CES—A WIDER AND DEEPER ASSOCIATION; AND CES NEWS

By Herman Greene

A WIDER AND DEEPER ASSOCIATION

In the January-February issue of CES Musings, we described CES as an association of people dedicated to research, education, art and action for the transition to ecozoic societies. Then we spoke of our associates as being “people who, including members of CES, are supported by the work of CES, see it as a resource, make contributions to it in the form of articles, poems, music, art, commentary, or donations, or otherwise engage in its programs or work.” We compared CES to the National Geographic Society, which began in 1988 and had 33 founders. They created “a society for the increase and diffusion of geographical knowledge.” They published the first issue of National Geographic magazine nine months after the society was founded.

The purpose of CES is to increase and diffuse knowledge of the ecozoic and the Great Work. We do this through research, education, art and action.

This short article is to signal that our associates include all those who are endeavor to live in ecozoic ways, as well as those who directly engage in research, education and arts for the ecozoic. This is the wider association part of this article.

Regarding the deeper . . . , I was recently visited by a remarkable author from Monterey, California. She had just been introduced to the idea of the ecozoic and to the work of CES. She said “I love this, I want to join you, and I want to join with you.” This is the deeper association part of this article. We will work over the next few months to deepen our association. We would love to hear from you how that could happen and what you would like to have from us.

SUCCESSFUL EVENT ON “LIVING THE CREATIVE LIFE: ART, BEAUTY, ECOLOGY”

We have held one other art event. While wonderful, it was not like the one we held on April 29-30, 2016 at the Church of Reconciliation in Chapel Hill. This one combined singing, lectures and multiple workshops. We found our sweet spot, our ecozoic home.

How can this be described? This picture says a lot. One can see the beauty of nature in the background, but also in Sandra’s necklace. Her hands express energy and light and her face engagement. This is how it was, and we became a community for that one grand weekend.
The event opened with Joanna Carey leading us in singing a round. Then Blake Tedder sang three songs. Mary Southard showed and talked briefly about her “Artists Statement.” You can see it here. If you weren’t present, this video gives you a good sense of the place we lived in.

Sandra Lubarsky gave the opening lecture on “The Importance of Beauty.” She said what we speak of as beauty is an affirmation of life. This seems right. What we call beautiful gives us life and affirms life. We feel gratitude, abundance. We are invigorated by it.

On Saturday morning, Mary Southard spoke of her creative life as an artist. She told her story by showing her artwork at different stages of her life. She talked of the highs and lows of her life and how her experiences came to her, as if from afar, as images. These images took over her and came through her to her paintings. We again share her beautiful work on the desert blooming, which was featured in all of our promotion pieces for the event.

We had five workshops, which was too many for the size of our group as one-third joined Mary Southard’s workshop on pastel drawing. Yet each of the workshops was special. I was in the poetry interpretation workshop with five others. We read poems on the current dystopia and on the ecozoic promise. Bill Peck led the poetry interpretation workshop. Maggie Peltier and Eve Olive led a workshop on creative writing. Joanna Carey led a workshop on singing. And Kelly Calegar led a workshop on beauty and motion.

Our closing lecture was by Peter Marcus Ford. He began with a quote from Alfred North Whitehead:

*The teleology of the Universe is directed at the production of beauty.*

He explained why in Whitehead’s understanding it was possible to make such a statement. Like Thomas Berry, Whitehead understood the universe as a communion of subjects not a collection of objects. Those subjects are about something expressed in the unfolding universe.

He contrasted that with mechanistic understandings that have dominated modern thought from Descartes forward and are still being repeated by well-regarded people. He gave these as some of the tenets of this creed:

- The world is organized strictly in accordance with deterministic principles or chance
• There are no purposive principles whatsoever in nature.
• There are no gods and no designing forces and that are rationally detectable.
• There are no inherent moral or ethical laws.
• Human beings are marvelously complex machines. The individual human becomes an ethical person by means of only two mechanisms: deterministic heredity interacting with deterministic environmental influences. That is all there is.
• We must conclude that when we die, we die and that is the end of us.
• Free will, as traditionally conceived, the freedom to make uncoerced and unpredictable choices among alternative possible course of action, simply does not exist.
• The evolutionary process cannot produce a being that is truly free to make choices.
• The universe cares nothing for us.
• Humans are as nothing even in the evolutionary process on Earth.

We closed with a Beltane dance led by Ann Loomis and Betty Lou Chaika. We learned that Beltane was the Celtic name for May Day. It is half way between the vernal equinox and the summer solstice. It is the time that nature is budding forth and growing.

Mary Southard’s art, both original and canvass prints were offered for sale and may still be viewed and purchased here.

HERMAN GREENE JOINS THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TOWARD ECOLOGICAL CIVILIZATION

Herman Greene, the President of CES, has joined the Board of Directors of Toward Ecological Civilization (EcoCiv). See article on this new organization in this issue of CES Musings.

He joins a distinguished Board consisting of

• Philip Clayton, President of EcoCiv and Ingraham Professor of Theology at Claremont School of Theology.

• Andrew Schwartz, Executive Vice President of EcoCiv, Managing Director of the Center for Process Studies, and PhD candidate at Claremont Graduate Theological Union.

• John B. Cobb, Jr., regarded as the preeminent scholar in the fields of process philosophy and process theology, author of more than 40 books, and Ingraham Professor of Theology Emeritus at Claremont School of Theology.

• Damian Geddry who worked for 35 years in automotive marketing, public relations, and advertising, including 10 years at Grey New York, one of the world’s largest advertising agencies. He won a Cannes Lions International award for digital advertising.
• William Lesher, Chair Emeritus of the Board of Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions. He is President Emeritus of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and past President of Pacific Lutheran Seminary.

• Mary Evelyn Tucker, Senior Lecturer and Research Scholar at Yale University where she teaches in a joint master’s degree program between the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and the Divinity School. She directs the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale. She is a Trustee of the Thomas Berry Foundation.