

The Phases and Future of the Noosphere: Segment 7

David Sloan Wilson: Most people that are inspired by Teilhard de Chardin are spiritually oriented, and that might describe you as well. But you come from a very different world of statecraft, along with your co-author, David Ronfeldt. And so, I'd like you to begin by just telling us your story as to how you acquired the profession that you did, and then how you encountered Teilhard in this very different context of strategy and statecraft.

John Arquilla: I think I'll answer that in reverse order, because I was exposed to Teilhard before I went into the military and came down this path of international security affairs as a career. But what I remember, having gone to a Catholic high school, I remember one of the readings in my French class was an excerpt from Teilhard's *L'Apparition de L'Homme*, the appearance of men, or better translated as the emergence of men. And that's the first time I saw the term Noosphere. This was 1968. So it was a very tumultuous time and in the appearance of men.

Teilhard, who wrote this in the middle 1950s, was pointing out that humanity had a choice between extinction and transformation. And I thought that was just such a powerful, powerful point. And as we're all old enough here to remember 1968 as a very, very turbulent moment, not just in the United States, but in France and around the world.

It seemed to me that Teilhard offered a great hope for us and suggested that this third story that humankind brings to the world, the idea of a realm of the mind, succeeds the geosphere, the hot rock of the earth as it was formed, and the biosphere when life emerged. And now the true purpose of existence is manifested in the rise of humans who can create a thinking circuit around the world, this Noosphere, this third story of the world. And it offered the possibility of transformation and of creating something of great beauty and harmony, as opposed to what I remember in that same essay, he called mankind's open sore, which was the notion of constant conflict that somehow we lived in an anarchic world where people did what they would, the strong did what they would, and the weak suffered what they must.