

Liminal Space

Reconnecting with the Unconscious

Thursday, April 30, 2020

My friend John Philip Newell is a poet and scholar who believes in the transformative power of Celtic Christian spirituality to support us in our era. The ancient Celts made great use of liminal times and places to integrate the “paired opposites” of which the world seems to be made. Newell writes:

Do we know that within each one of us is the unspeakably beautiful beat of the Sacred? Do we know that we can honor that Sacredness in one another and in everything that has being? And do we know that this combination—growing in awareness that we are bearers of Presence, along with a faithful commitment to honor that Presence in one another and in the earth—holds the key to transformation in our world? . . .

Eco-theologian Thomas Berry says the universe is so amazing in its interrelatedness that it must have been dreamt into being. He also says our situation today as an earth community is so desperate—we are so far from knowing how to save ourselves from the ecological degradations we are a part of—that we must dream the way forward. We must summon, from the unconscious, ways of seeing that we know nothing of yet, visions that emerge from deeper within us than our conscious rational minds.

Similarly, the rebirthing of our true depths will involve a reconnection with the unconscious. It will demand a fresh releasing within us of the world of dreams, myths, and the imagination. Whether as individuals or collectively as nations and religious traditions, new beginnings will be born among us when we open to the well of what we do not yet know or what we have forgotten deep within. . . .

Into this liminal realm, between the known and the unknown, we are invited to enter if we are to learn more of the way forward in our lives as individuals and as communities and nations. This is why, in so much Celtic storytelling and legends, lovers meet and worlds conjoin in the twilight. It is the coming together of masculine and the feminine. It is the convergence of the unseen world of those who have gone before us and this present dimension of space and time in which the seen and the physical dominate. It may be a time of encountering messengers from the invisible realms of the universe that are linked inextricably to our realm, but at the same time transcend us in our struggle with unknown forces of darkness within and without. This is also why, in so much Eastern spiritual practice [as well as many in monastic communities in the Christian tradition], the early hours of dawn are viewed as the time of meditation, when night and day are commingling in ways that more readily allow us to move from the known to the unknown and from the nameable to the ineffable.

Reference:

John Philip Newell, *The Rebirthing of God: Christianity’s Struggle for New Beginnings* (Skylight Paths Publishing: 2014), xvii, 89, 91.

“Making Love to the ONE Who IS LOVE” can be found at: www.pastordawn.com