

**THE NEW STORY:  
GOD AFTER THE DEATH OF GOD**

**PART 2**

**By John O'Neill**

**THE QUEST FOR GOD**

If we consider how we come to our own personal conception of God, we realize that nearly every human being is brought up with an image of God that is given at second hand by parents, religious traditions, and the larger culture. This initial *God-concept* (what Hazrat Inayat Khan calls “the God Ideal”) is not a product of a person’s own direct experience. Many people remain attached to the God-concept inherited from childhood with little recognition of the inherent complexities and paradoxes and inadequacies this concept entails. For some, however, a time comes when the received God-concept is no longer adequate – there is a failure of the God-concept to satisfy one’s need and to speak to one’s direct experience. A time comes in our lives when we seek to discover the form of ultimate Reality that is authentic to our own experience. In describing the awakening of this quest, Hazrat Inayat Khan writes: “The seeking for God is a natural outcome of the maturity of the soul. There is a time in life when a passion is awakened in the soul which gives the soul a longing for the unattainable, and if the soul does not take that direction, then it certainly misses something in life for which it has an innate longing and in which lies its ultimate satisfaction.”

The quest for God (in whatever form this God may take) is one of the *universal human experiences of existence*. For some, the quest for God arises out of the experience of the absence of God in a time of critical need – that is, God appears to be either silent or non-existent. Others discover their mystical longing for God and seek a knowledge of God that is adequate to the full range of their experience of the divine. As the quest for God proceeds, the mystical seeker comes

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to realize that God is, in fact, the most unthinkable concept because the Reality designated by the word “God” is beyond the range of human knowledge and words. And yet there *is* an experience of a Reality to which the seeker is related, a Reality which he or she longs to know and comprehend more fully. The mystic is caught in the exquisite paradox of wanting both to speak about the nature of God that has been discovered in mystical experience and to remain silent because the Reality experienced is truly transcendent, which means beyond the ability of words and concepts to encompass fully. A wonderful Zen koan captures this predicament when the Zen master advises the student: “Thirty blows if you speak and thirty blows if you don’t speak.”

I am sometimes asked the question: “Do you believe in God?” Of course the questioner typically expects a simple “yes” or “no” answer. When I hear this question, one part of me laughs the same way I laugh when I hear a Zen koan such as “show me the sound of one hand clapping.” My laugh expresses the realization that this question simply cannot be answered on the level it is being asked. Attempting to answer the question on the level expected by the questioner – just as attempting to answer a koan based on rational, logical thought processes – implies missing a deeper and truer dimension of experience. In Zen training the answer to a koan is often given not in a verbal formula but rather in some kind of spontaneous action or expression. Such a response demonstrates that the person answering has had a deep insight not only into the paradox inherent in the koan, but into the very nature of reality itself. An “enlightened” response to the koan is a confirmation of a moment of realization or insight and also of the ongoing moment by moment embodiment of that insight in everyday life and being. The surprise created by the spontaneous, enlightened response may trigger off a moment of enlightenment in others as well, just as, according to Zen stories, fully witnessing a single flower petal falling gently to Earth may bring about an enlightened realization. So, in true Zen fashion, I often try to answer the question about belief in God in a way that is unexpected or startling enough to “uproot” the question and bring the questioner into a state of surprise and openness for a new understanding. A wonderful example of responding in a different way than expected is found in a story told about a spiritual teacher from the East who was approached by a member of the audience after a public lecture.

The young man came up to the spiritual teacher and stated that he found the talk very moving and affecting and that he could agree with everything in the lecture except for one problem – he did not believe in God. Rather than being offended or attempting to convince the young man of the existence of God, the teacher simply replied: “I don’t believe in the God that you don’t believe in either.”

Although the “Zen approach” to answering the question about belief in God can bring about moments of enlightened realization, it fails to provide much conceptual content, which may be what is actually sought by the questioner. It is clear that to answer the question “Do you believe in God?” in a form that has cognitive content, I would need to define clearly what is meant by “God” and “believe.” This would take a deep and subtle process of inquiry which the questioner may very well have no interest in. And yet this inquiry is precisely what is needed in order for any assertion about God to have meaning. In order for our talk about God to have authenticity and practical value two things are required: One is actual direct personal experience of the Reality in question. The other is the ability to articulate with clarity and depth what one has discovered about the nature of divine Reality.

In keeping with the first of these requirements, the following glimpses of the God of the New Story are based on my own contemplative realization and inner experience. Therefore I will be speaking a good deal in the first person, describing my discoveries on my own quest for the God of the New Story. What follows is an account (*logos*) about the God of the New Story; it is, in that sense, a *theo-logos* – that is, a theology. However, in attempting to fulfill the second requirement of clear articulation it became clear to me that the best way to speak about the God of the New Story is not in an extended theological narrative, but to provide “glimpses” of different aspects of the God of the New Story as they have appeared to me. The notion of describing glimpses of God reminds me of the ninety-nine Holy or Sacred Names of the *wazaif* in Islam – these are the qualities in which God manifests in the realm of existence. The notion of glimpses of God also reminds me of facets on a diamond; each facet is a part of the larger diamond and reflects the unitary light in its own way. Seeing the facet is seeing the diamond, but

not the whole diamond; rather, the diamond in a particularized form. What follows is my attempt to describe facets of the God of the New Story that have emerged in my own inner quest.

## **THE GOD OF THE NEW STORY**

The new story about God can be summarized in four fundamental realizations that express a credo for the New Story. These are the “four noble truths” of the New Story.

### **(1) There is an ultimate Reality or Ground of existence.**

The first noble truth affirms that there is some fundamental ground, source, or reality that gives rise to and supports existence. Existence is not un-grounded. There is ultimately something rather than nothing. The final, deepest answer is “Yes.” The Ground is what we call God.

### **(2) The ultimate nature of the Ground is Mystery.**

The second noble truth affirms that the Ground has a transcendent dimension that is beyond the range of human understanding. We stand before the spectacle of existence rapt by an awe and wonder that carry us beyond the human bounds. We discover there is a mysterious Reality at the heart of existence which holds us and which we love, but which we cannot encompass in thought or word. God is divine Mystery, hidden in the Cloud of Unknowing. God is the Beautiful Mystery.

### **(3) The Ground is dynamic and creative and exists in form and formlessness.**

The third noble truth affirms that the divine Ground is inherently creative and seeks to know itself and express its richness through the forms of existence. The

intelligent order and beauty of the universe are expressions of the formless reality that is their source and ground. The God of the New Story is both the God of form and the formless God.

#### **(4) The Ground is knowable in its Sacred Names.**

The fourth noble truth affirms that knowledge of God is possible and that God can be known in the forms that reveal facets of the divine nature – these are the Sacred Names.

Some glimpses of the Sacred Names are described below. These are the facets of the God of the New Story that have revealed themselves to me or that I have discovered in my own quest for God.

### **SACRED NAMES: FACETS OF THE GOD OF THE NEW STORY**

#### **(1) The God of the New Story is *the Ground of Being*.**

There are moments when I am overwhelmed by *the sheer fact of existence*. I exist. The trees and grass and clouds and galaxies exist. You exist. I realize that I am held within and am a part of an unfathomably vast universe of existence, a great community of being. I am thrilled to ecstasy by the existence of the universe around me with its amazing beauty, order, and intelligence.

And yet I realize that all that exists around me is the arising, manifestation, or expression of some deeper Reality that is the source, ground, and basis of all things. This Reality can be called *the Ground of Being*. This Ground is not a substance, thing, or person. The Ground is “there”, it is real, and yet it is no-thing. The Ground *transcends* any forms we know from the manifest world. This realization arises from an experience of *transcendence*. The Ground of

Being is transcendent; the Ground of Being is “beyond” the world. This is the *formless God*.

If you have the experience of the Ground of Being and agree that this Ground of Being is what is meant by the word “God,” then the “existence” of God becomes self-evident. This is the New Story’s ontological/cosmological proof for the existence of God.

When I contemplate God as the Ground of Being I experience both its *silence* and *stillness* – the *peace* that passeth all understanding – and its *dynamic creativity*. The nature of the Ground is to express its hidden treasure of potential being in form.

There are two ways I experience the dynamic creativity of the Ground. One form is to experience existence as an *arising* from the Ground. This is a more Taoist or Buddhist perspective which experiences *every one and only here and now moment* as arising out of the Ground of Being. In this experience, there is the sense of being fully present in and open to the moment, and to whatever is arising in that moment. There is no concern with past or future, with goal or purpose, there is simply *being with, being present to*, whatever is arising in the moment. This experience brings a feeling of freedom and an enthralling love for the sheer fact of existence itself. Being present in the moment is meaning enough to make life blessed and worthwhile.

The other way I experience existence is as the *expression* of the divine Ground. I sense that behind existence there is the power of love, that existence is an expression of love, longing, and desire. The creative Ground is inspired to reach out of the unmanifest state to meet itself in the forms of the world – this self-transcendence is the epitome of the meaning of love which is always going beyond the boundaries of the lover toward the beloved. God is beautiful and loves beauty. The manifest universe is an expression of love.

Discovering the universe as the expression of the divine Ground also introduces the notion of purpose, of teleology, of some kind of divine intentionality in existence. The intelligence and order of the universe affirm the existence of a Reality that is dynamic and

continually bringing forth new and surprising manifestations, a Reality whose nature is creative novelty, rather than sheer chance and randomness. The human longing for meaning and purpose can be satisfied in experiencing the beauty and simplicity of the fundamental laws of the universe and the wondrous unfoldment of the cosmos even if we can never know the whole story of which we are a small, but inseparable part.

## **2) The God of the New Story is *Intelligence and Order, Beauty and Love***

The Ground of Being has two fundamental aspects: (1) intelligence and order, and (2) beauty and love. Everywhere we look in the universe we find intelligence and order. Science confirms that the universe operates according to an intelligent order embodied in the physical laws that govern the entire universe without exception or deviation (except, perhaps, for what we call miracles). Einstein affirms the ecstatic religious feeling that comes from encountering the order of the physical universe.

[The scientist's] religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection. This feeling . . . is beyond question closely akin to that which has possessed the religious geniuses of all ages.

We can see the astounding order of the universe also in our own physical bodies when we consider how day after day our body maintains its regular functioning – sustaining and rebuilding its tissues and organs, healing injuries and disease by returning the body to its natural healthy and balanced state according to a genetic blueprint encoded in its molecules and atoms.

Contemplating the intelligence and order of God we are astounded and amazed. In poetic terms, we discover creation as *the thought of God*. Our wonder at and deep grasp of the intelligent nature of the Ground give rise to what could be termed *realizational* or *noetic*

*mysticism.*

The God of order and intelligence is also a God of beauty and love. Once while standing overlooking a high, pristine mountain lake with towering white granite peaks in the background and clear blue sky with occasional clouds overhead, I heard a voice call out from all around me: “I am a God of beauty. And this is how we pray.” In that moment I realized that the prayer of God was all around me in the beauty of nature. My response was to pray in return, to acknowledge with gratitude and celebration the blessing of being part of such beauty. Beauty in all of its forms is the way the creative Ground shows itself and its glory.

Behind the act of divine self-disclosure in beauty there is the power of love. The love begins in the longing the creative Ground has to experience its potentiality in actuality, for its hidden treasure to be known. In this movement God is the lover and existence the beloved. God’s own ecstatic self-transcendence produces the world of form. In a poetic sense we could say that the creation is the prayer of God. In a reciprocal movement, God’s love for creation is mirrored in the human creature’s love for beauty that leads us back to the divine Ground.

The experience of God as love and beauty inspires a *devotional mysticism* that turns toward the beauty and splendor of God in surrender and prayer and seeks the union of lover and beloved.

### **(3) The God of the New Story is *Sacred Presence*.**

Although the Ground of Being is transcendent and no-thing, it is present *in and as* all things that exist. To see any existing object is to see the Ground of Being arising or expressing itself in that form. As it says in the Quran, “Everywhere you look is the face of Allah.” This is the *God of form*.

One of the great errors of transcendent religion is the separation of God and creation.

While there is clearly a metaphysical or ontological distinction between the Ground and the manifest universe – this is precisely the meaning of transcendence – there is also a continuity between the Ground and existence, because without the presence of the Ground existence would not exist.

When I experience the presence of the creative Ground in all things I am quickened in joy and appreciation. At the same time, I experience the inner relaxation and deep peace that come from feeling held by something larger than myself. In the words of Rilke, I am held by “Someone whose hands infinitely calm hold up all this falling.” In the surrender that comes with this holding I enter deeper into myself and realize that the presence of God is not only in things outside, but within me as well. I *am* the presence of God. That is my deepest identity. I *am* divine perfection. I *am* the beloved of God. I can say “yes” fully to myself and my nature.

#### **(4) The God of the New Story is *One and Relational*.**

The unity of existence (*wahdat al-wujud* in the terms of the Sufi mystic Ibn Arabi) is the most fundamental truth. What is – the Totality – is unified, one, whole, non-dual. All things are held within the Whole, within the All which is God. This is the universal experience of mystical union and non-duality (*tawhid, unio mystica, advaita*). God is not the Supreme Being separate from the universe; rather, God is the *One and Only Being*.

And yet the whole is dynamic, multi-faceted, differentiated. The oneness of the creative Ground expresses itself in the multiplicity of existence. And still that multiplicity is held within a holistic unity in which everything is related, interdependent. Everything gives rise to and is sustained by everything. This is what Buddhism calls *pratītyasamutpāda* (*interdependent origination*). Zen teacher John Daido Loori offers a beautiful description of the process of interdependent origination:

Imagine, if you will, a universe in which all things have a mutual identity. They

all have an interdependent origination [*pratītyasamutpāda*]: when one thing arises, all things arise simultaneously. And everything has a mutual causality: what happens to one thing happens to the entire universe. Imagine a universe that is a self-creating, self-maintaining, and self-defining organism – a universe in which all the parts and the totality are a single entity; all of the pieces and the whole thing are, at once, one thing.

This description of reality is not a holistic hypothesis or an idealistic dream. It is your life and my life. The life of the mountain and the life of the river.

The experience of God as relational awakens a deepened appreciation for the sacredness of the relationships that constitute my own human life. I am called to realize the many levels of relationship that span my relationship with the Earth and its life; my direct human relationships of family, friends, and community; my relationship with my own nature and destiny; and my relationship with the creative Ground of all life. Because I am a part of everything, what I do has an affect on the whole. Seeking to live and protect the sacredness of relationship in all of its forms and on all levels fosters a sense of personal responsibility for truthful, authentic, and ethical action, which I experience as the mysticism of *prophetic responsibility*.

#### **(5) The God of the New Story is *Embodied*.**

A central task of the New Story is to heal the two fundamental splits that have plagued humankind, especially over the past several millennia. One split is between God and humankind. This split results from overemphasis on the experience of God's transcendence and "otherness." When God is conceived of as "up there" or "out there," as "wholly other," the continuity of being between the Ground and existence – in other words, the presence of God – is lost and God becomes *absent*.

The other split is between humankind and nature. It has been difficult for humankind to

attain a caring and balanced relationship with nature when the natural world is seen as created for the domination of human beings, as a “standing reserve” of raw materials put there by God for human use, or as a temporary and fleeting visiting place where the soul works out its destiny in an eternal world beyond the physical. Embracing the natural world fully has also been difficult because it means accepting the finitude of human life, when there is a deep desire in the human being to escape the limitation and mortality of our human nature.

These splits have left humankind in an “in-between” place, not fully belonging to either heaven or Earth. The God of the New Story heals this split. Because God is both Ground and Presence, there is nowhere that God is not. God is present in the transcendent dimension, God is present in humankind, and God is present in the realm of nature and the manifest universe. When I experience God’s presence in all things, there is no split, there is no absence; I cannot be abandoned by God, although I can still abandon God by forgetting the divine Presence.

The God of the New Story is *embodied* in form; the forms of the world exist through the sustaining presence of the creative Ground and show forth various aspects of the divine nature. The embodied nature of God sanctifies the physical universe – the material universe is holy and “good,” not something to be escaped or “risen above.” The embodied nature of God sanctifies the human body, the temple of God. An embodied God is a *God of nature* and a *natural God*. The sanctity of the body calls forth whole-hearted affirmation of our physicalness and supports a *mysticism of embodiment*. The mysticism of embodiment embraces the full experience of our physical nature without guilt, shame, or fear – life in the body with its ecstatic pleasures and challenging fragility *is* the mode of existence granted us for the experience of life. Life in the body is a privilege – “this precious human birth” (Buddhism), the “privilege of being human” (Hazrat Inayat Khan) – and a gift to be fully accepted, fully lived, and joyously celebrated.

The mysticism of embodiment inspires us to care for the physical – both our own bodies and the natural world around us. We seek health and balance both within and without.

**(6) The New Story offers a new *Creation Story* for our time.**

Every religious tradition includes one or more creation stories (cosmogonies) that tell about how the universe we inhabit came into existence, what its nature is, and how we humans ought to live in order to be in harmony with it.

The New Story's creation myth is the story told by modern science of the Big Bang that brought the universe into existence. I find the scientific account of the Big Bang at least as fascinating, moving, and deeply meaningful as any traditional religious creation story. The modern story of the Big Bang begins with an initial state of *non-manifest potentiality*. "Prior" to the Big Bang the potential universe was "hidden" in the Ground in a state of potentiality, of symmetry and equilibrium, possible but not yet actual. Then some 15 billion years ago for some reason or through some process – which are beyond the horizon of science's understanding – there was a break in the primordial symmetry. The universe exploded into existence, from its non-manifest potentiality, from "nothingness." Through some utterly unimaginable process of expansion the universe exploded from a single seed – smaller than a sub-atomic particle – that contained all the matter and energy we now see in the manifest universe. As existence emerged from the Ground, the dynamic process of creative evolution brought about the formation of the billions upon billions of stars, galaxies, and planets that populate the night sky. About five billion years ago a planet we call "Earth" gradually formed around an ordinary, unremarkable star in one of the outer spiral arms of the Milky Way galaxy. Within less than one billion years of its formation the physical and chemical processes of the Earth made it possible for self-sustaining organic life to emerge. Over the course of four billion years life on Earth has evolved in a dialectical process that is both shaped by and has a transformative affect on the ecological environment of the planet. Through the course of the evolutionary unfoldment on the Earth, millions upon millions of species of plants and animals have arisen, abided, and disappeared. And the process of transformation goes on and on.

At a certain point in the very recent evolutionary story of life on Earth a new creature

emerged, a creature which is both a product and continuation of its evolutionary ancestors, but which also introduces new features to the life-world of planet Earth (and perhaps the cosmos). This creature is, of course, humankind with its unique quality of consciousness and self-awareness. With human consciousness comes language, rationality, self-reflexivity. With human consciousness also come other features of the human being which are unique in one way or another. These include the human experience of love (which humans appear to experience in a much different and more complex form than other species of animals) and the impulse to creative and artistic expression. Through humankind, self-reflective consciousness, love, and artistic creation become part of the life-world of planet Earth and part of the evolving experience of the One and Only Being.

**(7) The New Story supports a *Universal Inner Path*.**

According to the New Story, the purpose of our individual human life is attaining *the maximum realization of our human potential on all levels*, within the bounds defined by our personal nature, our capacities and talents, our familial and cultural conditioning, and the opportunities provided by destiny and fate.

Each aspect of the individual – the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social – has its realm of potential development and fulfillment. Each of these aspects of the self longs to be fully expressed as aspects of a single, integrated individual life. Every person has his or her own calling and destiny. The goal of each of our lives is to *become fully who we are*. When we are most fully who we are we are *natural* and *ordinary*. Hazrat Inayat Khan often states that the goal of life is to become natural. Zen Buddhism teaches: When an ordinary person attains knowledge, he or she is a sage; when a sage attains understanding, he or she is an ordinary person. When I am existing in harmony with the fullness of my nature I am truly natural and ordinary. There is no efforting to be something other than what I am in my deepest and truest nature. I experience the moment by moment arising of my being from out of the creative Ground.

Although the specific destiny of each person is unique, the New Story affirms a *common ground* of the *fundamental human experiences of existence*. Through the shared fundamental human experiences of existence, all humans meet on common ground as kin, as fellow travelers in the journey of life, and as members of the same species. We are united in asking the same fundamental questions and sharing similar experiences. We share the same species longing and aspiration. All humans seek *meaning, fullness of being*, and some form of *salvation* that allows us to rest in the Great Yes (that is, God), and assures us that our individual lives are sacred and have value. We seek for love and relationship, for meaningful work and action, for the opportunity to fulfill ourselves, and for creative expression of our uniqueness and gifts.

Religions arise from the common ground of human experience to answer human needs and concerns. Religions do not descend fully formed from the heavens, but emerge from the earth, from the grass roots of the longing and questioning of humankind. Religions are the collective wisdom of humankind, the accumulated revelations and responses that assure us of the meaningfulness of existence and provide guidance on how to live. And yet, every answer is only one answer; no answer is full and complete and final. Likewise, no single religion offers the final and ultimate story about the universe and the sole blueprint for living. The dynamic nature of the creative Ground insures that answers come and go, but the great questions remain, as mysterious and enthralling as ever – inviting new answers and new forms of the questions.

The universal inner path of the New Story is the common quest each of us is on to answer our deepest existential questions and satisfy our heart's longings. The New Story is not the story about particular forms of religious belief and practice, but about the common ground that all these traditional stories share. The universal inner path of the New Story affirms the shared experiences of humankind while recognizing the diversity of traditional paths and the special uniqueness of each individual path, all journeying from, toward, and within the same common Ground.

**(8) The New Story supports a *Holistic and Complete Mysticism*.**

The universal inner path of the New Story is mystical. The mystic is the person who earnestly seeks to know the deepest nature and reality of existence.

The mystic is the person who is forever open for surprise. The mystic seeks to see to the farthest distance possible while realizing that there is always something more to be seen.

The mystic is the person who loves Mystery, not final answers.

The mystic is the person who is able to hold both two poles of a dialectical tension – transcendence and presence, the God of form and the formless God, being and becoming, knowing and not-knowing, satisfaction (*rida* in Sufi terms) and longing (*ishk* in Sufi terms) – at the same time without becoming schizophrenic or collapsing the tension to one pole or the other.

The mysticism of the New Story is *holistic* because it embraces all levels of being. The mysticism of the New Story is *complete* because the mystical journey does not end in the loss of individuality (*fana* in Sufi terms) and absorption into oneness (*tawhid* in Sufi terms). The experience of mystical union is one part of the journey, which Hazrat Inayat Khan calls the *first awakening* or *God-realization*. The mystical journey of the New Story is fulfilled in the *second awakening* or *self-realization*.

The path of self-realization brings me full circle, back to my individual, concrete human existence. I am called to the challenge of fully realizing and actualizing my unique human existence on all of its levels and in all of its possible forms. The goal of the inner journey is to become a *whole person*. The development of the whole person is what Hazrat Inayat Khan called *the art of personality*. The complete mysticism of the New Story is the path to the fullness of embodied existence within an interdependent universe richly known and forever mysterious.

Many forms of the mysticism of the New Story have been mentioned already. There is the mysticism of the formless God that seeks Mystery beyond all knowledge. This is an I-I

mysticism in which the individual experiences his or her identity with the Ground of being. There is the mysticism of the God of form that sees God in all things and affirms the unique and existentially meaningful forms in which God appears to each individual. Each individual has his or her own “God Ideal” (Hazrat Inayat Khan) or “God of belief” (Ibn Arabi). Each individual God Ideal is true because that is how God has manifested in form to that individual. And yet, each God Ideal has only a relative truth as an imaginal representation of a Reality ultimately beyond final comprehension. The mysticism of the God of form is an I-Thou experience in which the lover is united with the beloved in love.

The New Story affirms that there is a form of mysticism on each level of the human being – physical, emotional, mental, personal, spiritual. The universal inner path of the New Story cultivates the mysticism on all levels of the human being. When all levels of our beings are awakened we attain our fullest individual expression and most integrated wholeness. The spiritual paths of the future must offer a holistic approach that affirms and cultivates the mysticism on all levels of the human being.

The *mysticism of the body* is the fullest possible realization of the potential of our physical senses and embodied nature. The creative expression of the mysticism of the body can take the form of dance, athletics, the full experience of the senses such as the taste of a wonderful meal or the smell of a gardenia flower, and, of course, the most intense form of the mysticism of the body – sexuality. The satisfaction of the desires and potentials of the body is not something to be denied or repressed, but to be fully enacted in an awakened and love-filled way.

The *mysticism of the mind* is expressed in the ecstasy that arises when we have a profound realization, solve a challenging problem, understand some dimension of the operations of the psyche, create music or write a poem.

The *mysticism of the heart* is experienced in the self-transcendence of the love relationship, in service, and in the care for others.

The *mysticism of the soul* is experienced in awakening, realization, ecstasy, joy, sacredness, and beauty.

The mysticism of the New Story is a call to *prophetic responsibility*. Because each of us is part of the larger whole, we each have a responsibility to preserve and enhance the harmony and unfoldment of the larger whole. Living is witnessing, living is embodying, living is serving.

Amen!