

Our Gaian Identity 1

A meditation prompted by pp. 21f in Paul Knitter's

'Without Buddha I could not be a Christian':

'It is evident, I believe, that thinking about or imaging God as InterBeing and relating to God as the connecting Spirit is a major antidote to the dualism that has infected Christian theology and spirituality. ...'

Gaia, a unity, is our home,
the ground of our being.
Everything counts within gaia.
Within gaian unity
we emerge as individuals-in-community.
Aware or unaware,
we come from, depend on,
contribute to the whole.

So the first reality is oneness.
We are 'microinstantiations',
microscopic living moments
within that vast oneness.
And therefore our awareness,
our understanding,
our experience of the oneness
is micro, particular, localized, transient.

But each intuits the whole
even as it understands its
time-bound, space-bound, passing singularity.

So though we humans
make distinctions in our language –
separating ‘things’ into seeming opposites,
capitalizing ones we focus on as ‘important’ –
these ‘Things’ our mind has created
need no reconciling in themselves.

Our minds, our traditions, the language we learn
may move us unwittingly away from
uncapitalized personal-communal experience
to creating images of ‘Things’ in our minds
that we feel we might revere by capitalizing ‘Them’.

From wind to breath,
from breath to soul
from soul to Spirit,
from Spirit to Holy Spirit,
from Holy Spirit to Holy Ghost
from Holy Ghost to Third Person of the Trinity
(for example).

But returning to our beginnings,
not creating irreconcilable opposites,
we may open up ourselves
to the sacred whole (uncapitalized!),
and relearn to appreciate and to properly value
the diverse modes of life
that make up and contribute to
the symphony of the whole.

Our words for 'world', 'spirit',
'interbeing', '[god]' can only point to
aspects of the whole
that are experienced within the whole,
intimately, individually, communally,
and mostly unbeknownst and unawares.

When we think of each of these 'things'
decapitalized, re-establish them in our experience
and know them as making up the whole,
our intimacy, connection and interdependency
with them is enhanced, not diminished,
and therefore more properly valued.

We experience 'spirit', for example,
as breath in the world,
the movement of air
in and out and around the living.

No air, no life!

No breath, no spirit!

No wind, no 'Holy Spirit'!

We experience 'world' as 'gaia',
alive, breath filled, breathing with life.

And were fish to use words like us,
they would not imagine 'Holy Water'.
They experience water as home,
their place of being and breathing.

And dolphins have it both ways,
breathing the air and swimming the seas!

May we hold each living being in our hearts
and the whole in which we all live as 'sacred',
that which is most valuable to us,
not because it is there for our use
but because without that whole,
without our earth-ancestry,
without so many of the living,
we could not have come to be,
we would not be alive today.

Capitalizing 'Things' as a mark of respect
may distance us from what are most intimate to us,
and distract us from constant invitations to awake,
from learning to appreciate each and all the living,
by working secretly, silently, effectively,
whenever we may, in whatever way we can
for the wellbeing and thriving of each and all:
for those alive now
and for those who will come after us.