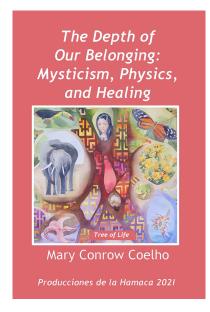
Discussion on *The Depth of Our Belonging: Mysticism, Physics and Healing* with Quaker Earthcare Witness & Mary Conrow Coelho



Session 3: Tuesday, February 22



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Walter Brueggemann's book *The Prophetic Imagination*, is based on his study of the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. Brueggemann argues that the leaders of the Israelites in exile in Babylonia were unable to face their tragic historical situation because of their numbed consciousness. The only way to penetrate the numbed consciousness of denial he argues was by public expression of grief. Articulated grief, he writes, is the gate of newness. Newness comes precisely from expressed pain.

Brueggeman writes: "There is grief work to be done in the present that the future may come." In the context of my emerging confidence in the remarkable depth of the human person, I could hear what Walter Brueggemann was saying and understand the fundamental role of grief and suffering in personal and cultural change.

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Thomas Berry writes that our collective behavior represents a crisis of commitment to life itself. The solution to the crisis of commitment is to recover our deeper self, to evoke once again those psychic energies that have dwindled in recent centuries. Part of the pathway for the individual is the encounter with grief. We may be acquainted with grief in our individual lives, but as a society we have yet to grieve for the rivers that no longer flow and forests that are gone forever. The same wounding that prevents our individual fulfillment can block a felt response to the environmental crisis.

Queries:

- Have you had experiences of grief for the loss of a favorite tree, for the destruction of a forest or contamination of a stream or river? Did that grief awaken your caring for the natural world?
- We witness too often the unmeasured suffering of human refugees fleeing lands that can no longer sustain human populations because of climate change and other causes. Are you aware of occasions of felt suffering (sym pathos) in you or others that has led to taking action?

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Sr. Miriam MacGillis, founder of Genesis Farm, has suggested that the foundations for a new culture are being laid. We are offered a radical identity in which personal and cultural change may come into being.

May we as individuals and as communities have the courage to reimagine our identity within the unfinished journey of Earth and cosmos.



Query: Can the surprising and unexpected common witness of the mystical tradition and the new physics lead to wider recognition of the sacred nature of the human person and the natural world? Can this evoke the psychic and spiritual energy to address the ongoing assault and destruction of the natural world? Is the change in worldview important for QEW?

Worship Sharing Guidelines

- Reach as deeply as you can into the sacred center of your life.
- Speak out of the silence, and leave a period of silence between speakers.
- Speak from your own experience, about your own experience. Focus on feelings and changes rather than on thoughts or theories.
- Do not respond to what anyone else has said, either to praise or to refute.
- Listen carefully and deeply to what is spoken.

Expect to speak only once, until everyone has had a chance to speak.

Respect the confidentiality of what is shared.

Guidelines for Today

- 1. Do the first round of sharing for any of the queries that speak to you leaving time for each person to speak. If you choose to pass, please make sure to let your group know that you wish to pass.
- 2. Depending on how much time is used in the first round, you might have time to do a second round.
- 3. You are all clerks Begin with some silence, consider starting off the responses yourself if it seems that all are reluctant to start. Introduce yourself and your meeting.
- 4. We will have 15 minutes in our breakout groups; each will have 3-4 participants.
- 5. We will come back together as a group to share reflections.