

## New Story News December

**The next meeting of the New Story Group is Monday, January 24, from 7:00 to 9:00pm.** Come at 6:30pm for fellowship. Newcomers are always welcome! The program will be announced in January.

The Zoom link is the same for all our meetings. 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](mailto:new-story@fmcquaker.org)

**There is no New Story Meeting in December, but there is always news!**

There are now two groups reading Mary's book.

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### QEW Discussion of The Depth of Our Belonging

January 11, 2022

With **Shelley Tanenbaum** (QEW)

You are invited to join a 3-part series of discussions on the book, ***The Depths of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing by Mary Conrow Coelho***. The discussion will be facilitated by Shelley Tanenbaum with contributions from **Mary Coelho**. Mary is a long-time member of the QEW community, and she has a background in biology and spirituality.

While the changes in worldview described in the book are discussed primarily from the perspective of their importance to the individual, at the same time the changes are fundamentally important to QEW's witness in the world. The dominant western consciousness regarding the natural world will not enable us to adequately address the ecological crises we are facing.

QEW is particularly well-positioned to address this need for change in consciousness, as it is an organization within the Friends' tradition that witnesses to the interiority of the person, the Light within, and often the natural world as well. This witness is now greatly strengthened by the remarkable scientific discovery of the nonvisible, energetic, numinous interiority of matter and our shared fundamental commonality with the natural world. We are offering these sessions as a time of spiritual healing. No special knowledge of science is needed.

The book discussion is planned for three evenings starting in January (Jan 11 and 25 plus Feb. 8): **you can register here**. Each session will start at 8pm Eastern and all will be on Zoom. There is no cost, but you need to register in advance to attend. Participants are strongly encouraged to **read the book beforehand** – this will be more of a discussion than a time to hear a summary of the book.

Thanks for considering this – hope to see you there.

Shelley and Mary

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## The Depth of Our Belonging FMC Book Group

Thursday, January 6, 7:00-8:30pm on Zoom

Welcome to the fourth meeting of the FMC group reading *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics, and Healing* (Producciones de la Hamaca, 2021) by Mary Conrow Coelho. We will discuss Chapter 3, "Listening to Mystics' Words in the Context of Radical Discoveries by Physicists" pages 30 to 55. When you read, underline passages that stand out for you and bring these and your questions the meeting. Here is the link to the [Nature of Matter](#) video that we watched last time as a supplement to Chapter 2. You are welcome to join this series in progress especially if you have read the book through Chapter 3.

The group is led by Cornelia Parkes at [new-story@fmcquaker.com](mailto:new-story@fmcquaker.com) 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

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## Musings on "What I Learned from Two Wise African American Women and How it Led to my Celtic roots"

Cornelia Parkes  
December 15, 2021

One wise woman is [Leah Penniman](#), Director of Soul Fire Farm, who said in a webinar that we each need to find our own indigenous roots and not appropriate the traditions of another culture. I think she said that. At least that's what I remember.

The other wise woman is Quaker Dr. [Amanda Kemp](#), author of *Say the Wrong Thing*, who led a workshop at New England Yearly Meeting sessions on discovering our ancestors. I found the workshop, which was several years ago now challenging. I felt the intense loss of not knowing my ancestors beyond the nationalities of my grandparents. I tried to channel my mother's father who died when I was four, but who would probably be happy to know that the curly headed little girl he knew grew up to be me. Even though genealogy has been done on his family back to colonial New England, we still don't know where his ancestors came from.

Fast forward to this year to a Saturday afternoon during Covid when we were all hanging out in my daughter's driveway. I found myself watching my 13-year-old granddaughter's every move intensely with overflowing feelings of love. A few weeks later in Meeting for Worship I was suddenly overcome by an equally intense feeling of my grandmother's love for me. You should not assume that my grandmother had played a sweet and loving role in my life. For most of my childhood we lived abroad and saw her only every few years. In addition, she was an alcoholic and ended her life in a state of alcohol induced dementia. Our ancestors are not perfect, but perfect love abides.

This grandmother, my mother's mother, was Irish, so that was where I went in search of my indigenous roots. Last month Mary Coelho recommended the book *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul: Celtic Wisdom for*

*Reawakening to What Our Souls Know and Healing the World* by J. Philip Newell (repeated below). I was amazed at how similar Newell's account of Celtic Christianity was to the New Story and to Quakerism. I was also surprised to realize that Celtic spirituality had hovered just outside of my awareness most of my life. When I was in high school, I wore a Celtic cross, not knowing where it came from or why I wore it. I also had a gold Christian cross, the kind that well meaning friends will give to a child. Did I sense that that cross was wrong for so many reasons? When my children were little, I was attracted to Quakers and then to the New Story and then I discovered that I could communicate with trees. Where did that come from? Where is this leading?

Google say that: Indigenous peoples are **inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment**. They have retained social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live." While I may have inherited Celtic roots from my grandmother, I also inherited roots in empire. Empire is the water we swim in. The only way we can see it is to get outside of it, to see it through an indigenous lens or another counter-cultural spirituality. Is the New Story developing a new Western indigenous story?

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### "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 an enduring 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 beautifully articulated.

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

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### "The Wisdom of Our Ancestors"

by David Korten. [Available here.](#)

From the surviving early cultures of Africa, the human birthplace, comes a foundational insight into life and our distinctive human nature and responsibility. It goes by different names in different places. It is perhaps best known by non-Africans as *ubuntu*, which translates: "I am because you are."

Corollaries relating to purpose, power, and procreation follow directly from the Ubuntu Principle to provide a three-part framework for action.

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### The Dominant Western Tradition

**Dave Damm-Luhr** submitted this graphic on the history of the dominant Western worldview copied from [Jeremy Lent's "Web of Meaning course"](#):

**Mary Coelho** commented:

I write to underline the importance of one of Dave's attachments titled "Dominant Western Tradition." It is a very brief summary of most problematic underlying western assumptions, often hardly conscious. From reading J. Philip Newell's new book, *Sacred Earth, Sacred Soul* I have understood better just how very deep and difficult these underlying cultural assumptions are. Newell discusses these assumptions in relation to Celtic/Christian thinkers, like Eriugena, who were thrown out of the church for challenging its teachings. The Roman Empire, he says, did not want to have to put any brakes on exploitation of the natural world as teaching about a sacred depth of nature would have done. This contrasts with the

teachings of eastern Christianity and Celtic Christianity. This history certainly illumines the depth of our current tragic situation. I recommend this new book by Newell. [See above]

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## Engaging the Powers

By Walter Wink (1992)

The New Story group discussed Walter Wink's five worldviews some time ago, but they are worth reviewing in light of our current understanding. There is a danger of interpreting the different worldviews as stages in an evolutionary development following the progress of the Dominant Western Tradition illustrated above. Today I see these different worldviews and their variations as all having deep roots and coexisting in contemporary cultures.

Five Worldviews (pages 4-6)

1. The Ancient Worldview: Everything earthly has its heavenly counterpart.
2. The Spiritualist Worldview: The earth is evil.
3. The Materialist Worldview: There is no spiritual world.
4. The Theological Worldview: The earth and heaven are separate.
5. An Integral Worldview: Heaven and Earth are the Inner and Outer aspects of a single reality.

The link to the "Five Worldviews" in Wink's *Engaging the Powers* is [HERE](#). It is best viewed by printing out the two-page summary.

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The editorial team chose our theme for this issue, "Sacred Wisdom, Sacred Earth," because we wanted to explore what might be called the "spiritual" roots of the Work That Reconnects. We also wanted to honor the wisdom traditions that have sustained so many people throughout history up to the present time as they have faced hardship, oppression, and collective trauma. A common thread in almost all those traditions has held Earth as the sacred source of life—hence: "Sacred Wisdom, Sacred Earth."

[Read the September 2021 issue here.](#)

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## A Celtic Mass for Peace

by Sam Guarnaccia (2008)

[Listen or order CD here.](#)

The composition of music for the text of “A Celtic Mass for Peace” by Celtic spirituality author, speaker, theologian, and poet J. Philip Newell, is a result of a collaboration born of the meeting of Dr. Newell and Sam Guarnaccia. Sam writes: “I was deeply inspired by the haunting spirit of the Celtic world, and the power of music to reach and express the indefinable. When invited to set the text to music, the challenge was to express the deep longing and reverence both for the Creation and of the Christ of Celtic experience.

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## “In Blackwater Woods”

by Mary Oliver

Read by Kris Ratcliffe [here](#).



## [Applying the New Cosmology](#)

Module 2: Deeptime Leadership and Personal Empowerment Program

Ten-Week Module: Jan. 12 - March 25, 2022

*There is nothing more critical than leadership for our moment of transition to a flourishing future. This course, **Applying the New Cosmology**, is indispensable for such a transition – thoughtful, comprehensive, and engaging. Sink in and be deeply transformed. —Mary Evelyn Tucker*

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Dave Damm-Luhr offers the following resources for your New Story enlightenment.

- The latest Kosmos Journal newsletter (on their website [here](#)). The website is good since it has many resources of potential interest to New Story people - and recent themes (e.g., Daniel Christian Wahl's piece on "Indigenous to Life").
- Book recommendation: Merlin Sheldrake, *Entangled Life*. His website is [here](#)
- A poem: "How to Make a Revolution" by Starhawk [here](#)