

From Fred Lanphear's writings on his EVOLVING COSMOLOGY

Phase IV Each of us, as part of the latest evolutionary innovation of human consciousness, is beckoned to reflect on our beginnings, our endings, and that which meaning to the journey. The God-like qualities that within each of us, beckons us to be conscious co=creators of the evolving universe. Being present to the planetary crisis, the next evolutionary leap requires an innovation in collective consciousness that propels us into new levels of cooperation to draw upon the wisdom of nature, to design and operate in concert with the natural world.

We are the universe becoming conscious of itself. As reflective beings we are aware that we are on a spiritual journey. We are exploring a multitude of pathways to understand and celebrate that which gives meaning to our unique role in the evolutionary journey. Many gaps in the understanding of our beginnings as well as the natural processes of our evolutionary journey have been revealed through the contribution of science and the unfolding Universe Story. This new story can be the overarching, common story that unites us as a species, it relates and connects us to ALL THAT IS. Each of us, from our individual and/or collective faith perspectives, has the opportunity of integrating and revising our faith statements, which we stand before and commit to, based on this new cosmology.

In regards to my spiritual views and practices during my fourth phase, I initially distanced myself from the institutional church for about 12 years while immersing myself in books about religion, such as *The Battle for God* and *The Great Transformation* by Karen Armstrong, progressive writings about Christianity, e.g. *Beyond Belief* by Elaine Pagels, *The Heart of Christianity* by Marcus Borg, and *Encountering God*, an exposition on religious pluralism by Diana Eck. It has become clear to me that the church and society is going through a transformation similar to the Axial Age described by Karen Armstrong in *The Great Transformation*. It was with this context that Nancy and I joined a "progressive" UCC church 2 years ago. It was a church that we experienced as being on the edge of redefining a relevant new role for Christianity. We have decided that we want to be involved in this transformation and ongoing description of the evolving God. I believe the historic church continues to be a relevant laboratory in which this activity can take place.

"All my Relations" has evolved to recognizing my kinship and intimate relationship with all the creatures of the earth, current and pre-historic. The great challenge is internalizing this relationship, where it becomes experienced from the heart and not just my intellect. Creating and using story, songs and rituals that celebrate our connections with the natural world is a major effort of Earth Elders and my own journey towards embodying my new relationship to ALL THAT IS.

Phase V Although I do not believe in a literal heaven or hell, I find myself anticipating a disembodied extension of consciousness when my physical body, including my brain, dies. It is not a denial of my mortality or even a longing to continue to exist in some spiritual form that informs this notion. Instead, it is being present to the accumulated

psychic evidence from near-death experiences (NDE), past –life phenomenon, and instrumental transcommunication (ITC) , or recordings of allegedly discarnate spirit. The research on these phenomena has shifted from claims of parlor séances to rigorously conducted research projects in university settings (IONS magazine SHIFT, Issue 17, December 2007 – February 2008. Death: Window to the Infinite) For now, we can either accept or reject anecdotal evidence.

For most of my life, I have considered this a topic of interest but not one that has been a focus of concern. Perhaps it was related to a denial of my impending mortality, or at least within a time frame that was worth dwelling on. However, as I am facing my death within the next 3-5 years, it becomes a topic that is more germane. The whole notion of consciousness and how it manifests itself in living and non-living matter, is a topic of extreme importance. Unraveling the mystery of consciousness will contribute to our understanding of whether the notion of a planetary layer of thinking substance or consciousness (Noosphere), as proposed by Teilhard deChardin in the HUMAN PHENOMENON, has validity.

Fred ended his paper with the above paragraph – the writing was entitled,

AN EVOLVING COSMOLOGY: A Swamp Yankee's Journey to the Center

Although I might be able to continue his thinking a bit, it would only be what I gained from watching him as he journeyed to his physical death. He accepted and celebrated his upcoming death as he did his life, with love and gratitude.

With love,

Nancy
May 23rd, 2012