WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 83
The Spirit of Man and God
by Ernest O'Neill

Can you make any sense of life? Can you make any sense of why we are here, or what we are doing here, or where it's all going? Many of us are concerned about that and really can't make any sense of it. So, we on this program have been discussing that question for some months now. What we have decided to do is to go back to some of the stuff many of us were taught in our early days was the key to the whole meaning of life.

It's stuff that really we have learned to despise and toss away as meaningless religious jargon. It's a little difficult to go back to it and to break through into understanding it, but that's what we've decided to do. So, actually, after discussing what kind of authority would help us with this kind of problem, we decided it had to be somebody who was more than a human being. That's what led us to thinking of that man, Jesus of Nazareth, who is really the only man that has ever shown that He could overcome death and could pass out of this world and come back to it again.

That led us, of course, to the men that He taught and to the things that He Himself believed in. That led us eventually back to the early book that many of us were taught was the center of truth when we were children. This is, of course, this old book called the Bible. So, I ask you... don't turn the radio off. Don't decide, "Oh, this is another Bible thumper." I'm not a Bible thumper and none of us are interested in Bible thumping.

We are anxious to intelligently examine whatever clues we have in our world that would help us with this question, because we're concerned. There are more of us than ever before committing suicide. There are more of us than ever before who are

absolutely bewildered and confused. It's very important to get some clear idea of what the point of this whole existence is, especially before we pass out of it. Because we had better find out what it is, otherwise we have little idea of where we are going to.

That's why we are talking about the account that we believe the maker, Himself, the Creator of the world revealed to the first men and women, if you like, to Adam and Eve. If there was an Adam and Eve, He revealed it to the Adam and Eve. But whoever the first two people were (any biologist will tell you, of course, it had to start with two people), so whoever those first two people were...if it was Adam (that comes from the Hebrew word "adama", which means ground), and Eve (which comes from the Hebrew word meaning "life"), let's accept that it's Adam and Eve.

But the truth is, as far as we can see it from this book, that the Maker of the world revealed to them what He had done. Of course, we were studying these facets of the creation to see how it reflected the very make up of our own personalities today.

We were looking at that verse in Genesis 2. It's about the 2nd chapter in the Bible. If you ever have a Bible, you should look it up, it's verse seven. It says, "the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground." That is, first of all He made us, our bodies from the dirt, from the earth, and then, He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life", that is "ruach", the Hebrew word for "breath". It means "spirit".

You remember we were saying that's why many of us feel at times we should be better than we actually are. Because there is something of God's Spirit in us. This is why we feel at times we were made to live forever. We do feel that, don't we? Don't you feel this at times? I mean, you can be very cynical and say, "NO,

this world will finish in a few years time for me. We'll die. We'll just go into the earth."

But deep down, deep in our deepest heart we feel that we were made to live forever. There's something more surely than just seventy years and out like a light. There has to be. Of course, there are other things inside us that make us feel something is valuable in us beyond us, ourselves. I mean, some people say you're worth about seven and six pence. (That's the old English money, isn't it?) But it's something like a pound, one pound today, perhaps.

Some people say that if you melt us all down, when you examine the chemicals that make us up, and sell it all, you would get about a pound for us. And yet, you know you feel worth much more than a pound. I mean, not just because your mother said, "You're the most valuable thing in the whole world," which all our mums say to us at some point. But, you do feel you're unique. You feel you're different. You feel, in some way, there's nobody like you, and actually this is true. There is nobody like you. You are unique.

One of the reasons why you feel you are uniquely valuable is because there is something of the maker's Spirit in you. There is something unique in you that makes you different from your dog. There is, isn't there? I mean, you look into your dog's eyes and sometimes you imagine he's smiling, but really it's all your imagination. There's something in your eyes that can never appear in his. There's a spirit in your eyes that can never appear in his eyes.

There's something in you that makes you different from an animal. There's a self consciousness, there's a self critical faculty that makes you different from animals. Animals don't ponder much over what they've done that day and whether it was right or

wrong. They just live for the moment. But there is something in you that is able to look in upon yourself and examine yourself and compare yourself with standards you know are higher than your own. That is part of God's Spirit inside you.

The rest of the verse goes, "and man became a living being." Actually, the King James translation is better. It says, "and man became a living soul." The Hebrew word is "nefesh". It's as if you put some instant coffee into a cup of water and that produced a third substance called coffee. God took dust from the ground, made our bodies, breathed into our bodies His Spirit, and we became living souls, a third substance.

It's as if we have three levels of consciousness. We have a spirit, a body, and then we have a soul. It might interest you to know that the Greek word for soul is "psuche". Through the changes that come, the sound changes that come in the English language, that etymologically came to be the word "psyche" in English. That is the word that is put together with the word "logos", the Greek word which means thinking, or a system of thinking and you get the word psyche-logos or psychology.

That's a way of thinking about the soul. That gives you a clue as to what part the soul is in your being. The soul is the psychological part of you. As the broadcasts go on, we'll try to talk about what is the make up of that soul, so that you may begin to know how to operate it yourself in the way it was intended to at the very beginning. You can see that at the very beginning, the maker, our Creator made us with three levels of consciousness.

First, a level of body that is conscious of the world outside. It's through our eyes, our ears, our five senses that we become aware of the outside, physical world. Then, within that, within the very innermost part of it, is our spirit. That's the part that relates

to our Creator, or the maker of the universe. Then, around that, is our soul or the psychological part of us. Some people have said it's as if we have three coats, you know.

We have the innermost one, the spirit. Then, the outer one is the soul, and around that again, we have the body. If you say to me, "What really is our spirit?" Well, probably it's the real you. It's you as you really are. You remember the old classical statement (made by somebody like Seneca or one of the old Roman philosophers who said), "What a man is when he is alone, that he is and nothing more." That's probably your spirit.

What you are, independent of all the drives and all the outside pressures that make you perform like a little puppet, what you are deep down in yourself, what you really are, the essence of you, yourself, that's your spirit. That's the unique expression of God's Spirit in this universe that you alone have contained and possessed. That's your spirit.

The Maker of the universe had a definite plan for us. He made us like that because He wanted to have friendship with us. That's why He made us. He made us with the three levels of consciousness that He, Himself has, because He wanted us to be His friends. He wanted us to live with Him forever, to love Him and to be close to Him. Actually, He is our Father. He wants us to be His children.

That's why He made us like Himself. That's why He didn't make us like animals, because He couldn't have fellowship with an animal. He made us like a person, because He is a person. He wanted to have friendship and He wanted to have love with us, and for us. He wanted to experience our love for Him. That's why He made us like that. Let's talk a little more tomorrow about what actually happened in the process of that creation.