

WHICH GOD DON'T YOU BELIEVE IN?

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Elie Wiesel was just a wide-eyed and innocent adolescent when he and all the other Jews of the Transylvanian village of Sighet were jammed into cattle cars one April night in 1944 by SS troops, and shipped to Auschwitz. Years later, having somehow survived, Wiesel promised himself he would, so he recorded his death camp experiences in his haunting book *Night*. Of all the horrors he describes, the one that I can never remove from my mind's eye is that of an execution of three fellow prisoners.

It seems that the SS had captured two men and a young boy and sentenced them to death by hanging for allegedly collaborating with the Polish Underground. To make an example of them, the Nazis had the prisoners of Auschwitz including Wiesel – assembled before the gallows in the camp yard. As the three victims were stood up on chairs and had their necks placed with the nooses, the two men cried, "Long live liberty!" But all eyes were on the child who remained silent.

Wiesel, then only a teenager himself, remembers him as a young boy with "a refined and beautiful face...he was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lip...he had the face of a sad angel." As the sign was given by the officer in charge to kick the chairs out from underneath the three condemned prisoners, Wiesel heard a man behind him mournfully ask, "Where is God?... Where is He?" There was "total silence throughout the camp; on the horizon, the sun was setting." All the assembled prisoners were forced then to slowly march past the gallows.

Wiesel writes about what he saw: "The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving, being so light, the child was still alive. For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes not yet glazed. Behind me I heard the same man asking, 'Where is God now?' and I heard a voice within me answer him. 'Where is He? Here He is – He is hanging here on this gallows.'"

Wiesel's friend Francois Mauriac, who knew the details of the author's deeply religious childhood, later wrote this about what the execution meant to him, "From the time when [Wiesel's] conscience first awoke, he had lived only for God and had been reared on the Talmud...dedicated to God and the eternal. But [in the death camp Nietzsche's cry became an almost physical reality...'God is dead, the God of love, of gentleness, of comfort, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob has vanished forevermore beneath the gaze of this tortured child'...[as Wiesel himself wrote] 'Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.'"

It took *Time* magazine until the mid-1960s to declare on its cover that "God is Dead." But for many, whose lives had been torn asunder by the grotesque human evils of the 20th century, the heavens had long since been emptied of any all-knowing, all-loving, all-powerful-and-caring presence of goodness, justice and light. The rancid smoke that drifted up from the ovens at Auschwitz rose to a dark and empty sky – and the theological message which many in our post-modern age heard ringing out of the stillness of the heavens was that all-powerful and loving God of the Judeo-Christian Bible – the God who was supposed to be "in charge" and had promised to wisely look after human affairs and us – is dead or gone. In reflecting on the many

tragedies of our twentieth century, my colleague Thomas Mikelson recently wrote that: "There is a God-sized hole in creation. This has been a difficult century for God in Western Culture. The staggering violence of totalitarianism led many toward moral numbness or cynicism and others towards practical atheism." Humanity, it has widely been said, is now on its own, and in the face of this world's many evils, often there is little to do but weep.

This remains, I would assert, the tortured theological context in which we must do religion in this troubled, post-modern age of ours. The unspeakably evil of the Nazi holocaust during World War II has been followed by other genocidal insanities – one after the other in cruel, depraved regularity – in places like Cambodia, Rwanda, Kosovo, and the Sudan. As I speak this morning, hundreds of civilians are being murdered by their own leaders even as democracy continues to be denied.

How, in the face of such bottomless horrors, can we believe either in the unquenchable nobility of humanity, or in an all-knowing, all-powerful, just and loving God who rules the universe? For me and many others (including most Unitarian Universalists of my acquaintance), the strictly proportioned God of the Old and New Testaments – the omnipotent God Weisel believed in as a child, but lost at Auschwitz – is dead and gone. That divine power and personality who pulls the strings of life and history, manipulating earthly events and us for his inscrutably divine purposes, is for many people of faith, including me, irretrievably lost.

You all remember the old spectacular stories, don't you? The God of the Bible was a fantastic cosmic personality – male, of course, reflecting perfectly the fiercely patriarchal nature of ancient Jewish and Christian culture. This God was a wise and willful ruler of earth – who regularly made his presence and purpose felt – both in the broad strokes of history and in the day-to-day lives of ordinary individuals. This "micro-managing God" could and would manipulate people, events and nature to get what he wanted.

Without batting a cosmic eyelash, God could cause seas to part, and then flood back in over evil/pursuing armies. God could speak through burning bushes, give commandments down from mountaintops, lead entire nations by generating towering pillars of fire in the sky, and respond to earnest prayers of the people. God could destroy (or save) whole cities, turn disobedient humans into salt, allow exiles and end enslavements, cause pregnancies and illness and carry on loud and lengthy arguments with reluctant messengers like Moses and Jonah.

Here was a great and powerful God, yet strangely a God in a very human form – more powerful and wise than us for sure – but nonetheless remarkably like us in His anger and mercy, His communications and desires, His thoughts and perspectives, even His prejudices and quirks! Either God made us remarkably close to His image, or we made Him remarkable close to ours – for the God of the Judeo-Christian Bible is very human in his proportions and propensities.

I have two main theological problems with postulating the existence of any such God. First and foremost, as a conscious and sentient being in this creation, I simply see no such wise, wonderful and supernatural God operating regularly and reliably in my universe! I see no pillars of fire, witness no Red-Sea-style miracles, receive no commandments from mountaintops, nor watched anyone like Jesus bringing the dead back to life. What's more, I don't see any evidence that some all-powerful being is wisely and justly directing history – either the vast sweeps of human history or the bittersweet flow and circumstances of our little personal lives. There was no All-Powerful God in Heaven to stop the Holocaust, or to stop the slaughter in

Kosovo or Darfur. And because my Unitarian Universalist faith must be based upon my actual life experience – because I refuse to believe things contrary to reason and the world as I directly experience it through my own sensory apparatus – I must respectfully reject this ancient idea of God. I just don't see the signs of any such God anywhere in my creation, pure and simple.

And the second problem I have with this old idea of God is that it requires what the theologians call a theodicy. Theodicy is the theological attempt to reconcile: 1) the assertion that our universe is ruled by a good, all-knowing and powerful God, and 2) the undeniable reality of so much evil and tragedy in the world. The vexing question all theodicy attempts to answer is: "If God is so good and powerful, why do so many tragic and evil things happen?" Theodicies – however framed, however articulated – have never spiritually worked for me. Just one example: every time destructive and deadly hurricanes hit anywhere here in Florida, fundamentalist Christian preachers from the Panhandle to Key West, who are devoted to the old vision of a God "in charge" of the universe, suggest that the destructive winds and waters come to do us harm because God is angry at us for something or another – permitting abortion, allowing homosexuality, or liberating women from the role of home-maker. Now all this, of course, seems to me just so much dangerous and foolish theological nonsense – this belief in a God who would manipulate weather and history to somehow keep humanity in line.

Theodicy is also foolishly and dangerously applied to personal tragedies. When I served our church in Plainfield, New Jersey, there was a particularly brutal murder of two young girls by the drug-deranged boyfriend of the mother. At the packed community funeral service, one of my conservative Christian ministerial colleagues had the theological audacity to tell the sobbing mother stop crying and not to be sad because God in His love and wisdom had allowed these murders to happen to spare the children pain and sorrow in later life! I swear to God, that's how he tried to theologically comfort her! Obviously, if you choose to place such a God at the center of your universe, then when horrible things happen as they inevitably do in life, you are left either hating God or life itself. In my view, any theodicy – any theological attempt to reconcile the reality of evil and pain with a belief in an all-knowing, all-powerful God – will always fail. Can anyone really believe there is a God ruling Heaven who would allow six million Jews to be slaughtered for some "mysterious/divine" purpose...or, closer to home, allow the death of an innocent child in a car accident as a part of some divine "master plan"?

Many of us facing this theological question are like poet James Kavanaugh, "I have lost my easy God – the one whose name I knew since childhood...He was a good God...He was a predictable God...He made pain sensible and patience possible and the future foreseeable... Now he haunts me seldom, some fierce umbilical is broken...I live with my own fragile hopes and sudden rising despair...my easy God is gone – and in his stead, the mystery of loneliness and love!" So our old/simple Gods of history and childhood are dead and gone...for many millions of us, consciously or unconsciously, we have removed them from our spiritual lives.

And yet, *Time* magazine was – once again – wildly wrong! God, of course, is not dead. What has been irretrievably buried late in the 20th century – at least for many of us – are some primitive conceptualizations of God, not the yearning for God itself. No matter how brutal or cynical the times become, no matter how silent or hostile the heavens sometime seem to us, most of us just can't quite get the idea of, or yearning for, God out of our consciousness, can we? Not even the persistent evils and uncertainties of our troubled times have succeeded in entirely crushing that unquenchable hunger in our hearts, that deep yearning in our souls, that nagging inclination of our minds, to wonder if perhaps something larger and lovelier than ourselves is powerfully and purposefully astir and alive in this creation.

Now...let me be very clear about this. I fully understand that many in this congregation self-identify as "atheists" or "humanists"...for some of you the very thought of God is of no spiritual usefulness, and that is, of course, an honorable spiritual perspective in this free church. But for many of us – especially in those tenderly fleeting moments when life's utterly holy and healing beauty and mystery breaks – as when we witness the birth of a new baby, or are captivated by a beautiful sunset, witness an act of radical generosity, or are held in the arms of some profound human love – we wonder still if there isn't something, something we might call God – or spirit – that breathes through our world, infusing it with enduring sacredness, preciousness, purpose and meaning.

The idea of and yearning for God cuts timelessly and persistently across all continents and cultures. There is something universal, I think, about the urge human beings have to try to know and then name life's enduring sacredness. As long as we have the mysterious gift of life, as long as we find ourselves so wondrously alive in this curious and astounding creation, no matter how much tragedy and pain we have experienced most of us will – whether we consciously want to or not – find ourselves pulled toward something we might call the divine mystery.

I am reminded of the modern Hasidic tale which is told about three old rabbis imprisoned in Auschwitz. After many months in the death camp, they decide finally to put God on trial for allowing the innocent children to be massacred, and they quickly of course find God guilty as charged. The God of Israel – the God that was supposed to rule the world and protect "His people," the rabbis conclude, broke His covenant. Yet a moment after the trial is concluded, one of the rabbis glances at the setting sun. "Oy, my friends," he said, "it's time for prayers." And the three rabbis bowed their heads...and prayed to God.

Yes, the question of and yearning for God is as powerful and persistent as life itself. It certainly has proved so for me over my adult life. Not even my own ardent and absolutist humanism – which I built around me in my college and seminary days like a great philosophical fortress of rationality against all traditional theological understandings – was able to insulate me from the irrepressible impulse of my heart to experience, name, and then to praise something higher, holier, more enduring and eternal than myself. Despite all of my youthful intellectual insistences and rational rejections, as I grew older and experienced my world more deeply, something I call God stole gently into my heart, and I was not able to defend myself against its healing and saving presence. Like the old Rabbis at Auschwitz, I know that no matter how painful or tragic or senseless life may at times seem to me, I will always and utterly be unable to get God entirely out of my soul. Perhaps the same is secretly true for you, even if you call yourself a humanist or atheist.

One of the occupational hazards I have discovered that comes with being a minister is having people – like some relative stranger in the airplane seat next to me -- proudly proclaim to me "I don't believe in God." Usually when I suspect the reason for this being shared is to somehow shock or upset "The Reverend," I respond with what we call in the ministry "a holy grunt"... "un hun." But if I have energy and sense they are actually sincere about wanting a genuine spiritual dialogue, I say "and which God is it that you don't believe in?" When I have actually taken the time for such theological dialogue on an airplane or other impromptu venue of human encounter, nine times out of ten I have eventually been able to say to that person (after listening to them describe the God they reject): "Fine...I don't believe in that (old, outworn, dysfunctional, primitive) God either. If that's what you mean by God, then I'm an atheist, too! But now that we've got that out of the way – discovering what it is you don't believe in when it comes to God

– we are free to explore just what it is you might believe about God that would be positive, creative, healing and liberating for you!"

And the truly amazing and delightful thing is that, again, more often than not, if that self-proclaimed atheist and I truly engage in spiritual dialogue about our experience in life, sooner or later we can find a god concept or at least an experiential definition of God which we can both comfortably and creatively agree upon – or at least discover that our differing conceptualizations of God are in sympathetic, parallel and supportive relationship to one another!

There are so many creative, spirit-enriching ways for Unitarian Universalists to think about God...and this diversity is not only logical, it is good! For I believe that God is – above all else – a radically personal reality, rightfully different for each one of us as we naturally experience our universe in our own immediate and idiosyncratic ways. Wise was philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein when he declared that religion belongs to the "realm of the inexpressible." I had a wonderful, old teacher in seminary – a dignified, German-born comparative religions professor by the name of Frederick Speigelberg. He died not too long ago, bless his heart. He was so convinced of the utter subjectivity of God that he proclaimed passionately that it was absolute folly and foolishness to even attempt to share our own ideas and experience about God to others. "Be content to know and name your own God," he would implore us, "and please don't try to transfer or argue it to someone else...they must discover their own sense of life's ultimate sacredness, not try to fit into your own."

Over the many years of my ministry, I have tended not to heed this thoughtful advice. For while I definitely agree with my old professor that talking about God with my own personal, clumsy, and imprecise words and experience is, by its very nature, an often subjective and slippery thing to do, I nonetheless believe there is great spiritual value in our each humbly sharing what God does (and of equal importance does not) mean to us individually. How, I ask, without such respectful sharing of our own ideas about and experiences of God, will we ever be able to mature and deepen our theological understandings and spiritual sensitivities?

All of this is by way of prefacing my own sharing of my personal idea of God, and what God as I experience it in my everyday life means to me. I offer my personal understanding of God not, I assure you, to "set you straight once and for all" on the question of God. As I have said on other occasions, every sermon I preach from this pulpit is the beginning of "a dynamic two-way conversation," not a "one-way pronouncement"! This morning, I share what the word "God" means to me in the hope that my understanding might stimulate you in your own thinking and feeling about this most fundamental of all religious concepts.

All right, let me be as clear as I can about the sense of God that has emerged to bless and guide me on my spiritual journey. This is going to be tricky for me to articulate, because that which I call God is a very personal, mystical and largely intuitive reality in my life – which I cannot describe in precise, rational or scientific terms, but only in poetic, experiential and metaphoric ones, that may or may not make a whole lot of sense to you and the world you know. That which I call God is not (as you might guess from what I earlier said about old, biblical understandings of God) a supernatural personality, nor a cosmic consciousness, nor divine intelligence...and it is most certainly not an omnipotent ruler of this universe. No such God of history makes any sense to me. God to me is rather an elusive, life-giving spirit sunk deep down in my world and being.

God to me is an elusive (but terribly powerful and real) spirit of holiness, healing and grace which I find dwelling in everyday, common things. "Incarnate" is the fancy word theologians

use...an indwelling presence is another way to say it, a presence which is there for me as a positive spiritual resource as I strive to live a life on this mortal earth of purpose, peace, compassion, contentment and joy. One of the original Hebrew meanings for the word spirit is a breath of life, or wind. The spirit of God that I see and sense and seek to serve is like a gentle, faithful wind that blows through my life, barely there often, and yet paradoxically – powerfully there, a very real spiritual presence that I feel with intuitive intensity, but cannot verify for you or anyone else by any scientific measure or rational proof!

That which I call God is a faithful, everyday spiritual presence, a presence which blesses, stirs and energizes my world like a caressing summer breeze – a fresh, healing, energizing breeze. I cannot ever concretely see or grasp it, but its existence my heart can never doubt. It's a powerful, indwelling presence of sacredness, beauty, grace and goodness – a presence of justice, of compassion, of mercy and love – a presence of wholeness, harmony, healing and health that persistently shines out of things great and small – even when I face tragedy, sorrow and pain.

Now let me be very clear about this. This spirit of life-sustaining beauty, goodness, purpose and love which I feel pulsing through all things in nature, in other people, even in myself – and seek to know, celebrate and serve as best I can – is not "in charge" of the universe. It does not "rule" the world, manipulate history, have a master plan for humanity, or consciously intend for my life or your life to go one way or the other. I cannot and do not pray to the God I find on my heart to somehow steer or change or choose the realities of my life. And there are – to be existentially sure – other powerful and countervailing forces sunk deep down in our world – forces of emptiness, angst, cruelty, sorrow, ugliness and pain natural, pernicious forces which also sadly manifest themselves powerfully and persistently in my world.

You need look no further than the killing fields of Darfur or the prison yards of Angola, Louisiana, or the wards of a cancer hospital to confirm that our world is not ruled by holy, generous, positive forces. That which I call God is existentially "restrained" and "restricted" by other realities in this creation, but this does not cause me to mute my praise for nor heartfelt reliance upon this spirit of holiness I feel so keenly.

Now, I fully appreciate that for some, such a God – such an elusive-yet-everyday spiritual presence that does not control fate, shape human history, or ensure happy endings – is not powerful or personal enough to be of comfort or usefulness to them. But for me, this is the only God possible in so mortal, fragile and unpredictable a creation. The fact that "that which I call God" cannot and does not "do all things on cue," in conformity with my wishes and desires, does not diminish its presence, its preciousness, nor its potential to help me find a deeply spiritual and satisfying way of human being. For me, even though this spirit I feel in everyday things is not "all powerful" or "all knowing," it is holiness enough. It is a sweet and saving everyday presence, that infuses my life with grace, with power, with hope and with goodness enough. That which I call God – elusive, mystical, and constrained as it is – is nonetheless faithfully there in my life to bless, encourage, heal, direct, challenge, and yes SAVE me – save me in countless little moments of living from spiritual despair and death.

As I have said, that which I call God is not "personal" in the sense that I do not have a direct, conversational, human-like relationship with this spirit. But my relationship with this great and gentle presence is, nonetheless, fiercely personal. Every day I awake, I strive to sense, to see, to celebrate and serve this spirit. Whether I am watching the hibiscus along A1A faithfully burst into song, or communing with dear old friends over a messy candlelit dinner, or lending myself with others of goodwill to some social justice cause, or struggling to become the best person I

can be – I fall into hushed prayer with my God, and try to draw my life and being closer to this holy and healing spirit. That which I call God does not come to me as a voice rolling out of the clouds, or offer me clear commandments on stone tablets passed down to me from some mountaintop, or sustain me with special dispensations granted just for me because I have offered myself faithfully up in prayer.

My relationship with that which I call God most certainly does not mean things automatically "go my way." As you all know, this is an often hard, random and painful world. My colleague Tom Mikelson is right, as often as not there is "A God-Shaped Hole" in our lives and in creation. Auschwitz on every level of life is real, and sometimes this spirit of God I so depend upon hangs on the gallows of human depravity and earthly tragedy. My God rarely shouts to me from some mountaintop of victory or clarity – rather it whispers to me out of the fragile and the commonplace realities of this mortal life. It gently sings to me out of the fleeting, everyday stuff of my clumsy, imperfect, yet strangely sacred life. This tender spirit breaks in upon my consciousness – often at the most curious of moments – to bless me with life-saving awareness of the irreducible, eternal beauty of self, other persons, earth, and the great mystery beyond all things.

William Wordsworth spoke for me when he wrote, "I have felt a presence that disturbs me with a joy of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and the round ocean and the living air, and the blue sky, and in the mind of humanity; a motion and a spirit that impels all thinking things, all objects of thought, and rolls through all things."

Again, the God I know and depend upon is not supernatural. It is, in fact, precisely the opposite. It is intensely and fiercely natural...ordinary and yet at the same time extraordinary...confoundingly common in one moment and sacred beyond words in the next. It is not somehow "set off from me" in heavenly purity or cosmic completeness but is a wholly incarnate thing, sunk deep down in the natural, everyday flow of life, emotion and persons around me. It is, as my colleague Clarke Wells poetically puts it, "That dearest freshness in deep down things," a life-giving presence that sings out of the muck and marrow of this life, a spirit that is freely available, if my heart is willing to see and serve it, to bless and lift and guide me here...now...just as I am in all my finite and flawed humanness. Through it all, the spirit I call God remains with me, faithfully and powerfully present in this broken and unpredictable world of mine, and I am regularly saved in a thousand little ways – saved by its simple grace, abundant mercy, profound clarity and available power.

And I am not in a passive, receptive relationship to God. That holy spirit I call God calls me – begs me...taunts me...haunts me...every day – to participate in its holy work and wondrous ways. The spirit in the world I call God is an open, unfinished, receptive spirit to which I can freely lend my little heart and fragile soul – lend my energies, my affections, my efforts, and my love so that this world might be just a bit better. Theologians call such thinking process theology...the idea that God is a process or a spirit alive in the world in which we can and should participate.

That spirit I call God can and does, of course, operate for life and love quite without me for I am after all a tiny, time-bound creature of little ultimate cosmic significance. But I believe the spirit of God "begs me, calls me into" its purpose and greatness, and becomes itself stronger and lovelier as I become more loving, more just, more purposeful, grateful and compassionate in my daily living. I like what theologian Dorothee Soelle boldly said, "To believe in God means to take sides with life and to end our alliance with death. It means to stop killing and wanting to

kill, and to do battle with apathy which is so akin to killing....To take sides with life and experience how we can transcend ourselves is a process that has many names and faces. Religion is one of those names. Religion can mean the radical and whole-hearted attempt to take sides with life."

We enter the spirit of God, we participate in God whenever and however we hear the call, and "lend" ourselves to the "taking sides with life," just where we are in our little corners of the globe. If, for example, you stand faithfully by someone's death bed – holding their hand, soothing their brow, singing to them in the night – it is your presence, your love, your physical embrace, tentative and imperfect as they are, that are the living pathway to creation's holiest grace and highest love. And the opposite is also spiritually true, isn't it? If we fail to bring our best and most loving selves to some human or earthly moment, then God is diminished by our refusal of the spirit. I deeply believe God regularly needs us – you and me – if God's spirit is to be truly alive on this earth. The spiritual irony of this life is that on a daily basis "the greatest spirit in creation" is dependent upon us terribly flawed and finite spirits, if it is to live with power and possibility. To me, the most beautiful theological thought of all is that there is an eternally holy spirit breathing through life which welcomes, encourages, and needs our puny energies and gifts to make the world right.

It's a hard thought to hold, isn't it, that God – or at least one dimension of God – is a verb, a process of noble human becoming rather than an actual cosmic being. The God I know and depend on for spiritual wholeness is both a presence beyond me and a process within me! My God is a good and gracious spirit which invites my frail little contributions of beauty and blessing...service and love. We should never dare, of course, to imagine ourselves synonymous with God, not even on those rare occasions when we are rather clearly serving as visible vessels for God's holy energy, as was Mother Theresa in the streets of Calcutta or Martin Luther King in the streets of Birmingham. That would be the worst form of idolatry. But I believe if we are awake to and welcoming of the holy powers and life-giving processes that are everywhere around and within us, we participate in that holiness, and that participation blesses, fills, ennobles and, yes, saves us and all of life around us.

So...here you have it, one Unitarian Universalist's somewhat non-systematic idea and experience of God. I don't expect or even want all, or even most, of you to have an identical or even a similar understanding of God. My old seminary professor was surely right, when it comes to what the word God means to each of us personally, there will always be amongst us a radically wide spectrum of experience and expression. What I do hope, however, is that unlike the boring spiritual nay-sayers I meet on airplanes – who simply bellow at me that they "don't believe in God" – that in your spiritual life, in your daily life of discovery and purpose, you will be searching for and sensing something larger, lovelier and more lasting than yourself to which you can give homage, gratitude, and the fullest, finest living of your life. Even if you are a longtime, ardent humanist or card-carrying atheist, I secretly pray that your heart will be open to the possibility of discovering some sacred presence in your daily living which calls you gently to deep, full, joyful and compassionate living.

Yes, the sure, old, primitive Gods are all dead – to me, at least. The world is, at best, a fractured place of triumph and tragedy, holiness and hellacious-ness, sacredness and suffering, and I refuse to believe that anyone or anything is ruling the heavens. But I believe creation is nonetheless eternally astir with a holy presence of profound gentleness, purpose and grace. I believe there is a Holy Spirit on the wind of this world that seeks to bless and nurture all who are open to feel its steady power and healing touch. I pray you – call it whatever you will, describe it in whatever words work for you – but please be open to seeing, savoring, and serving that holy

mystery beyond yourself. For Dag Hammarskjöld had it right when he said: "God does not die on the day we cease to believe in a personal deity...but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason."

Amen.