

## [NEW STORY NEWS NOVEMBER 2023](#)

The next meeting of the New Story Group at Friends Meeting at Cambridge is on Zoom Monday, November 27, from 7:00 to 9:00pm. Come at 6:30 for fellowship. First timers are always welcome!

The topic for November is “Science, Spirituality, and the Noosphere” reflections on a 14-hour webinar with Matthew Fox and Brian Swimme produced by the Shift Network. Steve Stodola will give a short summation of the themes of the seven classes; Gail Ransom will trace the evolving relationship of science and spirituality; and Jane Cutting will conclude with a description of four aspects of the Noosphere.

To participate in this event [click this link](#) or call 1-646-558-8656 and provide the Meeting ID 875 6881 1869 and passcode 101225. For more information and list of resources, please visit the New Story [web page here](#).

To be placed on the email list for New Story News and notices of future meetings contact Cornelia Parkes [new-story@fmcquaker.org](mailto:new-story@fmcquaker.org).

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### [The Story of the Noosphere](#)

A Series of 37 short, 6-minute, videos with Brian Swimme produced by the Human Energy Project.

The Noosphere is the name for all of human thought and activity considered as a whole system enveloping earth.

**Could these videos be used as the seed for an on-going discussion at the FMC New Story meetings?**

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### [Climate Action Movie and Discussion](#)

at [Friends Meeting at Cambridge](#) and on Zoom  
Wednesday, November 29, 7:00pm

Watch the talk entitled “Building Hubs of Climate Resilience: Will Friends act in Radical Faithfulness?” by Cherice Bock. We will discuss the ideas that resonated with us and actions we might take in response to what we have learned. Please [register](#) for the event to receive reminders as the event approaches. Sign ups in advance will help us plan but feel welcome to join us in any case. To participate using Zoom, [click this link](#) or provide the meeting ID 783 475 1861 and passcode 1652 (if requested) on [Zoom.com](#), the Zoom app, or after calling 1-646-558-8656. Contact Sarah Allen / Daniel Fitzmartin at [climateaction@fmcquaker.org](mailto:climateaction@fmcquaker.org)

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### [The Ecozoic Reader, Number 9, July-September, 2023.](#)

Special Issue – **Reflections on the book COSMOGENESIS by Brian Swimme**

Excerpts:

**A triologue among Craig Foster, Louis Herman, and Brian Thomas Swimme on cosmogenesis (page 2)**

**Swimme:** What causes things to evolve? It could be asked this way: “Who” causes things to evolve? Is it spirit? Is it scientific laws?

We find ourselves in one of the great transitions in human history. The modern story of scientific laws governing the universe is breaking down, so humans around the planet are tempted to retreat into the barbarism of fundamentalism, whether of the religious or secular kinds. But there is a pathway forward which goes beyond all those, a pathway I was searching for in *Cosmogenesis*.

So, my response to your questions is to remind us of the amazing discovery that Earth began as molten rock and transformed itself into Chinook salmon and oak trees and a hundred million other forms of life.

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Cosmogenesis is certainly among the ten most significant ideas in human history. It dwarfs Copernicus’s discovery that the Sun is the center of the solar system.

*Brian Swimme*

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Rather than trying to come up with a new word for the power that makes such transformations happen, I aimed at telling the story of how I came to feel this power, directly. How I came to experience in the presence of salmon a billion-year creative process. How I came to feel in each salmon the entire adventure of this wild universe. I know I am not answering your question in a literal sense, but does any of what I say connect to your own experiences?

**AN ARCHETYPAL JOURNEY (page 26)**

**Mary Coelho\***

In *Cosmogenesis* Brian Swimme tells us of his compelling archetypal journey. It is archetypal as he must leave home driven by inner unrest that compels him to seek something more than he has found in his contemporary world as a physics professor. He does not know the destination but is led by his intuitions and longings. He finds a teacher, Thomas Berry, and he finds a voice to speak and write about his insights and our transformed worldview. His voice is compelling because we also seek to find our way in these times. We find in his words steps to a resolution of our Western and personal alienation. I am personally grateful that he undertook a journey, so the possibilities of profound personal and cultural change become visible. May his words continue to bear fruit.

\*Mary Coelho is the author of *Awakening Universe, Emerging Personhood: The Power of Contemplation in an Evolving Universe* (2002), and *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing* (2022). She is a member of the New Story Group at Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Quakers), Cambridge, Massachusetts. Also



Photo by [Josh Hild](#) on [Unsplash](#)

central to her life is her work as a watercolorist. Her website is <https://www.newuniversestory.com>. She holds degrees in biology, teaching, and theology (MDiv and PhD in historical theology).

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**BBC FUTURE presents**

[The Benefits of Deeptime Thinking](#)

by Richard Fisher

Extending the mind into million-year timescales can feel daunting, but as Richard Fisher discovered, there are many benefits to be found by embracing a longer view. Watch these amazing videos about Fisher's discoveries.

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From the [Deeptime Network](#)

[The Cosmic Walk \(Online Version\)](#)

Created by LARRY EDWARDS, MIRIAM MACGILLIS, STEPHAN MARTIN, PENNY ANDREWS, JENNIFER MORGAN

Here's what we did in an online setting. We sent the narrative ([click here](#)) and the graphic ([click here](#)) to all participants and instructed them bring both docs, printed out, along with a candle. Before starting the ritual we talked about the history of this ritual and how it's being [interpreted and applied in many countries](#). We instructed them that during the ritual they were to light their candle with station one (the flaring forth) and trace the path on the spiral with a finger on their non-dominant hand. We started the music, and read slowly and meditatively the narrative, two people alternating with each station. After each station, a third person said "We raise our candles together." Paused as people lifted their candles. "And go to the next station." At the end the narrative, we allowed the music to play for an extra minute and then we slowly turned down the volume of the music.

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[Facing the Climate Emergency: How to Transform Yourself with Climate Truth](#)

By Margaret Klein Salamon and Molly Gage

Review by Amazon:

Yes, we're facing catastrophic breakdown of our climate. Yes, it's terrifying. But you don't have to be paralyzed. You can use your pain to transform yourself, your friends, and the world. You can become the hero humanity needs. This book will show you how.

Facing the Climate Emergency is an action-oriented self-help guide showing you how to maximize your potential to meet the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. Written for all of us struggling to cope and wanting to do something to stop the climate crisis, it gives us the blueprint to leave "normal" behind and enter climate "emergency mode."

- How to face the climate crisis and accept your fears, anger, grief, guilt, and other emotions
- Turning negative feelings into tangible action to respond to the crisis
- Rising to heroism and maximizing your impact by joining the Climate Emergency Movement
- Information on further reading, questions for self-reflection, and exercises

### What I am reading.

Cornelia Parkes

November 21, 2023

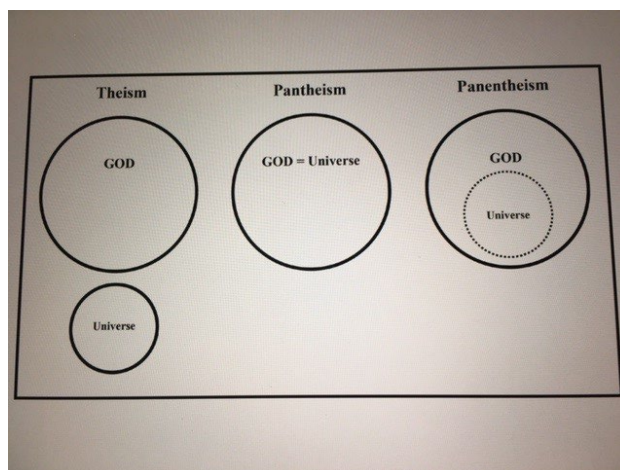
From the beginning of the New Story Group, we have claimed panentheism as our guiding theology. Our pamphlet, *Quakers and the New Story: Healing Ourselves and the World* (2014, revised 2017) by the New Story Group at Friends Meeting at Cambridge (FMC), is a working document describing the interests and understandings of the New Story Group: David Anick, Juliet Carey, Mary Coelho, Marion Foster, Patty Huff, Arthur Klipfel, Judith Morse, Gwen Noyes, Cornelia Parkes, Nancy Ruggiero, Steve Stodola, and Peter Stringham, with assistance from Severyn Bruyn, David Damm Luhr, and Jessie Brown. In the section “New Paths in Theology” we wrote the following:

*Some have rejected a traditional or theistic God by embracing non-theism or atheism, but there is another alternative. Today some Quakers, including the New Story Group, have adopted the non-dualistic approach theologians call “panENtheism,” which is neither traditional theism (God out there, transcendent, separate from the material world) nor atheism (no God anywhere). Panentheism holds that God is both immanent (permeating the entire world) and transcendent (understood non-spatially), unlike pantheism which holds that God is immanent only; that everything is God and God is everything. In panentheism, God permeates the whole universe, so that every part of it exists within God.*

But does panentheism really resolve the duality between God and the material world? What about pantheism?

In *God and Gravity: A Philip Clayton Reader on Science and Religion* (2018) Philip Clayton analyses and confirms the theology of panentheism. In the Chapter on “Spinosa and the Birth of Panentheism” Clayton writes in italics for emphasis, “no philosophically adequate form of pantheism has ever been developed in modern Western philosophy.” Clayton was one of the co-authors of the original version of *Quakers and the New Story: Essays on Science and Spirituality* (2007). This pamphlet introduced panentheism and non-duality as integral to the theology of the FMC New Story Group.

But I have become unconvinced. In one of Clayton’s books (I cannot remember where) there is this diagram of the realms of theism, pantheism, and panentheism. As I see it, when “God” is transcendent, there is a dualism between God and the universe and the consequences of dualism.



So why not choose pantheism? This question has come up many times in the history of Christianity and has always been labeled a heresy. Only now we no longer burn the heretics. Apparently removing a transcendent God destroys the entire edifice of the Western Christian doctrine and thought. There is a reason pantheism is the longest running heresy of the Christian church.

In *Pantheism: Gods, Worlds, Monsters* (2018) by Mary Jane Rubenstein there is the quote:

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“Those who speak of pantheism are wanting in the simplest categories of thought.

G.W.F. Hegel,  
Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion

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I am still reading this book and wondering if Rubenstein will be the one who develops a “philosophically adequate form of pantheism.”