

# 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.