from hardly there to almost always here, from ignorance to being awake.

In the context of the New Story, I wonder if the gradual awakening that I experienced is something that the human species has experienced as part of its evolutionary development. We know now that self-awareness is found in different degrees in different species. The handprints in cave paintings are early evidence of self-awareness in humans. That this evidence is widespread implies that self-awareness was a stage in the evolutionary development of the human. Another example of the emergence of self-awareness is the story of the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve gain “knowledge” they immediately cover their nakedness. Previously they were not aware of their nakedness any more than other species that do not wear clothing. But in this story, self-awareness is a sin, and ignorance is bliss (the garden). Previously when Adam and Eve fed themselves, they were not aware that it was “work” any more than other animals who daily search for sustenance. I wonder if a lack of self-awareness was also present in their acts of violence such as we see in our chimpanzee cousins. The knowledge of self-awareness meant that it was no longer possible to commit violence without being aware of it. Hence what was gained was the knowledge of sin not the sin of knowledge.

Conscious self-awareness adds another layer. We are now aware that we are aware. And then there is the awareness of our interconnectedness, the larger “Self.” But these are topics for another time.

¹ Paul Knitter and Roger Haight, *Jesus, and Buddha: Friends in Conversation* (Orbis Books: 2015), 41–42. Quoted in Richard Rohr’s Daily Meditation, Week 45: Christianity and Buddhism