

THE CENTER FOR REFLECTION ON THE SECOND LAW
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American Teilhard Assoc.

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REPRISE, CIRCULAR #37

Circular #101

The Seeker: What's it all about and how do I fit in?

Grandmother: It's the right question and it's hard to answer. You will have to work on it all your life. But maybe I can give you some help in how to go about looking. I think you begin by getting yourself an identity and I think that might begin with understanding that you belong in the world. When I say world I mean the universe and the earth and the life system of the earth, the entire life system, and the human species, the region where you are, the locality where you are, social and economic and political arrangements, and your family. You may not have a clear identity in all these ways but you have some of them at least. And know that you are unique. There has never been another person just like you and there is never going to be another.

In this way, work at finding out just who you are and how you come to be just here, just now. That's important. But it's not easy. Ideally you need to know a lot of history, a lot about what has gone on in the past that led up to your presence at this place at this time. It will require a lot of study, but it's necessary to get yourself located. I think it is important that we believe that there is meaning and that we are capable of finding it; at least we are capable of trying to find it. I have come to think that the meaning of the human species is to be found within the meaning of the universe. If the human has meaning, the universe has meaning and since the human is a part of the universe then it follows, in my way of thinking, that the human purpose must fit into the universe purpose. "The human journey is an aspect of the universe journey and subject to it." I also believe that the meaning of the universe is a mystery we have not penetrated and are unlikely to penetrate. So, for now anyway, we just accept the universe as a given and work on the problem of finding meaning for the human species as a functioning component of the universe, accepting that the part is not greater than the whole. After finding a meaning for the species then we try to find a meaning for subsets, such as races and regional groupings, within the species and then meaning for the individual.

I fully accept the proposition that the human species came into being as the natural result of the evolutionary process. I take it as established that what is flows out of what was. Everything is the outcome of the time developmental process of a constantly emerging world. That leads to the conclusion that the universe needs whatever it is that the human brings to the universe process. Here I introduce a thought that occurs repeatedly: "The human is that being in whom the earth (universe) celebrates itself in conscious self-awareness." Without the human there is no possibility for the operations of mind and consciousness, of reflection intuition and spirituality. There would be no agent capable of curiosity and therefore of learning and understanding of achieving knowledge and working toward a comprehension for what's going on here and what is our role in it.

A minute ago we spoke of the mystery of the universe and that brings up God for only God can fill the space reserved for mystery. Religion should build around the idea of God essential structures for answering the kind of questions we are considering here, and for guiding human behavior so that it conforms to religion's concept of what God wants regarded as sacred. It is the obligation of religion to recognize what is sacred, solemnize it, ritualize it, teach it, and establish sanctions to protect it. I think that religion is a necessary element of human living when it permeates every thought and action of the human animal and holds the human to standards that sanctify and promotes life and living.

Our problem, as I see it, is that our religion has not accommodated itself to realities science and common sense have revealed. The basic reality religion fails to recognize is the very fact of the embeddedness of the human species in nature and the moral imperatives that flow out of that; i.e., the necessity for the human to conform behavior to the way nature works. We have a society that is destroying nature and religion is doing almost nothing (there are some exceptions) to defend nature.

A philosophy is developing which states that the human must use those qualities unique to the human for universe purposes. In this way of thinking, I commend it to you, it is necessary for the human to learn about the universe and to celebrate it, to bring to it mind and consciousness and self-awareness and curiosity and understanding and love and respect and nurture and awe and etc and etc. (It is OK to substitute the word "earth" for the word "universe" since membership in the universe is fully comprehended by membership in the earth.)

So your search might lead you to conclude that you are located here and now, that you belong to this region, these associations, etc. and that you can find a role for yourself by inhabiting this area of the earth in such a way as to make all elements of it thrive. You might also work on trying to bring understanding of the natural world and its requirements to religion.

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NOTICES

Please remember the Seventh Assembly of the Fourth World at Meredith College July 31st to August 4th. Thomas Berry gives the keynote lecture at 7:30PM Sunday, 31 July at the Meredith auditorium. There is a \$5 admission fee for those not registered for the Assembly. Also open for general admission is the evening wrap-up of the days activity, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, also for \$5. Square dancing Tuesday evening.

In connection with the Fourth World Assembly we need overnight accommodations for several persons from India for four nights. They will take meals at Meredith and attend the meetings there during days.

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NABC III will be held at the Ish River Bioregion, Vancouver, BC August 21-26. Write Box 1012 Lillolet, BC VOK 1V0 Canada.

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The Center for Reflection on the Second Law will hold its annual conference at Camp New Hope during the weekend of October 28-30. The subject will be THE LAND. One focus will be on the recently published study done by the Institute for Southern Studies WHO OWNS NORTH CAROLINA. (PO Box 531, Durham, NC 27702. In that study the ownership of every parcel of land over 300 acres is listed. Bob Hall visited every county courthouse, all 100, of them in preparing this study. We will also focus on the philosophy, theology, economics and politics of land ownership.

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There will be a meeting at the Center for Reflection on Tuesday, September 20th AT 7:30 PM to talk about the future of CFRSL. We will have a speaker and a program. Put it on your calendar and try to come. We have been going for eight years now and its time to review our agenda.

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ADVISORS TO CFRSL

Peter Berg, Thomas Bery, Wendell Berry, Hal Crowther, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, David Haenke, Hazel Henderson, Bill Holman, Evelyn Mattern, Charles Mulholland, Ange Pflaum, Beth Pflaum, Robert Rodale, Kirk Sale, Jane Sharp, Charlene Spretnak, Clay Stalnaker, Brian Swinme