WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 26
Is There a God? What is He Like?
By Ernest O'Neill

Is there anyone out there beyond that sky? Can you see it out of your car window, or perhaps out of the window of your office or your home? You look up at the sky. Is it blue? Or is the usual old gray sky overcast? Whatever it is, is there anything beyond that sky? Many of us reply, "Of course! Yes, there's more and more space." Yet, the question is, is there anything out there beyond space? Is there anything that makes any sense of this world of ours? Is there any being or creature from outer space that is responsible for this world in which we live?

It's very important to be able to answer that question, because we're trying to talk about why we're alive. Why are you alive? What is the purpose of your being here? You can see that that purpose is inextricably involved with the purpose of the whole universe itself.

What we have been saying over the past few weeks is that many of us can see that the order and design in our universe cannot result from time plus chance. All the order that we see in our own bodies and in the world of nature cannot come from simply time plus chance. It must be traceable back to an intellect that is at least as analytical as our own.

In other words, the reason we can perceive order and design in our universe is because there is order and design in it. If there is order and design in our universe that is discernible by our intellects, then it has to have been placed there by an intellect at least as intellectual as ours. Of course, what we have said is not only logical. That an intellectual such as us has created our world, but in order to create us as people, that Being of that Supreme Creature must be at least as personable as we are and probably much more personable.

Many of us have got to that point. Yet, there is a further question beyond that, because the issue is not just are we theists, do we just believe in some Supreme Being. But, the further issue that is important to us and is, in a sense, more relevant is, what is that Creature, or that Creator like? What is His nature like?

We can only get very limited information about the Creator from studying His creation. It's a little like a carpenter. You can tell a little about a carpenter by studying a table he has made. You can tell if he's a neat carpenter, or a careful carpenter. But you can't really tell if he's the kind of carpenter that you'd like to be friendly with. You can't really tell what he thinks about music or art or poetry. You can't really tell if he's a kindly person or a loving person, or whether he's an impatient person.

In other words, you are limited as to how much you can tell about a being by studying the work that he has made. Yet, it is very important to us what the nature of the Supreme Being behind the Universe is like, because obviously, He is going to determine the purpose of everything in the universe. Above all, He's going to determine the purpose of your life and the purpose of mine. Obviously, if He is a cruel tyrant or a despotic monster, then He will not be concerned if we live the same way. But if He is honest and thoughtful, then He may require us to be the same.

In other words, it is vitally important that we not only know that there is some Being beyond the sky that is responsible for the whole origin of the world, even if He has used the evolutionary process to bring it about. It is not only important that we know that, but it is vitally important that we know what kind of Being He is, and what kind of reason He had in the back of His mind in making us, because that will vitally affect our own

life and the future of our own life. Is there any way in which you can tell what this Being is like? Is there any way in which we can tell the kind of person he is?

Of course, the truth is, you can't really tell what a person is like just by studying his creation. You can't really tell what the Supreme Being behind the universe is like simply by studying the universe. If He is a powerful a person as is required to create this massive universe, then He's certainly too powerful a person for you and me to be able to grab an autograph from. It doesn't matter how many shots we shoot deep into space. We will never be able to find out the kind of Being He is unless He chooses to communicate to us in some way, and to let us know the kind of Being He is, and the kind of person He is. If he doesn't choose to express Himself or reveal Himself to us human beings, there is no way in which a lesser being can come to understand the character of a greater being.

In other words, the real issue is not just the existence of circumstantial evidence like the order and design of the universe and the personableness of us human beings, and the existence of a sense of moral obligation, and a conviction of intuition that there is such a Being, but the more important issue is, is there any empirical evidence that this Creator exists? Is there any touch and see evidence, not just inferential evidence -- not just inferences that we draw from what we observe from the universe -- but is there any actual empirical evidence that He exists?

Is there any evidence that He has ever tried to communicate with us? Is there any evidence of signals from outer space that would let us know that such a Creator is in existence? This is the central question for those of us who want to know what the Being behind the universe is like. The central question is, has He ever spoken, and have we any reliable record of what He said?

Down through the centuries, many of our forefathers have professed to tell us the very words that the Supreme Being has spoken and the very deeds that He has done. This kind of evidence goes way beyond the kind of circumstantial evidence that we have been discussing over these past weeks. Because if such evidence of communication from the Supreme Being to us creatures exists in touch and see form, then there is every hope that we will be able to discover why we are here on this earth. We will be able to understand the purpose that this Supreme Being had in making us. Above all, we will be able to make sense of our lives. We will be able to integrate knowledge so that we can see our purpose and the kind of life we need to live in order to fulfill the hopes that this Supreme Being had for us.

If such evidence exists, then all the clouds of unknowing, all the mysteries of agnosticism, all the uncertainty and hopelessness and despair of our bewilderment in this present, modern world will disappear and will be replaced by a brightness of sunshine and certainty and confidence that will give direction and motivation and a firm grip to our lives. So, it is vitally important that we begin to examine the evidence in our world of this Creator's communications to us.