What is the Meaning of Life?
Program 60
Implications for the Resurrection
by Ernest O'Neill

What is the meaning of life? We've been talking about that question for a long time now. What we have said is that the whole meaning of life depends on the origin of life. It really matters whether we are just chance atoms thrown up by a mindless evolutionary system or whether we are, in fact, a planned, purposeful result of the activity of some intellect.

What we have been sharing over these few months is that there is a great deal of evidence in our world to suggest we are not just the chance results of the explosion of certain atoms. We are not just the hazardous result of a series of evolutionary processes that have occurred without any guidance or without any plan.

In fact, when we look at the seasons in our world and see how they fall so regularly, year after year, so that we can plan the growing of our crops by them; in fact, when we look at the incredible accuracy of the turning of the earth and its orbiting around the sun and realize we set all our watches and clocks by its activity; when we see the faithfulness and reliability with which the sun rises and sets each day; when we then begin to examine the chart of the elements and see how the atomic weights fit into a pattern that surprises us and enables us to tell where another element may be found even though we have not yet found it; when we study the DNA structure of the molecules and the basis of life itself.

When we observe the amazing circulation of the blood and the beating of the heart which we cannot yet explain, the more we enter into the incredible design and intricate purposefulness that we see in our world. We are drawn to the same conclusion as

Einstein, that there is an intellect who originally planned whatever evolutionary process may have brought about our existence or may not have brought about our existence; there has to have been an intellect behind it.

And since we are persons, that intellect has to be at least as personable as we are. We've also observed the fact that not only is there incredible design and intricate purposefulness in the world, but we've seen, too, that despite all our desire to be selfish, petty people who are always fighting our corner, we have discovered within ourselves a higher kind of desire that makes us want to be unselfish.

Even though it's easier to be selfish, we want to be unselfish. Even though it's easier for us to be cowardly, we want to be courageous. So, we've seen inside ourselves another tendency that suggests there comes from outer space to us certain standards of life that are higher than those we naturally take to ourselves.

So, because of the evidence of design and order in our universe, because of our own personableness, and because of this sense of moral obligation we have within us that keeps contradicting and making awkward all our failures, we have concluded there is circumstantial evidence around us that there must be, somewhere, an intellect -- a personal intellect, a Supreme Being of some kind -- that has been responsible for the origin of our world.

Now, of course, we've agreed that that evidence is circumstantial at this point. But, then we asked the further question: was there any empirical evidence, any "touch-and-see" evidence? If there is such a Supreme Being in the universe, and if there is such a Supreme Intellect that is responsible for our creation, has the

Intellect ever communicated with us in any way? Is there any empirical evidence that has taken place?

We began to talk about the various religious leaders that have claimed to speak for this Supreme Being, and we found they all fall into the same category of being ordinary, human beings that died like the rest of us, were buried and were known no more. Except for one remarkable human being who existed in the first century of our era.

He was a man who out shone all other religious leaders by the perfect purity and ethical perfection of his life. He out shone them and also by the intimacy he implied he had with the Supreme Being behind the universe. He said, "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father. If you worship me, you really worship the Father."

Where all other great religious leaders were careful to disassociate themselves from claims to divinity, this man said he was divine, and that even at pain of death. Even when he was being threatened with execution, he still said, "Yes, I am the Son of the Creator of the universe."

He not only lived like the son of the Creator of the universe, he not only spoke like him, but he did something no other religious leader ever did. He said he would be crucified, be executed, and would then come alive again after he was dead, and would remain alive long enough to show us that he had the power to destroy death itself and therefore, to show us he had the power to get off the earth and to come back onto it whenever he wished -- to go out into outer space to where his Creator Father was and to come back whenever he chose. And this he actually did.

We have been examining the historical evidence which reinforces the incontrovertible conviction that this man did

actually rise from the dead. And we are left with only the three possibilities that we talked of. Either he was a lunatic, and his life does not suggest the imbalance of the lunatics that are in psyche wards and claim to be the son of God. His life evidences all the balance of a human being whom we respect and whom we regard as the ideal picture of a human being.

Moreover, if we claim that he is a liar, we are faced with the ethical impossibility of the foremost moral teacher whom all of us regard as offering the highest ethical standards that the world has ever seen, we're faced with that high, ethical moral teacher, lying about the central focal point of his whole life: his own identity.

If we say he was a liar when he said he was the son of the Creator of the universe, then he cannot be the highest ethical teacher and the highest moral example the world has ever seen, and yet be a liar about the central point of his teaching.

If we say he's not a lunatic and he's not a liar, then, maybe he's just a legend. The problem with this is, though Buddha had the time between his death and the first recording of his life on paper, providing the time for a legend to develop because the people were all dead who remembered him when his life story was written -- this man, Jesus, did not provide that time because it was barely twenty years after his death, when the circumstances of his life were being read about in various groups of people in the then known world.

Many of the eyewitnesses who observed his death and observed his rising from the dead were alive and they could corroborate that evidence or they could contradict it. In fact, they corroborated it and they confirmed it.

So, we are left with the situation if this man is not a liar, and if he was not a lunatic, and if he is not a legend -- then he must have been the son of the Creator of the universe. He must be the unique Son of the Supreme Being that made our world, that made our whole universe.

If that is the case then, at last, we have someone who can tell us something about what life is about, what the meaning of life is, and why you and I are here. This is the kind of thing we would like to discuss over these next weeks and months.