



# TEILHARD PERSPECTIVE

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## Peace Among Humans Through Peace with the Earth

### A Few Words from ATA President, John Grim

*What follows is the text from Dr. John Grim's speech at the Unitarian Society of New Haven, CT upon the presentation of the Gandhi Peace Award to Bill McKibben on April 18, 2013.*

I want to thank the organization, Promoting Enduring Peace, and the organizers of this event for the invitation to say a few words as a way of introducing the author, environmentalist and activist, Bill McKibben. Bill has helped to create the largest social movement since Civil Rights that mobilized forty thousand people in Washington DC to protest the proposed Keystone pipeline. May his efforts continue to foster the peace that transforms the social and environmental violence of our times.

This is the first time that the Gandhi Peace Award has been given to an environmentalist since it was created in 1960. This marks a shift in our expanding awareness of what it means to be a peace-maker in contemporary society, namely, engaging in peace projects that are not simply

human-centered, or centered on ethnic groups or nation-states, but centered on the dynamics of the whole Earth community. This shift reminds me of what my mentor, Thomas Berry, used to say: "There will be no peace among humans until there is peace with the Earth." I take this peace to

be a fusion, as our program notes say, of socio-economic justice and environmental harmony necessary for sustainable civilization.

This is certainly descriptive of Bill McKibben's work evident from his first book, *The End of Nature*. Published first in "New Yorker" magazine and as a book in 1989, this work alerted readers to the fundamental changes that human impacts had affected over the Earth. His wake-up call in that book and in his ongoing work has been for shifts in consciousness in the ways

humans relate to the Earth, namely, a turn from projects focused exclusively on human aggrandizement at the expense of nature. Bill leads us to imagine the voice of the Earth saying in the face of unending extractive relationships: "I have given freely of my bounty, but you used me!" He brings



us into awareness of these use-relationships through the physics of climate change as well as the morality of Earth systems. Acknowledging and acting on these relationships is the deep peace project of our times.

Certainly this is akin to what Gandhi spoke of as *satyagraha*, a truth-force or soul-force. Many felt that Gandhi's call could only be implemented through non-violence in the political arena of his time. But Mohandas Gandhi's agendas were diverse and complex. They were first and foremost ways of moving the human quest for truth into the real-politik of nation states. As well as Gandhi's truth-force, *satyagraha*, brings one into the possibilities of a deeper spiritual transformation that he described as a divine encounter. That is, in the action of resistance to oppressive forces individuals open themselves through suffering to spiritual transformations simultaneously within and beyond themselves. Gandhi expressed this saying: "God never occurs to you in person but always in action."

I recall a gathering we organized at Harvard in 2001 where Bill was present. It was the first conference on religion and climate change. Bill's call to us there was to a similar act of imagination. He said: Imagine gatherings where theologians and scholars and activists came together—and did not leave until they had worked out plans for closing down a polluting power plant, opening up new funding for alternative energy, or any of a hundred other tasks: specific actions, which they would help to carry out in the days and weeks ahead. [*Daedalus* Fall 2001] Action...that was the call then and it is still Bill's call now to religious leaders and laity.

For it is Bill's belief that people will rise up to the moral challenge of climate change. What makes tonight's award so poignant is that we remember a spiritual teacher, Gandhi, and honor an environmental leader, Bill, who share an understanding that in conflict both sides are joined together in a deeper reality. The unique disposition of Gandhi's *satyagraha* campaign was that

each side had a chance to make the outcome a mutually beneficial one. Truthful action governed by the readiness to get hurt and yet not to hurt, was manifest in the principle of *ahimsa*, or non-violence. What we see in Bill McKibben's work is a powerful expansion of truthful action into the community of life.

What is it in our day that calls forth *satyagraha* campaigns in which the goal is to undertake suffering so that others may not suffer, so that others may simply live? This is what Bill was pondering when he got dengue fever in Bangladesh. He realized he could eventually leave, while others could not who were adversely affected by climate change and profligate energy use in the First world. This was a wake up call for Bill and all of us to climate justice, and restraint in energy use and material consumption. These are environmental concerns that preoccupy many of us late into the night.

Indeed, this is what inspires the work of the Forum on Religion and Ecology that Mary Evelyn Tucker and I have brought to Yale. We are attempting to mobilize religious traditions to rediscover their embeddedness in the Earth and their solidarity with those suffering from climate injustice, drought, and flooding. All religious traditions are struggling to find the language, symbols, rituals, and ethics for altering our life-threatening behavior, and for encouraging changes of lifestyle in the face of global warming. Religions are themselves challenged by their own bilingual languages, namely, their characteristically strong language of the transcendence of the divine above nature, and the relatively weak language of immanence of the sacred within nature. Not only do religions puzzle over the meaning of matter, they often turn towards applied science and market rationality for language to express utilitarian relationships to the world. For example, only recently have the extractive powers of the fossil-fuel corporations been questioned in religious settings as leaders ponder the negative consequences of unrestrained energy production by mountain-top removal, fracking, and tar sand oil extraction.

The horrific effect of these extractive processes on human and natural communities is becoming more visible. Yet, the majority of the religions are still unable to bridge the gap between the American way of life, and an integration of justice, peace, and environmental harmony.

Indeed, at the Harvard conference that I mentioned above, Bill McKibben pointed out that ecology may rescue religion at least as much as the other way around. This is an important point that I want to conclude on, namely, that religions awaken to the sacred in the act of responding to the ecological dilemmas of our time. Climate justice signals the alliance and fusion of a *satyagraha* campaign in which all sides have a chance to make the outcome a mutually beneficial one. This awakening of consciousness to the effects of our actions, to the signs of our future is what I see in Bill McKibben's *satyagraha* work.

Such transformations of consciousness that lead directly to changes in the ways we interact with the world will hopefully enable life to flourish for future generations. Human activity as planetary creativity may now become religious not simply for autonomous individuals, or self-selected societies, but in relation to the larger Earth community. This challenges the religions at the heart of their teachings.

Our contemporary call to climate justice cannot be answered simply on the basis of doctrine, dogma, scripture, devotion, ritual, belief, or prayer. While all of these are necessary for individuals and communities, our challenges cannot be met by any of the religions in themselves. Religions are necessary for the transformative turn that we need to make, but they are not sufficient in themselves. The individual religions must explain, acknowledge and undertake massive spiritual engagement with the reality of the moral dimensions of climate change. Religions as cultural expressions must act not simply for human needs but to enhance the community of life. If the religions can participate in this ecological creativity they may again empower humans to realize

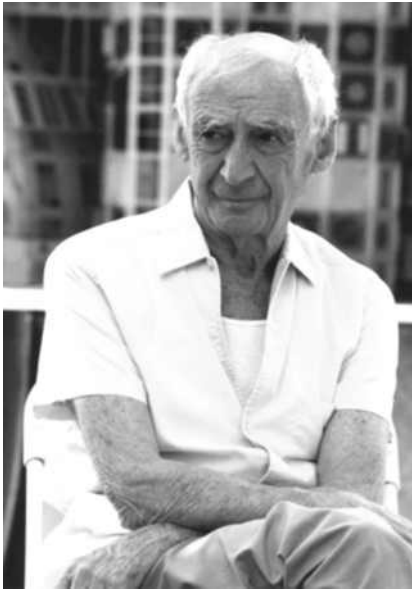
action that is an encounter with God, namely, renewing the integral Earth community.

This is what I hear in Bill McKibben's work that both echoes Gandhi's *satyagraha* and calls us into the resistance and regeneration of our times. Please join me in thanking Bill for leading and sustaining the most important soul-force movement of our time.



**Bill McKibben** is the author of a dozen books about the environment, beginning with *The End of Nature* in 1989. He is a founder of the grassroots climate campaign 350.org, which has coordinated 15,000 rallies in 189 countries since 2009. Time Magazine called him 'the planet's best green journalist' and the Boston Globe said in 2010 that he was 'probably the country's most important environmentalist.' Bill is a frequent contributor to various magazines including *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Orion Magazine*, *Mother Jones*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Granta*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Outside*. He is also a board member and contributor to *Grist Magazine*. Bill has been awarded Guggenheim and Lyndhurst Fellowships, and won the Lannan Prize for nonfiction writing in 2000. Bill currently resides with his wife, writer Sue Halpern, and his daughter, Sophie, in Ripton, Vermont. He is a scholar in residence at Middlebury College.

**Paolo Soleri**  
**June 21, 1919 - April 9, 2013**



*What follows is the full text of Paolo Soleri's obituary from the Arcosanti website  
(<http://arcosanti.org/node/10917>)*

## **REMEMBERING PAOLO SOLERI**

Today the world has lost one of its great minds. Paolo Soleri, architect, builder, artist, writer, theorist, husband, father, born on Summer Solstice, has died at age 93.

Paolo Soleri spent a lifetime investigating how architecture, specifically the architecture of the city, could support the countless possibilities of human aspiration. The urban project he founded, Arcosanti, 65 miles north of Phoenix, was described by NEWSWEEK magazine as "...the most important urban experiment undertaken in our lifetimes."

His own lifetime of work is represented in models, drawings, books, lectures and museum exhibits throughout the world. Soleri's exhibition in 1970 at the Corcoran Museum in Washington DC – and the concurrent publication of his landmark book, CITY IN THE IMAGE OF MAN – changed forever the global conversation about urban planning on our living planet. His term,

"Arcology" joining the words architecture and ecology to represent one whole system of understanding human life on the earth is meant to serve as the basis for that conversation.

Paolo Soleri's ideas are embodied on the ground in the flowing forms of his architectural workshop Cosanti in Paradise Valley, (now an Arizona Historic Landmark) and in the continuing construction at Arcosanti, the urban laboratory on the high desert in central Arizona. There, to date over 7,000 students have participated in its construction. More than 50,000 architecture enthusiasts visit the site each year.

Over the years Soleri's architectural commissions have included the Dome House in Cave Creek, Arizona, the astonishing Artistica Ceramica Solimene ceramics factory in Vietri, Italy, the Indian Arts Cultural Center/ Theatre in Santa Fe, the Glendale Community College Theater, the University of Arizona College of Medicine chapel, the Scottsdale Pedestrian Bridge and Plaza; and his latest bas-relief murals part of the new I-17 Arcosanti/Cordes Junction Arizona traffic interchange. In an age of specialization Paolo Soleri showed architecture's ability to influence and even lead the search for a new pattern of inhabiting the earth. The awards that resulted from this search included gold medals from the American Institute of Architects, the Union of International Architects, the Venice Biennale and the National Design Award from the Cooper-Hewitt/Smithsonian Museum.

Soleri continued questioning and creating until his death. The theme of his last project, a series of collages entitled "Then and Now", juxtaposed his own signature forms with illustrations of life from antiquity. In this project Paolo Soleri attempted to capture the critical notion that we are constantly building on the past, on the work of countless generations that have preceded us on the earth. Our own work - and Soleri's work especially - put into this context, might be a seed that takes many more generations to mature and complete.



Paolo Soleri is survived by two daughters, Kristine Soleri Timm and Daniela Soleri, both of California, two grandchildren, and the famous urban research Foundation he began, Cosanti. A private burial will take place at Arcosanti, the internationally – renowned urban laboratory he founded in 1970, whose construction continues. Soleri's body will be placed beside his wife Colly, who preceded him in death by 31 years.

## **Conference Report: Anthropological Challenges for Today**

*By David Grumett,  
University of Edinburgh*

When Teilhard visited Rome in October 1948, he sensed powerfully that he had arrived in a tangible, organic centre of spiritual unity. In *Letters from a Traveller*, he wrote: “In these days, it is here in Rome that we find the Christic pole of the earth.” During his visit, Teilhard was struck by “Christianity's extraordinary, really imperturbable confidence in the unshakeable solidity of its faith and truth,” acknowledging a “remarkable phenomenon there, unique, in fact, in all the world.”

Last November from Friday 9th to Saturday 10th, a major conference took place in Rome, at the Pontifical Gregorian University, which brought together about 200 academics, clergy, students and members of the public to consider the implications of Teilhard's theology for a renewed evangelization fifty years after the Second Vatican Council. Hosted by the Associazione Italiana Teilhard de Chardin and the Centre Européen Teilhard de Chardin, the event had strong support from the Association Française des Amis de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and the Fondation Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. It was chaired by Cardinal Paul Poupard, the President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Culture, and Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, the Council's current President, sent greetings. Fr François-Xavier Dumortier, the Rector of the Gregorian

University, was present as were several members of the Teilhard family.

Plenary speakers from across Europe addressed aspects of Teilhard's thought relevant to the theme. Evangelization was the focus the first session, with presentations by Mgr André Duplex of the Institut Catholique de Paris and Fr Rosino Gibellini of the Italian publisher *Éditions Queriniana*, who made special reference to the apostolic constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. Anthropology provided the focus of the second session, with a helpful overview by Annamaria Tassone-Bernardi, chairwoman of the Associazione Italiana, as well as a fascinating presentation by Fr Antonio Spadaro, editor of the Jesuit journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, on cybernetics and my own on Teilhard's vision for economic, cultural and social relationships with special reference to the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*. In the evening we walked to the Church of Saint-Louis des Français, where we enjoyed a captivating dramatic rendition of “The Mass on the World” by the Swiss actor Julien Lambert interspersed with singing from mezzo-soprano Anouk Molendijk.

Saturday saw a second full day of plenary presentations. Marie-Jeanne Coutagne from the Catholic University of Lyons, a renowned expert on the philosopher Maurice Blondel, spoke about the theological and secular ideas of freedom. Then Mgr Eric de Moulins-Beaufort, the auxiliary bishop of Paris and scholar of Henri de Lubac, discussed the resources that Teilhard and de Lubac being to the Church's response to the challenges posed by the Second Vatican Council. Contributions then came from Fr Alfredo Dinis of the Catholic University of Braga, Portugal, and Fr Agustin Udias from Madrid on the world and the noosphere. Following lunch, we enjoyed presentations on the implications of Teilhard's thought for interfaith relations and the study of religion by Gérard Donnadiu, chairman of the Association Française, Italian scholar Luciano Mazzoni-Benoni, and Evelyne Maurice from the Centre Sèvres in Paris. The final presentation was, appro-

priately, on evolution and the Cosmic Christ, and was given by Mgr Thierry Magnin, Rector of the Catholic University of Lyons. The proceedings ended with Mass.

Teilhard evidently enjoyed his own visit to Rome, evoking in one letter the “beautiful golden light.” But how much actual influence did he exert after his death on the Council? During the formal proceedings, his name was mentioned by only eleven speakers, with many of these references occurring during the debates over the contentious constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. Nevertheless, the Council was a huge event of long duration and many dimensions, both formal and informal. Because of this, tracing Teilhard’s full influence on it accurately would be an impossible research task. We know that there was great interest in his ideas among many bishops and others present in Rome during the Council. For instance, de Lubac, who was present as a theological adviser, was frequently asked by groups and individuals to deliver expositions of Teilhard’s thought, and he reports many occasions on which Teilhard was invoked by both enthusiasts and detractors. Moreover, de Lubac published his first, controversial study of Teilhard, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin*, during the Council, followed two years later by a profound and beautiful presentation of Teilhard’s theology, *The Faith of Teilhard de Chardin*, in an attempt to correct misreadings of the first book. These works were in circulation in Rome during the Council despite an unsuccessful attempt by the city authorities to have them removed from bookshops. In any case, it is clear that at least some of Teilhard’s broad ideas were in circulation at the Council.

What, however, did he take away from Rome? In *Activation of Energy*, Teilhard wrote two years later that, from a Catholic perspective: “If the Church is not to be false to herself ... she cannot but regard herself as the very axis upon which the looked-for movement of concentration and convergence can, and must, be effected.” Perhaps Teilhard’s Roman sojourn renewed his sense that

spiritual evolution had a necessarily institutional dimension that only the Church could fulfil. This is a message that has not always been remembered by either his advocates or detractors, resulting in a sometimes fractious ongoing relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, this conference received significant coverage in Rome. An article by Éric de Moulins-Beaufort on Teilhard and de Lubac appeared in *Osservatore Romano*, and we were honored to receive a mention in Pope Benedict’s Angelus address on Sunday, delivered in a wet St Peter’s Square. It would not be an overstatement to say that this event, held in Rome’s premier pontifical university, made a welcome contribution to the long overdue rehabilitation of Teilhard within the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Teilhard, Benedict XVI, and the New Evangelization**

*Translated Remarks by Gérard Donnadieu,  
President of Association Française des Amis de Pierre  
Teilhard de Chardin*

Regarding the proceedings of the Symposium that took place in Rome on 9th and 10th of November 2012 : “Anthropological Challenge for Today, A reading of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in favour of a renewed evangelization, 50 years after the council Vatican II.”

This international conference held in Rome will have been a decisive step in the acknowledgement by the Catholic Church of the thought of the renowned Jesuit, Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, who was unjustly persecuted and ignored during his lifetime. Let us quote about this the conclusive remark of Fr. Eugenio Costa of the Papal Gregorian University, an organizer with others of the conference: “*This two day conference has been an excellent journey through Fr. Teilhard’s thought and life. I have wondered how we can explain this present, and sometimes passionate, renewed interest in our great friend. The circumstances in which we live, namely, culture, evolution of the mind, research, change of direction - often change the course of life’s*

*river, as well as the thoughts of an Author, to follow tracks that are sometimes difficult to understand. Then, suddenly, something becomes clear before us... The tenacity and determination of some of the best people prevent these thoughts from being lost, and allow the current to go on stronger and stronger so that at last the river can be seen!*" Yes, the river of Teilhard's thought has indeed become visible, with the irresistible force of a majestic flow now endorsed by the Catholic Church. This finds expression not only among theological authorities, indeed, it includes the Pope himself. Such was the sentiment of the members of the conference, when they explicitly received, on Sunday 11th November, the blessing of Pope Benedict XVI. It was a moment of intense emotion.

This long march went from almost complete misunderstanding of Teilhard by the Church, to his being acknowledged as a genuine Christian thinker and now to the appreciation of his thought as an asset to the new evangelization. In the meantime there have been many moments of doubt but also of hope for all those who, like the members of our Association, have been fighting, since Fr. Teilhard's death, for a just recognition, at last, of the man and his work. Let us recall in a few lines the main steps of this long process leading from the misunderstanding of his work to its intelligent reception.

It is well known that the misunderstanding he endured was a great pain for Teilhard throughout his whole adult life. Beyond the vexations and humiliations he suffered from his Church, he remained heroically faithful to it. As early as his first altercation with the Roman Authorities in 1924 he had said *"One must swallow the impediment through obedience". And later on he imparted to friends who were advising him to leave the Church: "Would it be logical for me, by breaking with my Church, to impatiently strain the growth of the Christian branch in which, I am convinced, the sap of tomorrow's religion is breaking forth? I am a prisoner of the Church because of the very views which show me its insufficiencies."* It is only several

years after his death that some elements of his thought began to be seriously considered by a few theologians. First of all by Henri de Lubac, future cardinal and his faithful friend, who wrote several books in support of Teilhard's thought demonstrating his orthodox Christianity. This brave commitment did a lot to avert the risk of censure of the work that Teilhard's opponents, influential at the Curia, wanted to snatch from the magisterium. It also loosened tongues and pens, especially during the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) of which many commentators acknowledge Teilhard's indirect influence on the drafting of a number of texts. This aspect was abundantly recalled at the conference in Rome, especially in connection with the Constitution on the Church in today's world *Gaudium et Spes*, with the Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* and even with the Constitution on Revelation *Dei Verbum* (which is less known albeit central to the work of this Vatican Council). After the Council, the wind having changed, many theologians began to quote Teilhard. In that way Joseph Ratzinger wrote in a theological work, published for the first time in 1968 in Germany and since then widely translated [1]: *"In Jesus-Christ humanization's process has really reached its end...It is a great merit of Teilhard de Chardin to have renewed the meaning of the relations of Christ to mankind and by proceeding from the present image of the world to have on the whole rightly understood them...and made them accessible again."* Then in 1981, year of the celebration at the UNESCO of the centenary of Teilhard's birth, the Vatican itself initiated a prudent change by sending the Apostolic Nuncio as its representative.

In June 1988, Pope John-Paul II came to the point of admitting that it is legitimate, and even necessary, to take into account the new scientific understandings in order to renew theological language. And in October 1996, speaking to an audience of scientists coming from all over the world, he did not hesitate to declare: *"New knowledge leads us today to recognize in the theory of evolution*



*more than an assumption*". Well, is it not the development of the theory of evolution that brought Teilhard to his vision of the world? And enabled him to show how important was the spiritual dimension of this theory? And that the Christian could see in it God's action at work? Almost one century later, the Pope was making his own the Teilhardian thesis!

Yet the summit of this recognition - recognition and not rehabilitation because we must insist: Teilhard was never condemned by the Church - of its illustrious son who had been ignored for such a long time was the great international Conference held in Rome between the 21st and the 24th October 2004, at the Papal Gregorian University. It was presided over by Cardinal Paul Poupard, as a representative of John-Paul II. Before the two hundred members who had come from all over the world to make an inventory of the scientific, theological and philosophical heritage left by Fr. Teilhard, Cardinal Poupard declared: "In his own unrivalled way, Teilhard teaches us (as John-Paul II does in epigraph of the encyclical, "Fides et Ratio") how faith and reason are like two wings allowing the human mind to rise towards the contemplation of truth". In this way Teilhard officially became a Christian thinker worthy of being studied and taught!

Eventually the last and most significant developments were the numerous references to Teilhard de Chardin's thought that Benedict XVI made during his pontificate. In 2006 to begin with, during the first Easter vigil he presided, Benedict XVI gave a strikingly Teilhardian homily. In these remarks he highlighted the universal and cosmic dimension of the Risen Christ: "*Let us, for once, use the language of the theory of evolution and say that the resurrection of Christ is the greatest "mutation", the absolutely most decisive jump... that ever happened in the long history of life: a jump of a completely new sort, concerning us and concerning the whole of History.*" Then, as he was giving an extemporaneous homily at the Cathedral in Aoste on the 27th July 2009, referring to the Eucharist,

understood as the world's offering to the living and vivifying God, he quoted Teilhard in an echo of *The Mass on the World*: "*It is the great vision Teilhard de Chardin that in the end we will have a real universal liturgy in which the universe will become a living Eucharistic host*". At last, in his book *Lumière du monde* [2], as he was questioned about the credibility of the Gospel narrative, especially about the resurrection of Christ, he answered: "*[God] may have created, through the resurrection, a new dimension of life. Beyond the biosphere and the noosphere, as Teilhard de Chardin said, He may still have created a new sphere in which man and the world are but one with God*". Can we imagine a better definition of what Teilhard precisely called the Christic?

The second conference that was recently held in Rome, with the apostolic blessing of the Holy Father, is in keeping with this continuation. Whereas the 2004 Conference had been the recognition of the thinker and the Christian, the 2012 Conference has made Teilhard's thought a significant dimension of the new evangelization. The question is not anymore to acknowledge the work but to make it serve the Church of Christ, to make it an asset in the spiritual struggle ahead of us. This aspect was emphasized at the conference by the great convergence of the lecturers' points of view going beyond the differences and the variety of their approach. The unifying and synthetic ability of the Teilhardian vision was extraordinary: it succeeded in assembling, in a wonderful synergy, points of view that were very different at the beginning. In order to realize this, be inspired by it and rediscover these remarkable texts I cannot but advise our readers to acquire the official Acts of the Rome Conference (as soon as they are published, towards the end of 2013) in which they will find all the lectures in their entirety.

Thus, Benedict XVI has been the first pope who named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in order to refer to him and honor him! What a strange destiny for a pope whom the media constantly



described as a conservative, refusing to see his open-mindedness and his modernity as a thinker and a theologian. Because they keep on trying to make the spiritual realities, particularly those of the Church, fit in with their notions borrowed from political language – right / left, conservative / progressive – the media condemn themselves to completely misunderstand a large part of reality, its very core, which is beyond this simplistic view and has nothing to do with political accuracy. By willingly withdrawing from St. Peter's seat before he could not rely anymore on his physical and intellectual capacities, Benedict XVI has just given to the world and to the Church another example of his great intelligence and no less great humility. *What should the Catholic Church do today?* Fr. Teilhard was wondering in 1954, in a letter to Jeanne Mortier [3]. And he immediately answered: “*just present to the world the Universal Christ she has been able (she and she alone) to generate (to make explicit) during the last two millennia*”. It seems to me that this is exactly what Benedict XVI has tried to do during his eight years as pope, through his teaching (three encyclical letters of an obvious Christological tone), through his preaching and through his very life in as much as it accepted passivity in order to let himself descend into Christ (what an extraordinary example his renunciation is); And on this road he could not but meet Teilhard, The Teilhard of *The Divine Milieu*, of the *Mass on the World* and of *The Ever Greater Christ*.

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[1] Joseph RATZINGER, *La foi chrétienne hier et aujourd'hui*, Cerf, 2005, p. 159-160

[2] BENOIT XVI, *Lumière du monde*, Bayard, December 2010, p.220

[3] *Lettres à Jeanne Mortier*, Seuil, 1984, p.163

**Following Gérard Donnadiou's examination of renewed interest and recognition of Teilhard's thought within the Catholic Church, the following letter from an Association member highlights the long-standing commitment of so many to the vision of Teilhard.**

Dear Pope Francis,

I am an 85 year old, retired United Methodist minister who, for about 50 years, has described himself as a Teilhardian. Since the mid 60s he has been my spiritual, philosophical, scientific and social mentor and guide through his various published works.

As I am certain you well know, on orders from the Vatican, he was forbidden to publish, was denied prestigious academic positions in his native France and was exiled to live in other countries, especially for a long period in China. He died in New York City on Easter Sunday, 1955, and is buried near there.

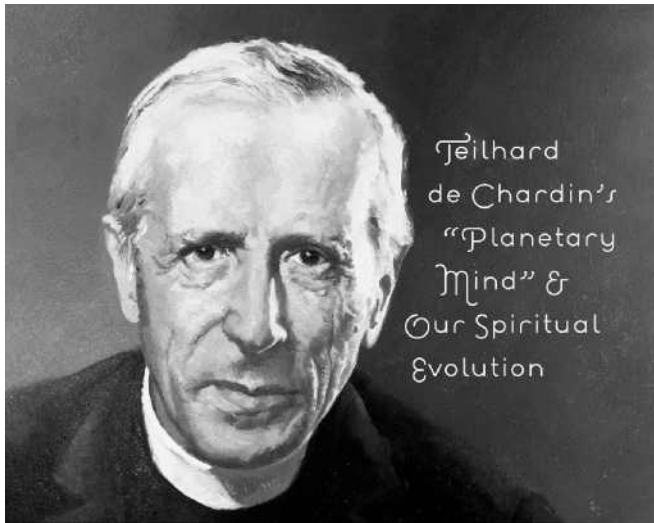
The passage of time has amply shown that he was the preeminent Roman Catholic scientist and seer of the twentieth century.

I am writing to recommend that in whatever way is appropriate, you see that Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. be recognized for his creative and multifaceted contributions to our understanding of God, the entire created order and the work of Christ in it. Please release Teilhard from the prison in which the Roman Catholic Church has kept him for more than seventy-five years.

On another note altogether, thank you for taking the name Francis. Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of millions of Christians, such as I, and non-Christians as well. A small Statue of Saint Francis with his “A Simple Prayer” and “The Canticle of Creation,” has a prominent place on a wall of our home.

Your servant in Christ,  
Richard C. Stazesky

## Teilhard de Chardin's 'Planetary Mind' and Our Spiritual Evolution



We're pleased to highlight this series of interviews on the philosophy and contributions of Teilhard de Chardin. This series was presented as part of the NPR show "On Being" with Krista Tippett (<http://www.onbeing.org/>). Here are a few brief selections from the three individuals interviewed: Ursula King, David Sloan Wilson, and Andrew Revkin. The full recordings of the interviews and other related resources are available online at: <http://www.onbeing.org/program/teilhard-de-chardins-planetary-mind-and-our-spiritual-evolution/4965>

As Teilhard wrote: "We do well to look at it (Earth) with emotion. Tiny and isolated though it is, it bears clinging to its flanks the destiny and future of the Universe." (FOM, 114) Our challenge now is to actualize an integral while multi-form and multicultural Earth community. How can we become planetary citizens as a movement toward a sustainable future?

### **Krista Tippett, host:**

It's a constant theme these days: Where is technology taking us? Are we heading towards greatness, or just hyperconnected collapse? This challenge, our challenge, was foreseen a century ago by Teilhard de Chardin.

A world-renowned paleontologist, he helped verify fossil evidence of human evolution. A Jesuit priest and philosopher, he penned forbidden ideas that seemed mystical at the time but are now coming true — that humanity would develop capacities for collective, global intelligence; that a meaningful vision of the earth and the universe would have to include, as he put it, "the interior as well as the exterior of things; mind as well as matter."

The coming stage of evolution, he said, won't be driven by physical adaptation but by human consciousness, creativity and spirit. It's up to us. We visit Teilhard de Chardin's biographer, and we experience his ideas energizing New York Times Dot Earth blogger Andrew Revkin and evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson.

### **David Sloan Wilson:**

The main thing he said, which is only now becoming back in back in vogue, is that in one sense the origin of man was just another species, but in another sense we were an entirely new evolutionary process, and that made us in some ways as significant as the evolution of life.

### **Ursula King:**

The whole region of cyberspace, you see there are some people who say Teilhard is the patron saint of the World Wide Web. He somehow had this idea that we will intensify our communication. But what are we doing; what do we do with it?

### **Andrew Revkin:**

There are the Kurzweils of the world who talked about the singularity when they kind of see the potential for this system to essentially become more powerful than we are. But I think what's much more powerful right now is this growing capacity to collaboratively create things — and collaboratively feel things and experience things as well. It's not just a function of computing power, there's something else that's going on.

## Journey of the Universe Featured at the Chautauqua Institution

Responses to *Journey of the Universe* from scholars of the world religions were a highlight of a conference titled *Our Elegant Universe* held in upstate New York at the Chautauqua Institution from June 24-28, 2013. The Chautauqua Institution is a leading educational center started in 1874 that has hosted numerous intellectuals and artists over its long and distinguished history.

*Journey of the Universe*, inspired by the vision of Teilhard and Thomas Berry, is a cosmological story of the unfolding of the universe and Earth in which life and humans emerge. The film and book were written by the ATA Vice-Presidents Brian Swimme and Mary Evelyn Tucker and produced by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim.

Images and metaphors from the wisdom traditions of the world religions and philosophies are woven into *Journey of the Universe*. Indeed, there are numerous affinities between the world religions and Journey, some of which are described in the papers that were delivered at the Chautauqua conference on *Our Elegant Universe* (<http://www.ciweb.org/religion-lectures-week-one/>). Moreover, the extensive work of the Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale (<http://www.yale.edu/religionandecology/>) is also a complement to *Journey of the Universe* as both of these projects are concerned with our growing ecological crises. As such they are trying to awaken humans to recognize our dependence on nature's remarkable complexity and to find a way forward amidst the unraveling of ecosystems.

The participants in the Chautauqua conference included scholars of the world religions: Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Rabbi Larry Troster, Heather Eaton, Safei Eldin Hamed, David Haberman, Christopher Chapple, and James Miller. These talks are posted on the *Journey of the Universe* website: <http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org/conference-at-chautauqua/>

## Notable Books and Articles

Our first review is of the latest published work of Peter Todd, the author of our most recent Teilhard Study: *Teilhard and Other Modern Thinkers on Evolution, Mind, and Matter*. For those who may not yet have had a chance to digest this study, we include the abstract here:

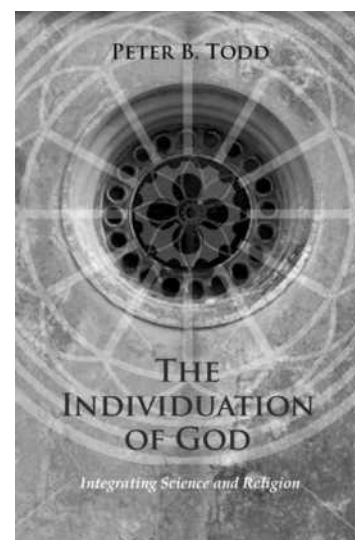
**Abstract:** In his *The Phenomenon of Man*, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin develops concepts of consciousness, the noosphere, and psychosocial evolution. This paper explores Teilhard's evolutionary concepts as resonant with thinking in psychology and physics. It explores contributions from archetypal depth psychology, quantum physics, and neuroscience to elucidate relationships between mind and matter. Teilhard's work can be seen as advancing this psychological lineage or psychogenesis. That is, the evolutionary emergence of matter in increasing complexity from sub-atomic particles to the human brain and reflective consciousness leads to a noosphere evolving towards an Omega point. Teilhard's central ideas provide intimations of a numinous principle implicit in cosmology and the discovery that in and through humanity evolution becomes not only conscious of itself but also directed and purposive.

Todd, Peter B. *The Individuation of God: Integrating Science and Religion*. New York: Chiron Publications, 2012.

Review by Leonard Cruz, M.D., M.E.

Quantum mechanics, depth psychology, and mysticism are blended in Peter Todd's scholarship as he searches for a *Third-Millennium Theology*.

Todd effectively strikes a blow to the *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins's enormously popular





2006 book by highlighting that the God Dawkins seeks to dismantle, a God infused with classical Newtonian and neo-Darwinian ideas, has already been silenced and annihilated. Todd correctly points out that Dawkins completely ignores revolutionary ideas emerging from quantum mechanics high priests such as David Bohm (*The Undivided Universe*), Erwin Schrödinger (*What is Life?*), and evolutionary biologists like McFadden, Al-Khalilili (*A Quantum Mechanical Model of Adaptive Mutation*) who propose a quantum mechanical model of evolution. One consequence of Todd's frequent reference to Dawkins is that it may unintentionally promote *The God Delusion*.

During the twentieth century, under the banner of process theology, various explorations of God's attribute of being mutable were undertaken. *The Individuation of God* is at once a psychologically well-informed work and another contribution to process theology. Readers who are familiar with certain bedrock ideas from quantum mechanics will undoubtedly appreciate Todd's grasp more than those for whom ideas like quantum entanglement, or emergent phenomenon are entirely new concepts. It may be helpful to explain some concepts and Wikipedia provides some succinct explanations with suitable references (retrieved 2/3/2013 )

**Quantum entanglement** is a form of quantum superposition. When a measurement is made and it causes one member of such a pair to take on a definite value (e.g., clockwise spin), the other member of this entangled pair will at any subsequent time[6] be found to have taken the appropriately correlated value (e.g., counterclockwise spin). Thus, there is a correlation between the results of measurements performed on entangled pairs, and this correlation is observed even though the entangled pair may have been separated by arbitrarily large distances.[7]In Quantum entanglement, part of the transfer happens instantaneously. [8]

**Emergence** is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively

simple interactions. Emergence is central to the theories of integrative levels and of complex systems.

The **negentropy**, also **negative entropy**,<sup>[1]</sup> of a living system is the entropy that it exports to keep its own entropy low; it lies at the intersection of entropy and life. (It is a measure of a systems tendency to move toward or sustain complexity and order.)

Todd suggests that God and man are in an entangled state such that both God's and man's individuation are inextricably bound and reliant on one another for completion. This will strike many Christians as antithetical and heretical, but it may provide process theologians a solid scientific basis for their claims.

The book's first chapter, "The Case against God" summarizes the case Dawkins prosecutes against God in which he contends that belief in a personal god constitutes a delusion. In "Religious Fundamentalism as a Shadow", Todd notes that fundamentalism and the literalism it espouses is "One major challenge to the survival of humanity..." . (p 21) The third chapter, "Mind and Directed Evolution" introduces the most revolutionary claims. Insofar as the quality of mind is revealed even at the quantum level, Todd explains that biosystems may be viewed as quantum computers. As such, they are capable of evaluating infinite probability states, and through natural selection, efficiently choosing evolutionary changes that are useful for survival. If for example, the mutation of the HIV retrovirus involves something other than random events, then humankind's collective conscious response may be understood as a "metaphorical quantum entanglement between the developed and developing worlds...that transcends the confines of nationalism and economic self-interest..." (p48).

In the chapter titled "Consciousness as an Organizing Principle" the author decries spiritual materialism, secularism, and the religion of the state for their ability to support a "God of insects"

(p82), wherein spirit and numinosity is repressed and no individuality exists like with beehives or ant colonies. This conception of God has menacing effects upon the planet and its resources. In the totalitarian states especially, "...no individuality exists ... the individuation process is repressed so that personal self-identity is subsumed to a mindless devotion to the state ...". Depth psychology, theology, and the numinous qualities of archetypal symbols illuminate how man's conception of God can evolve beyond a transitional object.

The last two chapters, "Myth, Symbol, and Transformation" and "A Third-Millennium Theology" challenge conventional understanding of time's arrow and reintroduce the numinous in an effort to propose a theology for our current millennium. Todd is not suggesting a third-millennium theology as some completed endpoint. However, he seems to be mindful of the simultaneous threats of thermonuclear warfare, chemical & biological weapons, natural resource depletion, and global warming. These are more dangerous if humanity remains fixed in the mindset of religious fundamentalism, classical Newtonian mechanics, or neo-Darwinian orthodoxy.

*The Individuation of God* inquires about time and the illusion of time's arrow. Todd invokes Schrödinger's reference to the "tyranny of Chronos" in considering the indestructibility of the mind. The Greek New Testament uses two words for time, Chronos (Χρόνος) and Kairos (καιρός). Kairos is the indeterminate time, often discovered in the liminal realm, when something special happens. It can be thought of as the emergent moment, the eternal now, or the realm where the illusion of time's arrow is transcended.

In the end, *The Individuation of God* is a valiant and well-informed effort to integrate modern science, psychology, and theology. *The Individuation of God* successfully interweaves an expansive list of sources. In the last chapter His Holiness the Dalai Lama is quoted, "If science proves some belief of Buddhism wrong, then Buddhism will have to

change." (p141). And from Einstein's essay, "The World as I See It" he quotes, "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious." We arrive at some intriguing conclusions that "Without psyche there would be no theory to explain the outlines and patterns discovered by science." (p150) In the course of God becoming fully human through the incarnation, arises a corollary and possibility, that humanity is becoming divine. This is in perfect alliance with Jung's notion of Christ as a symbol of the *coniunctio*, for Christ reconciles opposites.

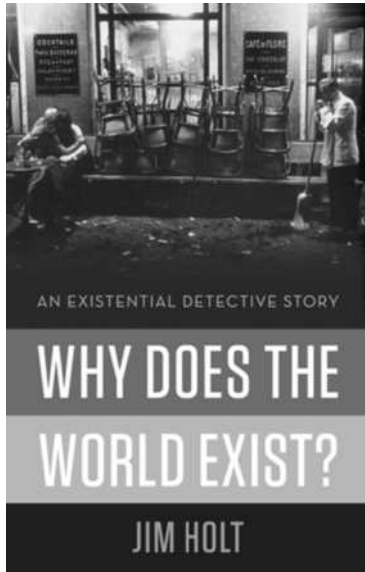
The evolution of God and the evolution of man cannot be separated. There is a trajectory of humanity's conception of God that began with a mythopoetic, animistic experience of the divine. This trajectory later traverses the epochs in which omnipotent, often patriarchal Olympian or Old Testament deities reigned with ferocity and aloofness. And this arrives at a "...three-hundred-year-old schism between science and religion" (p160) that yielded a demythologized, annihilated god. Peter Todd's third millennium theology, may provide a path of return to the Garden of Eden. This third millennium theology is characterized by a deep appreciation for the entangled state of our inner and outer life, of I and Thou, and of the physical and the numinous. This theology brings man's evolving notion of God full circle where it is once more infused with myths and symbols. In this regard, depth psychology and Jung's seemingly unfathomable explorations continue to enrich us.

At times it may appear at times that Todd too often refers to ideas previously mentioned, but this is necessary since many topics are likely to be unfamiliar. The frequent invocation of Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion*, makes *The Individuation of God*, appear to be a disputation of Dawkins. This is a small shortcoming, of this book but *The Individuation of God* deserves to stand alone with Dawkins relegated to a footnote and bibliographic reference.

Holt, Jim. *Why Does the World Exist? An Existential Detective Story*. New York: Liveright, 2012.

Review by Charles D. Matthews

Jim Holt of *New Yorker* and *New York Times Review of Books* fame has written a *New York Times* Top 10 Book of the Year that is also a popular finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in non-fiction recounting as it does Mr. Holt's engaging interviews with the world's great thinkers in the fields of math, physics, artificial intelligence, theology, philosophy and literature all of whom are asked to share their thoughts on the "ultimate question." *Why is there something rather than nothing?*



With engaging elegant and witty references to historical scholarship mixed with poignant remembrances of the author's own recent loss of his dog and witness to his mother's "infinitesimal transition from being to nothingness" we willingly and enjoyably travel along with Mr. Holt to Pittsburg, Austin, Greenwich Village, North Oxford, London and Paris, meet some of the intellectual giants of our time and are ultimately pulled along to the ultimate conclusion that the "ultimate question" remains for most ultimately unknown and, for now, ultimately unknowable.

For all the pleasure the book affords, however, it was disappointing that Mr. Holt did not give at least a passing reference to Teilhard deChardin, a man who was not only a prolific writer, a priest, and a besieged but unremitting early champion of evolution but a man possessed of impeccable scientific credentials who made it his lifetime's work

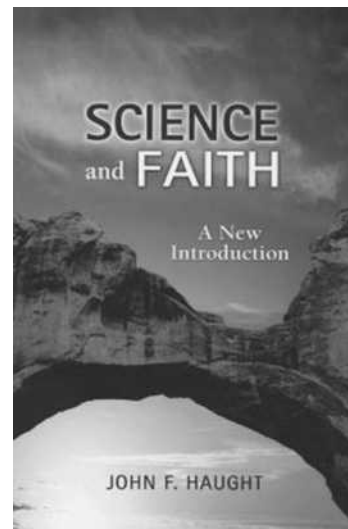
to respond to Mr. Holt's "ultimate question" and in doing so concluded that the world exists so that we who live in it can evolve, become more Christ like and ultimately converge – enfold if you will – in both science and faith, at the same incarnate point, and become one in God.

Haught, John. *Science and Faith: A New Introduction*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2013. <http://www.paulistpress.com/Products/4806-6/science-and-faith.aspx>

Review by Ursula King, Institute for Advanced Studies University of Bristol, England

John Haught has managed to create an imaginary, provocative dialogue where several spokespersons argue either for or against different positions about science and faith whether there

exists conflict, contrast or convergence between them. His book represents a masterly summary of sophisticated debates in very accessible form.



It opens one's eyes to the complex depths of reality and convincingly proves that there is still plenty of room for theology in an age of science. But it also shows that now, when we are faced with an immense evolutionary journey that is still going on and full of promise, theology requires fresh expression in the light of transformative scientific knowledge. Readers are invited to become participants in the ongoing dialogue and will enjoy the lively debates and critical reflections offered here. Full of strong arguments, helpful explanations and wise guidance, this inspiring book will be of enormous benefit to college students and anyone trying to work out their own answers to deeply troubling questions about science and faith in a fast changing world.



# *Emergent Universe Oratorio*

**Premiere, Sunday September 15, 3pm**  
Shelburne Farms, Shelburne Vermont

**SAMUEL GUARNACCIA, composition**  
**CAMERON DAVIS, visual art**

The *Emergent Universe Oratorio* is an hour and half long choral and chamber orchestra composition co-presented with visual art conceived in response to the current unfolding scientific cosmology as presented in the 2011 documentary *Journey of the Universe*.

The *Emergent Universe Oratorio* premiere will held in the unique Breeding Barn at Shelburne Farms, Vermont, a National Historic Trust building which was at one-time the largest open span wooden structure in America. Shelburne Farms is a 1400-acre working farm, and nonprofit environmental education center located on the shores of Lake Champlain.

The Oratorio Premiere is co-hosted by collaborative partners Shelburne Farms and All Souls Interfaith Gathering. It is a project of 2020 Strategies, is supported by grants from the Argosy Foundation, the Puffin Foundation, and sponsored by the American Teilhard Association.

**Free and open to the public**

Donations at the door will be gratefully accepted.

**For more information visit [www.samguarnaccia.com](http://www.samguarnaccia.com) or call 802-734-0279**

*Devi Prayer (Hymn to the Divine Mother) by Cameron Davis*  
*Original painting is 66" x 60" acrylic on canvas*

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### **American Teilhard Association, Thomas Berry, and Journey of the Universe Websites**

At the new ATA site [www.teilharddechardin.org](http://www.teilharddechardin.org) can be found a Biography, List of Writings, Pictures and Quotes, Life Timeline, ATA Events, Teilhard Studies with first page, recent full Teilhard Perspectives, Membership info, Links, and a Brian Swimme interview on Teilhard.

The Thomas Berry site [www.thomasberry.org](http://www.thomasberry.org) offers a Biography by Mary Evelyn Tucker, a John Grim essay: "Time, History, Historians in Thomas Berry's Vision," Writings by Thomas Berry, comments on his *The Great Work*, Films about or inspired by, and a List of Books.

A new site [www.journeyoftheuniverse.org](http://www.journeyoftheuniverse.org) introduces this title film, book and educational series by Brian Swimme, Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, and an advisory board to carry forward in multimedia fashion the inspiration of Pierre Teilhard and Thomas Berry.

### **Teilhard Perspective**

TEILHARD PERSPECTIVE is published by the American Teilhard Association, a non-profit organization whose goals are to explore philosophical, scientific, religious, social and environmental concerns in light of Teilhard's vision and the role of the human phenomenon in this emerging understanding of the cosmos.

We welcome suggestions of relevant ideas, books, news, events and contributions of articles for this newsletter. The editor is Tara Trapani, Yale University. The *Teilhard Perspective* newsletter along with the biannual *Teilhard Studies* pamphlet and Annual Meeting notices are available through membership. Please contact us at: American Teilhard Association, c/o John Grim, 29 Spoke Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525. Annual membership is \$35.

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