

TEILHARD PERSPECTIVE

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An Endorsement by Pope Benedict XVI of Teilhard de Chardin

This newsletter has earlier noted in its Spring 2008 issue an historic Vatican warning to Pierre Teilhard's mid 20th century synthesis of a creative evolutionary science with traditional Christianity. In that case, Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, a close advisor to Pope Benedict XIV, and once a theologian co-author with then Joseph Ratzinger of *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, saw Teilhard's achievement as pointing the way for such a vital 21st century rapprochement, both in his own book *Chance or Purpose?* and before public audiences.

This past summer, Pope Benedict himself, in a Homily at a Celebration of Vespers at the Cathedral of Aosta, Italy on July 24, 2009, personally cited "the great vision of Teilhard de Chardin" as a beacon to appreciate a numinous universe. The full Homily can be read at this long online address: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2009/documents/hf_benxvi_hom_20090724_vespri-aosta_en.html, or can also be reached via Google and some of the above keywords. We next quote the excerpt wherein Teilhard is so lauded by Benedict.

"The role of the priesthood is to consecrate the world so that it may become a living host, a liturgy: so that the liturgy may not be something alongside the reality of the world, but that the world itself shall become a living host, a liturgy. This is also the great vision of Teilhard de Chardin: in the end we shall achieve a true cosmic liturgy, where the cosmos becomes a living host." (Pope Benedict XVI)

Needless to say, this Papal endorsement, after many years of clerical warnings and banishments, did not escape a perceptive media. These next excerpts are from a news report by John Allen on July 28, 2009 in the *National Catholic Reporter*. The whole article can be accessed by going to their website and searching for "Teilhard."

Pope Cites Teilhardian Vision of the Cosmos as a 'Living Host'

Though few might have cast him in advance as a "green pope," Pope Benedict XVI has amassed a striking environmental record, from installing solar panels in the Vatican to calling for ecological conversion. Now the pontiff has also hinted at a possible new look at the undeclared patron saint of Catholic ecology, the late French Jesuit scientist and philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

Benedict's brief July 24 reference to Teilhard, praising his vision of the entire cosmos as a "living host," can be read on multiple levels -- as part of the pontiff's rapprochement with the Jesuits, or as a further instance of finding something positive to say about thinkers whose works have set off doctrinal alarms, as Benedict previously did with rebel Swiss theologian and former colleague Hans Küng.

The potential implications for environmental theology, however, are likely to generate the greatest interest among Teilhard's fans and foes alike -- and more than a half-century after his death in 1955, the daring Jesuit still has plenty of both. Admirers trumpet Teilhard as a pioneer, harmonizing Christianity with the theory of evolution; critics charge that Teilhard's optimistic view of nature flirts with pantheism.

Toward the end of a reflection upon the Letter to the Romans, in which St. Paul writes that the world itself will one day become a form of living worship, the pope said, "It's the great vision that later Teilhard de Chardin also had: At the end we will have a true cosmic liturgy, where the cosmos becomes a living host."

Though offered only in passing, and doubtless subject to overinterpretation, Benedict's line nevertheless triggered headlines in the Italian press

American Teilhard Association 2010 Annual Meeting

Our 2010 Annual Meeting will held on April 17 in the Social Hall of Union Theological Seminary in New York City. A light lunch at 12 PM and 1:30 lecture is planned, with a speaker to be announced.

about a possible "rehabilitation" of Teilhard, sometimes referred to as the "Catholic Darwin." That reading seemed especially tempting since, as a consummate theologian, Benedict is aware of the controversy that swirls around Teilhard, and would thus grasp the likely impact of a positive papal reference.

At the very least, the line seemed to offer a blessing for exploration of the late Jesuit's ideas. That impression appeared to be confirmed by the Vatican spokesperson, Jesuit Fr. Federico Lombardi, who said afterward, "By now, no one would dream of saying that [Teilhard] is a heterodox author who shouldn't be studied."

On the basis of his scientific work, Teilhard developed an evolutionary theology asserting that all creation is developing towards an "Omega Point," which he identified with Christ as the Logos, or "Word" of God. In that sense, Teilhard broadened the concept of salvation history to embrace not only individual persons and human culture, but the entire universe. In short order, Teilhard's thought became an obligatory point of departure for any Catholic treatment of the environment.

Yet from the beginning, Teilhard's theology was also viewed with caution by officials both of the Jesuit order and in the Vatican. Among other things, officials worried that his optimistic reading of nature compromised church teaching on original sin. In 1962 -- seven years after his death -- the Vatican's doctrinal office issued a warning that his works "abound in such ambiguities and indeed even serious errors, as to offend Catholic doctrine."

In 1981, on the 100th anniversary of Teilhard's birth, speculation erupted about a possible rehabilitation. It was fueled by a letter published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, by the then-Cardinal Secretary of State Agostino Casaroli, who praised the "astonishing resonance of his research, as well as the brilliance of his personality and richness of his thinking." Casaroli asserted that Teilhard had anticipated John Paul II's call to "be not afraid," embracing "culture, civilization and progress."

Responding to ferment created by the letter, the Vatican issued a statement insisting that its 1962 verdict on Teilhard still stands -- to date, Rome's last official pronouncement on Teilhard. (The statement was issued in July 1981, four months before then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, took over as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.)

Across the years, Benedict has sometimes seemed to be of two minds himself. In his 1968 work

Introduction to Christianity, Ratzinger wrote that Eastern Christianity has a deeper appreciation for the "cosmic and metaphysical" dimension of Christianity than the West, but that the West seemed to be recovering that perspective, "especially as a result of stimuli from the work of Teilhard." He argued that Teilhard gave authentic expression to the Christology of St. Paul.

Yet Ratzinger's ambivalence about Teilhard is of equally long vintage. In a commentary on the final session of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), a young Ratzinger complained that *Gaudium et Spes*, the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," played down the reality of sin because of an overly "French," and specifically "Teilhardian," influence. Overall, the impression is that Benedict finds much to like about Teilhard's cosmic vision, even if he also worries about interpretations at odds with orthodox faith.

Teilhard at Vespers

A further commentary on the Pope's homily appeared in this excerpted editorial in the Jesuit magazine *America* for August 17, 2009.

"The church seems forever to be embracing those she once held in suspicion. Galileo Galilei, the Italian astronomer, is the most famous among them. But there are others, too, like Thomas Aquinas, Joan of Arc and Ignatius Loyola. The most recent candidate for rehabilitation is the Jesuit paleontologist, evolutionary philosopher and spiritual writer Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Vatican watchers have taken note of Pope Benedict XVI's appeal to Teilhard during an evening prayer service he celebrated July 24 in Aosta, Italy, as a sign of re-appraisal of the priest and his thought. Citing Teilhard's "great vision," Pope Benedict urged that "we consecrate the world, so it may become a living host," a phrase reminiscent of the French Jesuit's eucharistic theology, in which all creation becomes an offering to God.

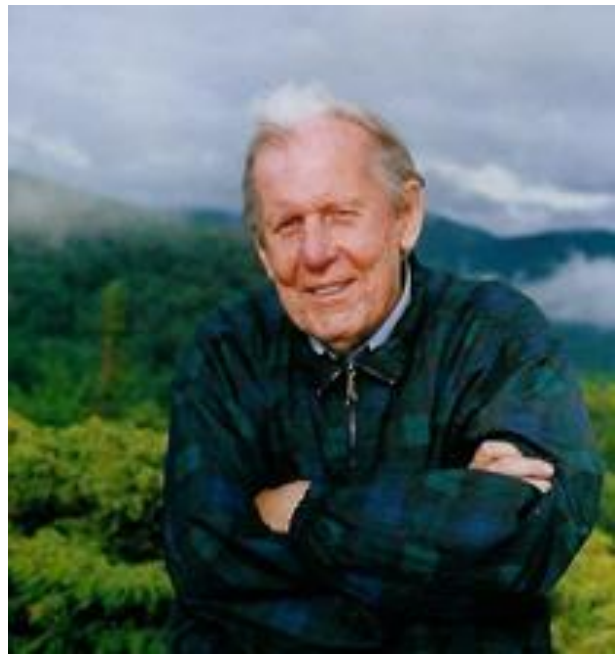
Teilhard articulated his vision during an expedition to the Ordos Desert of Inner Mongolia in 1923. Lacking the elements of unleavened bread and wine to celebrate Mass, he composed a poetic prayer, "Mass on the World" (published in *Hymn of the Universe*; Harper, 1961), offering the whole of creation in its evolutionary history as a host to God. Pope Benedict has previously praised the sense of cosmic liturgy in the Eastern church. His appeal to Teilhard adds the distinctive resonances of the Frenchman's vision: a cosmos evolved over time and increasingly known by

scientific investigation; a spiritual process that comes to consciousness in humanity, a humanity whose spirituality is found in activity as well as passivity; and a humanity called not only to live in the world but also to transform it.

The pope's prayer in fact puts emphasis on our obligation to "transform the world." In adopting this theme, his thinking seems to have developed along the same trajectory as that of Pope John Paul II. After the Second Vatican Council, both expressed dismay at the optimistic, Teilhardian tone of the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," with its focus on the cosmic Christ and its affirmation of the transformative power of the resurrection in history. Then Bishop Karol Wojtyla complained that Christ the redeemer had been eclipsed by Christ in glory. As Pope John Paul II, he revised his opinion in his encyclical *On Social Concern* (1987). Likewise, Pope Benedict has come to write increasingly of the transformation of the earth as a Christian vocation. He writes in *Charity in Truth*, for example, "Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity contributes to the building of the universal city of God, which is the goal of the history of the human family" (No. 7). The pope appears to acknowledge that the kind of sensibility Teilhard possessed belongs to the full flowering of our human nature. To an unexpected degree, he voices trust in the graced capacity of human beings to transform the world and in so doing make it a more fitting offering to God.

Like Teilhard, Pope Benedict reminds us that the world we transform by our labor, our learning and our ingenuity contributes to Christ's great offering of the world to God. The pope has pointed to an array of problems awaiting solution and transformation: the protection of human life and the environment, the expansion of the "responsibility to protect" to include provision of food and water for needy populations, and the creation of international structures to regulate speculation in financial markets and govern a global economy.

In whatever field we endeavor to transform the world—science, engineering, communications, business, the arts—we must aim at promoting sustainable, fully human development at rising levels of well-being for all and for everyone. At the end, when this transformation has reached its fullness, as Teilhard wrote, "the presence of Christ, which has been silently accruing in things, will suddenly be revealed—like a flash of light from pole to pole."



Thomas Berry Memorial Service

The previous Spring 2009 Perspective highlighted Thomas Berry's two new books *The Sacred Universe* (Columbia University Press), and *The Christian Future and the Fate of the Earth* (Orbis Books) before we knew of his June 1 passing. The issue then became in addition an extended remembrance, and not only for Thomas, but also for Ewert Cousins, Fanny de Bary, and Thomas King, SJ, who passed away in the same few weeks. On September 26, 2009, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City, a grand memorial convocation was celebrated. A fine review has been written by Tara Maguire Knopick, Yale University and the Forum on Religion and Ecology, and is slightly adapted next.

The memorial program, along with presentations by Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Grim, Brian Swimme, William Theodore de Bary, Thomas Berry Award recipient Martin Kaplan, Steven Rockefeller, a poem read by Brian Brown, Franklin Vilas reading from *The Human Phenomenon*, reflections by Miriam McGillis, excerpts from *The New Story* read by Catherine de Bary Sleight, and much more can be accessed on the Thomas Berry website www.thomasberry.org, click on Award and Memorial Program.

Overview of the Thomas Berry Award and Memorial Service

Tara Maguire Knopick

On Saturday, September 26, over one thousand people from points all around the globe gathered at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City to honor the memory and celebrate the life of Thomas Berry, author, professor, geologist, and respected elder of the religion and ecology movement.

The event began with the presentation of the Thomas Berry Award to Martin S. Kaplan, long-time supporter of the work of Thomas Berry and the fields of religion and ecology and interreligious dialogue. Mr. Kaplan gave the accompanying lecture and spoke of the vision of Thomas Berry and how we must all carry that vision into the future. The talk focused on climate change and was a strong appeal to political and religious leaders to respond to the findings of the IPCC report for the common good of present and future generations. In addition to Mr. Kaplan's speech, remarks were given by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim of Yale University; Senator Timothy Wirth, President of the UN Foundation; Ann Berry Somers of the University of North Carolina Greensboro; Stephen Dunn, CP, of the University of Toronto; Rick Clugston of the Earth Charter International Council; and Steven Rockefeller of Middlebury College.

Following the award ceremony was the memorial service for Thomas Berry—a celebration of his life and a gesture of gratitude from all present for his Great Work. It began with a momentous procession including members of the Omega Dance Company, glorious banners by Ralph Lee and the Mettawee River Company, and accompanied by the music of Paul Winter on his hauntingly beautiful soprano saxophone and Tim Brumfield on the great Cathedral organ. Additional musical tributes were offered by Eugene Friesen on cello, Kathleen Deignan, Danny Martin and the entire congregation gathered in song.

The music, dance, and artistry combined to uplift the crowd and carry all gathered there out of those walls of stone, into communion with all members of the community of Earth. Paul Winter himself reflected: "it was a summit meeting of wisdom-keepers...all Thomas' children. I said to Jim Morton at the party: 'the community that has emerged from this transformational oasis you created here, is itself a Cathedral.' Ralph Lee's symbols-on-poles, and the Omega banners, worked brilliantly at the end, along with Tim's rapturous organ playing, and together it all

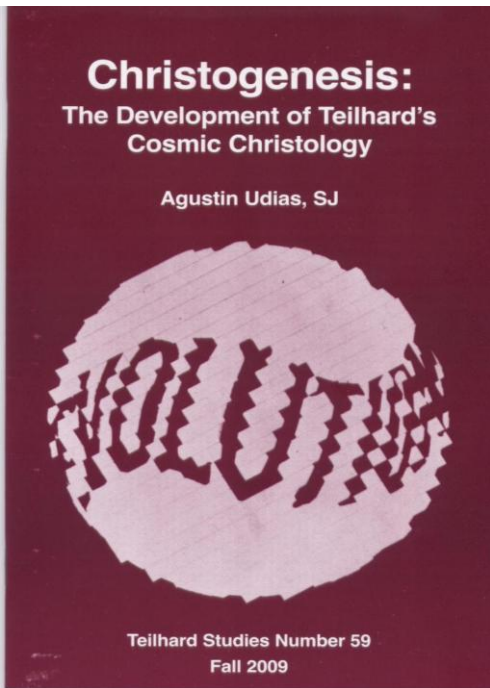
seemed to spark that spontaneous and joyous recessional, the most celebrative I think I've ever seen for any event in the Cathedral. How Thomas would have loved that! And John's "whoop" was one of the great moments in the Cathedral's history, a prayer I'll long remember. It was truly an honor to take part in it."

And in the words of another in attendance that day, Clare Hallward remarked: "I felt shaken as by a mighty wind, love as fire. We were all caught up in that beautifully orchestrated dance of joy unleashed. The music rang forth in revelation, a song of praise carried on wings of sound, a dimension of feeling beyond thought, expressing the explosion of creative love that brought the universe into being, whirling the longings of our hearts for love and belonging up among the rafters and the very stars. Affording us a glimpse of what Thomas called the Grand Liturgy of the Universe. Words no longer suffice to convey the moment."

In addition to the music and dance, memories and reflections were offered by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim of Yale University, Wangari Maathai of the Greenbelt Movement, Wm. Theodore de Bary of Columbia University, Brian Swimme of the California Institute of Integral Studies, and Sr. Miriam MacGillis of Genesis Farm, as well as a poem in Thomas Berry's honor written and read by Brian Brown of Iona College. Stories both humorous and profound touched all present and gave a glimpse into both the humanity and the greatness of the man being remembered and honored there.

Lauren deBoer commented: "Thomas represented an older, deeper, more primary source of wisdom, one we need so much today. He brought that out in people, gave expression to the unexpressed in so many of us, made us feel less alone, less alienated, perhaps a little less sorrowful and more hopeful about what we can do about the desecration of the planet...I am grateful for the healing vision Thomas has given, both for my own healing and for that of the larger culture. May it endure for generations to come."

Filled with that spirit of hope and healing the dancers, streaming banners, and triumphant music gave a final farewell and exuberant gesture of gratitude for the life and work of Thomas Berry, and a renewed commitment to carry on his vision and in the words of Martin Kaplan, to "choreograph our way into the future by listening intently to the music and dance of the Earth, and of all the species that share Earth with us."



New Forum on Religion and Ecology Website at Yale University

Founded by ATA President and Vice President John Grim and Mary Evelyn Tucker, this pioneer endeavor to reconverge the grand traditions of a sacred earth and a scientific universe story is now aided by a 2.0 website design with many new features and links. In addition to ecological resources from the spectrum of World Religions, publications from books to newsletters, Climate Change Science and Ethical concerns, a Science bibliography, and much more, one can access the latest News and Events on this vital website. And on the home page can be viewed an introductory 13 minute video presentation by Mary Evelyn and John on “Religion and a New Environmental Ethic.”

In addition, the monthly Forum Newsletter is full of content by its editors Sam Mickey and Elizabeth McAnally of the California Institute of Integral Studies, can be reached from the home page. We next offer excerpts about the website redesign from an announcement. Its web address is www.yale.edu/religionandecology.

This latest *Teilhard Study*, edited by Kathleen Duffy, SSJ, is a 21st century essay by a Jesuit scientist, for many years a Professor of Geophysics at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, that offers a most succinct entry to and advance of Teilhard’s numinous vision. And it is gratifying to hear from ATA member since the 1960s Peter Riani, who is still teaching Teilhard at age 80, that this is the best Study he has ever read.

Statements from World Religions on Climate Change: Recent statements on the environment and climate change from the world’s major religious traditions and interfaith organizations and partnerships, along with links to historical statements over the past 20 years;

Abstract. As part of his evolutionary cosmological vision, Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin devised an original Christology whose development can be followed in his writings. His main purpose was to establish the person of Christ as the convergent focus of cosmic evolution. Already, in his earliest essays, he spoke of the universal Christ and about the cosmos being centered in him. Once his conception of evolution converging in an Omega Point was established, he identified the Omega Point with Christ, so that the whole process of cosmogenesis becomes a true Christogenesis. A christic sense of the world, the consequence of Christ’s presence as the enlivener of the evolutionary process, corresponds to a cosmic vision, the consequence of the evolution. Teilhard’s vision was for him not a mere theory, but the motor of his interior life and mission, which he proclaimed, was to universalize Christ and thus to Christify the universe.

Climate Change Science: the latest updates on the science of global warming with brief overviews and links to expert analysis, detailed reports and peer-reviewed papers;

Climate Change Ethics: essays on the ethical dimensions of proposed solutions to global and local environmental problems and analysis of equity and justice issues in climate change policy.

“The **Forum on Religion and Ecology** is the largest international multireligious project of its kind. With its conferences, publications, and website it is engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, ethics, and practices in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns. The Forum recognizes that religions need to be in dialogue with other disciplines (e.g., science, economics, education, public policy) in seeking comprehensive solutions to both global and local environmental problems.

The Forum's website has long been the world's leading source for information and action on the emergent field of religion and ecology, and historical insight on the ecological contributions of the world's religious traditions. The site's new additions underscore the urgency of the climate change crisis and the crucial roles that religions must play in constructing ethical worldviews for interacting with other people, species, and the environment in order to serve as a moral force for environmental action."

An Editorial Appreciation of Teilhard's *The Divine Milieu* by America Magazine

As this current and recent issues of the *Teilhard Perspective* have sought to report, a renaissance of new interest seems underway in his timely vision of a spiritual evolutionary genesis that is numinous in its origin, creative emergent procession, and personal destiny. In their June 8, 2009 issue, before Pope Benedict's remarks, editor-in-chief Drew Christiansen, SJ offered these thoughts in his column "Of Many Things." Thank you to ATA member Frances Jordan who advised me of this editorial from her home in Ilio City, the Philippines.

"It was the feast of the Ascension, and I was searching for a half-remembered quotation for my homily at the evening Mass. I remembered it appearing in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *The Divine Milieu*. I didn't find the quote in time for the homily; I did find and use another. But my quick search led me to take up Teilhard's spiritual masterpiece once again, feeling I had much to re-learn from this spiritual master.

If I had to list a handful of books that have influenced my life, *The Divine Milieu* would be at the top. I read it in the early 1960s, just as the Second Vatican Council was taking place. I inhaled its intoxicating this-worldly mysticism. I was strengthened by its explanation of the spiritualization of our activities, not a strong suit in the penitential spirituality of the post-Suppression (1773-1814) Jesuits.

The Divine Milieu offered a symphony of themes that echoed the masters of Western spirituality, the Bible—especially St. Paul—and the divine liturgy. As in monastic theology, phrases, mostly in Latin, dot the text, displaying a mind that has imbibed the Scripture in *lectio divina*, been formed by the recitation of the liturgy and is practiced in savoring the meaning of the simplest phrase. At the same time, there are passages

that read like scholastic *responsa*, staking out Teilhard's own orthodox mystical position against heretical alternatives sometimes ascribed to him. All the same, the book reads like a prose poem.

The Divine Milieu is a whole spirituality for the whole person from a Jesuit who found his identity at the heart of the church, even though as a paleontologist he worked at the farthest edges of its mission. "This little book," he wrote, "does no more than recapitulate the eternal lesson of the church in the words of a man who, because he believes himself to feel deeply in tune with his own times, has sought to teach how to see God everywhere, to see him in all that is most hidden, most solid and most ultimate in the world." Like St. Ignatius Loyola, the Jesuit founder, he sought "to find God in all things" and to teach others to do the same.

Sometimes I think of *The Divine Milieu* as the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius' classic manual of the spiritual life, re-worked for modern times. The whole book is an extrapolation of Ignatius' "Contemplation to Attain Divine Love."

What is strikingly different is that Teilhard does not dwell on the life and death of Jesus the way Ignatius did. The Christ of *The Divine Milieu* is the cosmic Christ of St. Paul, the glorified Christ as the fullness of creation to be united with God at the end of time. But while Teilhard does not contemplate the details of Christ's life, his spirituality is highly incarnational. Its whole effort is to help us see Christ at work in all of life (and history). Seeing Christ's action in matter was vital for him as a scientist, but perceiving him in our creative human activity was all the more important, both because we mistakenly tend to regard our creativity as a threat to God, but also because it is through human endeavor that creation comes to Christ and Christ brings it to the Father."

We should also note that Louis Savary's 2007 *Teilhard de Chardin – The Divine Milieu Explained* (Paulist Press), which won the Catholic Press Association award for best paperback spirituality book of that year, offers just such an array of exercises, pathways and "divinizations" for the 21st century. A 2004 re-edition of *The Divine Milieu* with a commentary by the late Sion Cowell, then director of the British Teilhard Association, along with Jean Maalouf's 1999 *Teilhard Study* "The Divine Milieu: A Spiritual Classic for Today and Tomorrow" can add to this persistent interest.



Center for Ecozoic Studies

In Thomas Berry's home state of North Carolina, in its Chapel Hill university triangle area, resides this active endeavor to advance his vision of an ecologically respectful Earth community. Founded and directed by Herman Greene, a lawyer, and long time friend of Thomas, its informative website is www.ecozoicstudies.org. Herman Greene is also the author of *Teilhard Study* No. 41, Autumn 2000, "Understanding Thomas Berry's Great Work." Here is their Mission Statement.

The mission of the Center for Ecozoic Studies is to offer a vision of an ecozoic society and contribute to its realization through research, education, and the arts.

"Ecozoic" means "house of life."

An "Ecozoic Society" means a society of life.

The "Ecozoic Era" is a time of mutually enhancing relationships among humans and the larger community of life.

The "Great Work" is living the promise of the ecozoic.

"The mission of CES is to offer a vision of an ecozoic society and contribute to its realization through research, education and the arts. CES emphasizes critical reflection, story and shared dream experience as ways of enabling the creative advance needed to bring into being a new mode of human civilizational presence, and also of discerning the practical steps leading to the Ecozoic. CES

understands the universe as meaningful, continuously evolving, and relational.

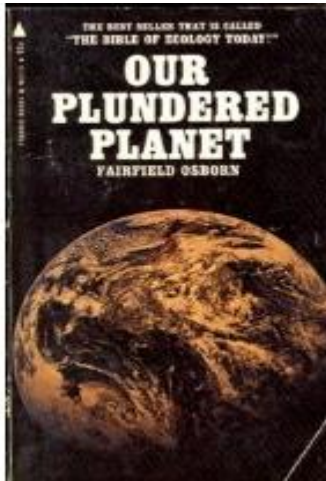
In such a universe, the Ecozoic is not something to be arrived at, but something ever to be created. Its hallmarks are inclusiveness, interdependence, and appreciation; communion, differentiation, and subjectivity; and sensitivity, adaptability, and responsibility. It involves more just and cooperative relationships among humans, as well as transformed relationships of humans with the larger community of life."

From that website is introduced a new memorial volume on Thomas Berry contained in the second issue of the periodical *The Ecozoic: Reflections on Life in an Ecological Age*, just out in September 2009 and shown above, with over 150 contributions and remembrances that run to over 340 pages. This is a special document which seems to include so many for example Beatrice Bruteau, Vandana Shiva, Carl Anthony, Joanna Macy, Brian Goodwin, and Nancy Wright. The edition can be purchased from the website.



Also available, for both download and for purchase from the website, are issues of the Center's periodical publication *The Ecozoic Reader*, an issue is seen above. Recent titles, which contain many original articles, are *Cosmology and the Ecozoic Society*, *The Wisdom of Women*, and *Ecological Civilization – Life-Giving Community*. In these issues one will find luminous gems such as "Organic Democracy: Adaptive, Responsive, Life-Sustaining Communities"

by Ellen LaConte and Herman Greene, and Susannah Lach's "Creation Unfolding, Evolution Occurring, God Becoming."



Teilhard's Prescient Environmental and Technological Concerns.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's writings were surely a product of his day, and in the late 1940s and into the 1950s he joined in postwar optimism such as nuclear energy and electronic computers. For this penchant he has sometimes been taken to overly endorse their use, without a sense of ecological consequence. For the record, over 70 years ago he in fact made a strong statement about the deleterious effects and impacts of unrestrained human consumptions upon the abiding biosphere. In his 1948 essay "The Directions and Conditions of the Future," published in *The Future of Man*, Teilhard makes note of one of the earliest and forceful admonition in this regard. "I think we must pay serious attention to warnings such as that recently uttered by Mr. Fairfield Osborn, in his book *Our Plundered Planet*." (242)

An environmentalist and essayist, Osborn's book was a well-reviewed, if largely ignored, Little, Brown volume of 1948. Although Teilhard is not mentioned, Vladimir Vernadsky and Alfred North Whitehead are cited in chapters such as The Long View, The New Geologic Force: Man, The Interdependence of All Things, and The Earth is not a Gadget. Long out of print, it is still available at Amazon.com. We quote the book's concluding sentences which are even more relevant today.

"Technologists may out do themselves in the creation of artificial substitutes for natural subsistence, and new areas, such as those in tropical or subtropical regions, may be adapted to human use, but even such recourses or developments cannot be expected to offset the present terrific attack upon the natural life-giving elements of the earth. There is only one

solution: Man must recognize the necessity of co-operating with nature. He must temper his demands and use and conserve the natural living resources of this earth in a manner that alone can provide for the continuation of his civilization. The final answer is to be found only through comprehension of the enduring processes of nature. The time for deviance is at an end." (Fairfield Osborn, 201)

Two related aspects of Teilhard's thought that are open to misinterpretation might also be helpfully sorted out. It is said on occasion that he valued human beings over the natural world, at the expense of other creatures and resources. In this sense he is equated with an "anthropocentric" view that places human persons at the pinnacle of evolution, by way of conscious reflection, as its ordained goal. But if Teilhard even wrote one word "phenomenon," that would be a contribution because it defines a wholly different mindset and consequent natural reality. It is not really a matter of preference or belief about human standing, for unless we people are intended, central participants of a greater genesis creation, there can be no innate identity and purpose to guide, heal and avail our otherwise imperiled civilization. Human beings are who we are, surely amongst the family of creatures, but with a special role, it would seem, to thoughtfully, respectfully, and intentionally facilitate an organically viable ecosphere.

Fast forward from the 1940s, with the intensified personal humankind that Teilhard foresaw now in much manifestation. An imperative "Sustainability Singularity" for the next 2010 – 2020 decade when earth care must pass into such ecological enlightenment could be proposed. Yes, Teilhard did often mention "machines" as an aspect of this evolutionary emergence of a worldwide, super-organism-like creative union. Vernadsky did likewise by which a regnant sphere of reason would feedback to recreate a better, peaceable planet.

But what kind of "technology" and how it is to be used is a critical issue. In 1959 I (Arthur Fabel) was a summer technician/gopher at the Far Rockaway power plant of the Long Island Lighting Co. When I left for my senior year at the now Polytechnic University of NYU, I was told one word - "nuclear." We again jump ahead to Al Gore's new book **Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis** where, as only he can, a whole array of energy options from renewables to carbon sequestration are explained. A long chapter recounts the past and future of nuclear power, where it is seen not as either/or, for or against, but whether this and any other technology is appropriately employed

within the mindful milieu of a local and global, social and ecological, context or it is not.

Nuclear power in the United States went on in the 1960s and 1970s with little if any foresight, the wrong designs, mega installations, metals that corrode, equipment break downs, and no overall plan for the disposal of radioactive waste. Al Gore does not advocate this option, but notes that Japan and especially France took a more careful path with smaller plants and thought-through, pretested engineering. My point then is that “technology” is not a monolith but needs to be seen along a spectrum from reckless indifference, such as off-shore drilling, to minimal ecological or economic effect, e.g., thin film solar panels or low wattage solid-state lighting.

Surely Teilhard would seem to hold to this latter view and pursuit. This is not dominion, but a witness of our phenomenal, evolutionary role to assist the biosphere to achieve a novel informed, healthy phase. If his super-organic, hominized biosphere is truly appreciated, climate change could be seen as earth actually trying to attain a 98.6⁰ metabolic homeostasis. That would be much more understandable to folks than the rancorous, vested arguments over global warming. I actually feel that Al Gore, a valiant “ecoprophet” as per a *Newsweek* cover story for November 9, 2009, somewhat over does the technical fixes, as Stewart Brand’s **Whole Earth Discipline** even more so. Environmentalist author Bill McKibben has quite called for a “technology of community” in this regard.

A new mode of empathic human and creaturely habitation to a relational, holistic Earth Community would thus be seem to equally vital. For one example, incipient rural and urban ecovillages or cohousing communities of an average 100 people, the common hominid grouping for a million years, could be seen as “social protocells,” and be further joined in bioregional networks. These are presently springing up everywhere, either in a new locale, or as a retrofit of existing buildings and land. Please see “A Home-Grown Ecovillage on Our Street” by Jim Schenk in *The Ecozoic Reader*, Volume 4, No. 4, 2007, noted in our previous item. Many more annotated references are collected in A New Earth Creation section of the Natural Genesis website. There is indeed much head and heart work to be done.

A Teilhardian Vision for the United Nations

Thank you to veteran ATA member Mary Ann Shores of Fergus Falls, Minnesota for alerting me to this endorsement of Teilhard on the floor of the UN General Assembly. It was presented in an Address by Miguel D’Escoto Brockmann, President of the General Assembly, on June 26, 2009 and made upon the adoption of the “Outcome Document of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development.” We excerpt here, the full text can be read online by Googling some of the above keywords.

“My role as President of this General Assembly, which brings together representatives of all the world’s peoples, is to invite you to look beyond today’s economic concerns and to hold out hope for the common future of the Earth and of humanity.

We may well ask, what next? Not necessarily in terms of the economy, but in terms of humanity. Where are we headed? At this point it is unlikely that anyone, however wise, can answer this question with certainty. But even without having the answers, we can all seek and build together the consensus that will lead us towards a more hopeful future for us all and for Mother Earth.

This reminds me of the vision of the great French scientist, archaeologist and mystic Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. In China, where he carried out his research on “Homo pekinensis,” he had something like a vision.

Looking at the advances in technology, trade and communications that were shortening distances and laying the foundations for what he liked to call planetization, rather than globalization, Teilhard de Chardin was already saying, in the 1930s, that we were witnessing the emergence of a new era for the Earth and for humanity.

What was about to appear, de Chardin told us, was the noosphere, after the emergence in the evolutionary process of the anthroposphere, the biosphere, the hydrosphere, the atmosphere and the lithosphere. Now comes the new sphere, the sphere of synchronized minds and hearts: the noosphere. As we know, the Greek word *noos* refers to the union of the spirit, the intellect and the heart.

Where are we headed? I venture to believe and hope that we are all headed towards the slow but unstoppable emergence of the noosphere. Human beings and peoples will discover and accept each

other as brothers and sisters, as a family and as a single species capable of love, solidarity, compassion, non-violence, justice, fraternity, peace and spirituality.

Is this a utopia? It is undoubtedly a utopia, but a necessary one. It guides us in our search. A utopia is, by definition, unattainable. But it is like the stars: they are unreachable, but what would the night sky be without stars? It would be nothing but darkness and we would be disoriented and lost. A utopia likewise lends direction and purpose to our lives and struggles.

The main focus of this new step will be life in all its forms, humanity with all its peoples and ethnic groups, the Earth as a mother with all its vitality and an economy that creates the material conditions for making all this possible. We will need the material capital we have built up, but the focus will be on human and spiritual capital, whose most wholesome fruits are fraternity or brotherhood, cooperation, solidarity, love, economic and ecological justice, compassion and the capacity to coexist happily with all our differences, in the same shared home, the great and generous Mother Earth.”

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Collection at the Georgetown University Library

At this premier Jesuit college in Washington, DC is housed the most extensive repository of materials by and about Teilhard. Due to the good offices of its late professor of theology and Teilhard scholar Thomas King, SJ (1929 – 2009), and others, a gathering of over 700 items can be viewed through its online catalog at <http://www.library.georgetown.edu/>. From this home page, type “Teilhard” in the upper right search box which will bring you to an item by item chronological presentation, clearly done with many images. Other search methods are available there, and with some negotiation an extraordinary research facility is achieved.

In addition, when the ATA closed its small office on 72nd Street in New York City, circa 1980, its library of many works housed there found a new home at this Georgetown Library. John Grim, Donald Gray, Manhattan College theologian, and our Winifred McCulloch helped out with this move.

Teilhard would be pleased with this manifest, vibrant noosphere, as if a worldwide digital library, along with an increasing number of books and journals online, whence any scholar or student can have access to the holdings of every university and college on the planet.

Teilhard Completely Exonerated Over the Piltdown Affair Redux

Since contrived misinformation and smears nowadays don't easily go away and are difficult to clear, such as atheist Richard Dawkins latest book, we reprint from the Fall 1998 Teilhard Perspective the following paragraphs that document Teilhard's full and decisive exoneration from any involvement in the sorry Piltdown fossil affair.

A recent book and the discovery of some bogus bones has finally laid to rest the unfortunate insinuation, started by Stephen Jay Gould, that Teilhard had a hand in the Piltdown hoax. In *Unraveling Piltdown* (New York: Random House, 1996) historian and author John E. Walsh recounts in careful detail the series of events that unfolded at the site to perpetuate the forgery. The primary onus is placed on Charles Dawson, a lawyer and antiquary, who first “found” the supposed human skull and jawbone. After an entire chapter on Teilhard's involvement and Gould's accusation, he finds him to be “fully vindicated.”

As reported in the journal *Nature* (381/261 May 23, 1996) a trunk unearthed at the British Natural History Museum belonging to Martin Hinton, a zoology curator there at the time, is seen as the “smoking gun.” It contained several bones similar to those at Piltdown that turned out to be of recent orang-utan origin which were artificially stained by chemicals to make them appear ancient. Hinton is then reputed to have conspired with or to have duped Dawson to set up the counterfeit site. Teilhard is again exonerated by this conclusive finding.

Notable Books and Articles

Buzzell, Linda and Craig Chalquist. *Ecotherapy: Healing with Nature in Mind*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2009.

Thanks to Lauren de Boer for advising me of this book, which includes his essay “Healing and the Great Work.” In 1995 Sierra Club Books published *Ecopsychology: Restoring the Earth, Healing the Mind*, edited by Theodore Roszak, Mary Gomes, and Allen Kramer, to initially voice an awareness that a human being cannot become a whole, healed person in isolation. Unless ones daily life is rooted in and concerned with a supportive community and a

sustainable nature, people despair and wither. This new volume gathers some 32 voices such as Joanna Macy, Bill McKibben, Ralph Metzner, and Meredith Sabini in search of a 21st century ecological context for a vital psychotherapy relevant to both person, society, and planet.

A further implication and message might then imbue, as the first quote avers. Surely efforts today to mitigate the physiological biosphere of material resource abuse and abrupt climate change are imperative. But we ought to realize, as a crucial, even prior step, is that its root cause is a psychological wasteland. A national and continental world addicted to guns, money, score settling, and individual power, fueled by irrational fundamentalisms, cannot begin to heal itself until such a mental deficit and derangement is recognized and addressed. As long as our culture so values consumptive aggrandizement and behavioral excesses, any palliative resolve and surcease will not be possible.

“The problem of our day is an inner deadening, an increasingly deployed defense against the stresses of living in an overbuilt industrialized civilization saturated by intrusive advertising and media, unregulated toxic chemicals, unhealthy food, parasitic business practices, time-stressed living, and a heart-warping culture of perpetual war and relentlessly mindless political propaganda.” (Buzzell & Chalquist, 19)

“These are two basic premises of the “Great Work,” as articulated by cultural historian Thomas Berry and expanded and refined by others. They culminate in the idea that the most important work of our time, and the most difficult challenge the human species has faced, is to reinvent itself in order to live in “mutually enhancing relations with an integral Earth community.” (de Boer, 271)

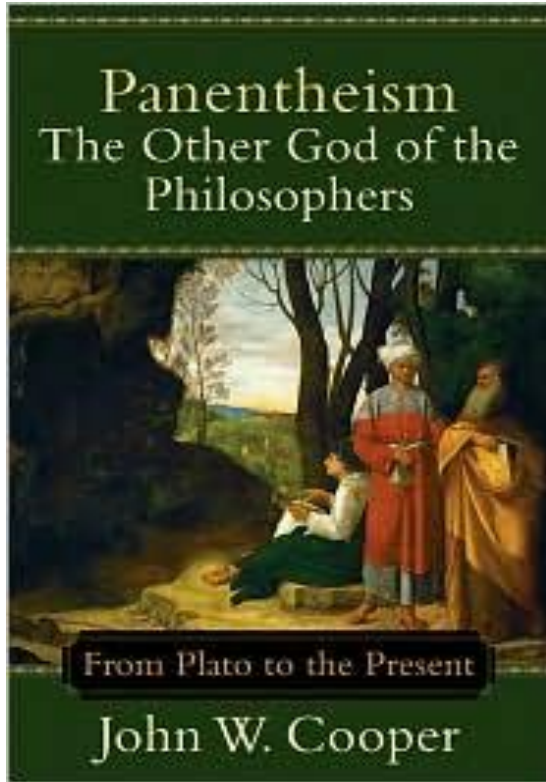
Christakis, Nicholas and James Fowler. *Connected: The Surprising Power of Our Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives*. New York: Little, Brown, 2009.

As wired computer webworks increasingly interlink worldwide, respectively a Harvard University medical sociologist and a University of California, San Diego, political scientist take our daily engrossments with Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, Google, and so on, to augur for the emergence of a truly super-organic planetary person. It is cheerfully shown how much today our emotional relations, health, money, politics, technology, and more, which hominid evolution is

said to have prepared us for, are now informed by and engrossed in such a ramifying noosphere. As a result, local and global group collective intelligences and knowledge memory appear to be forming by themselves, “on their own.” If we can become properly aware of this trend and shift, they can be much to our advantage. Many writers have broached such aspects, but this work is one of the first to trace, as the quotes aver, the outlines of an encompassing, quickening earthkind. Teilhard would be amused, and say “tell me about it.”

“The study of social networks is, in fact, part of a much broader assembly project in modern science. For the past four centuries, swept up by a reductionistic fervor and by considerable success, scientists have been purposefully examining ever-smaller bits of nature in order to understand the whole. But across many disciplines, scientists are now trying to put the parts back together – whether macromolecules into cells, neurons into brains, species into ecosystems, nutrients into foods, or people into networks.” (303-304)

“The networks we create have lives of their own. They grow, change, reproduce, survive, and die. Things flow and move within them. A social network is a kind of human superorganism, with an anatomy and physiology – a structure and function – of its own. (289) The great project of the twenty-first century – understanding how the whole of humanity comes to be greater than the sum of its parts – is just beginning. Like an awakening child, the human superorganism is becoming self-aware, and this will surely help us to achieve our goals.” (305)



Cooper, John W. *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.

In contrast to a more familiar “pantheism” whence all that exists is in some way Divine, in a “panentheistic” view, creation both resides “in” God, while at the same time its Creator retains a separate presence. Cooper, a professor of philosophical theology at the Calvin Theological Seminary, achieves a well organized, thorough, and clearly written tome that would make a good textbook. Everyone from Plato and Plotinus to Pannenberg and Polkinghorne, some 200 men and 5 women, is fairly given their due. A wide topical spectrum runs from Greek and Renaissance neoplatonism to romantic, process, liberation, ecological, and scientific approaches, along with entries for each world religion and for salient personages.

Teilhard is rightly given his own chapter, “Christocentric Panentheism,” for whom a high regard is expressed. As not often the case, Cooper realizes that while Teilhard advocates a numinous evolutionary ascent, at once an immanent genesis oriented toward a Divine destiny ahead, his vision equally contains an original, abiding God above.

But Cooper, rooted in an Augustinian school, parts company in a final chapter and opts for salvation’s traditional course of a creation-fall-redemption-consummation. So here is another example of a deep dichotomy today. Does this worldly realm possess an intrinsic identity and value of its own, which people can discern and creatively participate in, or does it remain somehow flawed, still in need of miraculous intervention? For Cooper “redemptive history” within such a cast is more of an “emanation and return” to a paternal Godhead, rather than, say per Teilhard, toward “Someone in gestation” as a Christic New Being. I am not a theologian, but as one reads e.g. Gloria Schaab’s recent *Teilhard Study* and many other works, a providential Trinitarian perspective could suggest itself, that of transcendent father, immanent mother and phenomenal child.

“The cosmic evolutionary spirituality of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) is heir to the legacy of Christian Neoplatonism and is shaped by the philosophy of Henri Bergson. Teilhard has had a broader impact that any other twentieth-century panentheist. Far beyond academic theologians and intellectual devotees, his perspective has inspired progressive forces in the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II. Much liberation, feminist, and ecological theology builds on his panentheistic vision. He is widely regarded in interreligious and non-Christian circles as a model for integrating spirituality with current postmodern worldviews. (148)

Teilhard’s panentheism consists in his view that the history of the universe is God’s self-incarnation culminating in Jesus Christ. In Christ, the world is God’s body. Gustavo Gutierrez implicitly adopts panentheism by appropriating Teilhard’s cosmic Christology to support his own assimilation of socioeconomic liberation in the Christian understanding of salvation.” (287)

De Waal, Frans. *The Age of Empathy: Nature’s Lessons for a Kinder Society*. New York: Harmony Books, 2009.

The Emory University primatologist was inspired to write his latest book by President Barack Obama’s evocation on his campus for a more caring, helping, “empathetic” culture. In response, de Waal illustrates with copious cases an “other Darwinism” that can admit and include how innately prevalent cooperative behavior actually is. Mutual aid is imperative for individual and group survival not only for humans and primates but across Metazoan species from mammals

to invertebrates. With such a vista, a recurrent natural wisdom can be revealed by which people might create viable communities. As Teilhard advised, by the name of “creative union,” and also by traditional African “ubuntu” wisdom, relational kinships actually will enhance one’s personal liberty.

We cite this work, along with the 2009 books **Games, Groups, and the Global Good**, edited by Simon Levin, (Springer), **The Mermaid’s Tale: Four Billion Years of Cooperation**, by Kenneth Weiss and Anne Buchanan (Harvard University Press), and new listings in the “Cooperative Societies” section of the Natural Genesis website, to record an epochal paradigm shift in evolutionary theory to factor in the equally real, pervasive presence of reciprocal, salutary aid from microbes to a metropolis.

Edwards, Denis. *Ecology at the Heart of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.

Several books reviewed in this issue are not offered as definitive statements but to convey a sense of deep theological issues and contradictions that still need to be recognized, cleared up, and moved beyond. A Flinders University (Adelaide, Australia) theologian, Edwards attends to the ecological turn in the arc of divine history, relying strongly on Teilhard, and also the companion views of Karl Rahner. Somehow it seems, as essays to introduce the new **Green Bible** (www.greenletterbible.com) suggest, God’s plan is lately in revision and no longer seems to involve the world’s demise, which could not have been known much earlier. Rather it is to be achieved by the fulfillment here and now by a sustainable, spiritual Earth. But is its value to remain a mirror for, in worshipful praise, of a paternal Creator, more Rahner’s redemptive view, or does the world, with Teilhard, tend toward its own Christic essence?

To reflect, these various debates beg to be pressed so as to reach an inspirational explanation and a valid, tellable story. For example, Rick Warren, who gave the benediction at Barack Obama’s inauguration, contends in his megabooks that “earth is not our home,” we are here for God’s pleasure and eternal life elsewhere. On the other hand in the *Parabola* magazine, Winter 2009, issue on The Future, a note by Andrew Harvey cites the Christian mystic Bede Griffiths, (who met with Thomas Berry under the then great oak tree) as saying we are in the midst of a “birthing of a Divine Humanity, a coming Christ consciousness.”

Esbjorn-Hargens, Sean and Michael Zimmerman. *Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World*. Boston: Shambhala, 2009.

Said to be a decade in the making, the work is a large contribution toward a cosmological basis for environmental responsibility graced by a novel spiritual interiority. While Sean Esbjorn-Hargens is a professor of Integral Studies at John F. Kennedy University, and Michael Zimmerman a University of Colorado philosopher, both are advocates of the Integral worldview of Ken Wilber, which underlies the book’s content. We next offer excerpts from the publisher’s website.

“Today there is a bewildering diversity of views on ecology and the natural environment. In response to this pressing need, *Integral Ecology* unites valuable insights from multiple perspectives into a comprehensive theoretical framework—one that can be put to use right now. The framework is based on Integral Theory, as well as Ken Wilber’s AQAL (all quadrants – all levels) model, and is the result of over a decade of research exploring the myriad perspectives on ecology available to us today and their respective methodologies.

Dozens of real-life applications and examples of this framework currently in use are examined, including three in-depth case studies: work with marine fisheries in Hawai’i, strategies of eco-activists to protect Canada’s Great Bear Rainforest, and a study of community development in El Salvador.”

Roof, Nancy, ed. **Kosmos Journal**. Fall/Winter, 2009.

We have noted this extraordinary publication - “the journal for world citizens creating a new civilization” - in earlier issues. This latest edition “Seeing the World with New Eyes” is special again in several ways. Tributes are first made to Thomas Berry by poet Drew Dellinger and visionary Erwin Laszlo. Its salient theme is that an epochal transformation of human habitation is underway within and toward an integral planetary ecosphere. Everything must be done over in an aware, healthy, graceful way that is ultimately best for children. A lead article, for example, by Richard Hames, Director of the Asian Foresight Institute at Dhurakij Pundit University in Thailand, contrasts the waning and waxing options of an Industrial Civilizational Collapse, or a Gaian Global Renewal.

Jean Houston, a teenage friend of Teilhard in the 1950s and ever since engaged in the evocation of a feminine, mythic nurturance as she does so well,

contributes next. In “The Emerging New Story” she calls for such a recreation of human and social nature most effectively appreciated as a blessed nativity event. Archetypal forces in gestation from the depths of historical time, religious and cultural beliefs, and now a cosmic and earthly genesis narrative can be rightly drawn upon for assistance.

The Journal has a website www.kosmosjournal.org where its table of contents can be viewed, along with some articles. It is also available in most Barnes & Noble stores. One more typical item of interest is about Nicanor Perlas, who is now a presidential candidate in his native Philippines. At the invitation of Thomas Berry, in the late 1980s he spoke at one of our ATA Sunday lecture series. We were then taken by his youthful philosophical acumen and enthusiasm. He is still walking the talk toward a revolutionary governance of ethical and social justice, our best wishes to him.

(Jean Houston quotes her Bulgarian cab driver in San Francisco): “I have just been present at the birth of my daughter,” he told me. “I was very afraid, for I had never seen such a thing. It was very messy and very beautiful. And after all the hours of my wife’s labor and the painful contractions, a new life! Maybe that is what is trying to happen in our world.” I sometimes think of my work as a kind of midwifery. We find ourselves at present in the midst of the most massive shift of perspective humankind has ever known.” (9)

“Basic to the emerging New Story is the belief that we humans are not alone as we face the massive transition that is upon us. Rather, we are embedded in a larger ecology of being, its motive force arising simultaneously from the planet that is our birth place and the stars that are our destination. Pulsed by Earth and Universe toward a new stage of growth, we are waking up to the realization that we can become partners in creation – stewards of the Earth’s well-being and conscious participants in the cosmic epic of evolution. As ancient peoples have always known, the story is bigger than all of us, and yet desires our engagement, our love and our commitment.

The world is hungry for vision. At a time when whole systems are in transition and global forces challenge all authority, there is an insistence in the mud, contractions shiver through the earth womb, patterns of possibility strain to emerge from the rough clay of changing social structures. This is the child who is now being born. This is the New Story.” (Jean Houston, 11)

Russell, Dale. *Islands in the Cosmos: The Evolution of Life on Land*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Fertile bioplanets are cosmic islands in this opus by the Curator of Paleontology at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences which recounts the earth life’s ramifying and emergent florescence across the sequential eons and eras. In a Foreword, the Cambridge University paleontologist Simon Conway Morris, sets a rare tone for the book. For while this text courses through the usual crawly creatures, extinct species, and processional ages, something much more is implied. Rather than the vested view of an accidental evolution, “inevitabilities” and “directionalities” are seen to trace a grand convergence toward a seemingly intended complex and conscious human phenomenon. In his own Preface, Dale Russell attests that while a doctoral student in geology at Columbia University years ago he made a pilgrimage to Pierre Teilhard’s grave at St. Andrews, then a Jesuit seminary, in Hyde Park, New York, from whom he takes his inspiration.

For this work, along with Caleb Scharf’s book next, and an increasing number gathered on the Natural Genesis website, compose a waxing effort to glimpse, give credence to, and announce a radically new kind of organically developmental creation. A cosmic Copernican Revolution seems to be unfolding in our midst, largely unknown because this time it is much due to a worldwide humankind, from a Ptolemaic physical machine, alien to life, mind and person, to a progressive embryony

“Yet however remote these worlds might, they were a product of evolution, as of course are we. From our privileged perspective, we see them as pregnant with possibilities, a planet that slowly awakens as the first minds begin to stir. Here, surely, is a saga that is even today incompletely told: awareness flickers into existence and intelligences emerge, culminating in the incredible trajectory of human evolution. (Conway Morris, x) These inevitabilities not only provide a compass to the Darwinian adventure, but also in revealing directionalities allow us to reconsider the concept of evolutionary progress, not as an artifact of human wish fulfillment but as integral to this tapestry of life.” (Conway Morris, xi)

Scharf, Caleb. *Extrasolar Planets and Astrobiology*. Sausality, CA: University Science Books, 2009.

When a novel realm of celestial objects, first definitively viewed only in 1995, can merit an excellent, thorough textbook then a certain maturity for this endeavor has been reached. As Director of the Columbia University Astrobiology Center, Scharf dutifully covers all the aspects of planetary composition, atmospheres, habitable zones, prebiotic cosmochemistry, and so on. But it would seem that the implications of such an unexpected filling of the cosmic neighborhood, similar in import to the finding of myriad galaxies in the 1920s and 1930s, has not yet registered. For it reveals a cosmos which by its innate nature spawns anywhere it can a prolific expanse of earth-like abodes for life to generate complex and conscious forms. In the final pages, Scharf indeed broaches a view at odds with the current mechanical model, in so many words that a genesis universe is newly being found with its own essence and destiny.

“At the start of the book, we posited that life is a phenomenon that emerges in this Universe as naturally as physical “laws,” such as Newtonian gravity. It certainly seems that many of the pieces that go together to enable life as we know it are indeed inevitable. Star and planet formation, and complex carbon chemistry, are generic features of the cosmos, and these appear to be critical for life.” (450)

Schaefer, Jame. *Theological Foundations for Environmental Ethics: Reconstructing Patristic and Medieval Concepts*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009.

The author is a Marquette University theologian who provides a careful mediation for a Catholic sensibility attuned to 21st century ecological sustainabilities. In this regard, the goodness of earthly creation, an appreciation of its aesthetic beauty, a reverence for an abiding sacramentality, the respect of animals since they are sources of praise to and worship of the Creator, as are people, and so on, is thoughtfully evoked. In this spirit, humans can engage in a respect for and cooperation with other beings, along with a much restrained and grateful avail of natural resources.

“Motivated by love of God and one’s neighbor, the human person becomes a virtuoso who lives prudently, justly, moderately, and courageously in his or her temporal life while aiming for eternal happiness with God.” (267)

Tononi, Giulio. **Consciousness as Integrated Information**. *Biological Bulletin*. 215/3, 2008.

We cite this paper as one example from the scientific literature of how decades later the tandem rise of complexity and consciousness that Teilhard once foresaw is being confirmed. The University of Wisconsin psychiatrist, and collaborator with Noble laureate Gerald Edelman, sets out to explain how sentient awareness is distinguished by its contained knowledge. A mathematical exposition in “cerebral qualia space” of this “integrated information theory” leads to the claim that consciousness is an intrinsic natural quality. A scalar evolutionary ascent is then seen to accord with relative information levels. Not said to be a panpsychism but by this shift, as the quotes offer, a radically different kind of universe and human can become evident. Rather than a moribund machine wherein people are alien “specks of dust,” if a rising, awakening sentience is the measure, human persons appear as its brightest, self-reflective center.

“If one accepts these premises, a useful way of thinking about consciousness as a fundamental property is as follows. We are by now used to considering the universe as a vast empty space that contains enormous conglomerations of mass, charge, and energy—giant bright entities from planets to stars to galaxies. In this view (that is, in terms of mass, charge, or energy), each of us constitutes an extremely small, dim portion of what exists — indeed, hardly more than a speck of dust. (233)

“However, if consciousness (i.e., integrated information) exists as a fundamental property, an equally valid view of the universe is this: a vast empty space that contains mostly nothing, and occasionally just specks of integrated information — mere dust, indeed — even where the masscharge – energy perspective reveals huge conglomerates. On the other hand, one small corner of the known universe contains a remarkable concentration of extremely bright entities (where brightness reflects high consciousness), orders of magnitude brighter than anything around them. Each bright ‘star’ is the main complex of an individual human being (and most likely, of individual animals). I argue that such a consciousness-centric view is at least as valid as that of a universe dominated by mass, charge, and energy. In fact, it may be more valid, since to be highly conscious implies that there is something it is like to be you, whereas if you just have high mass, charge, or energy, there may be little or nothing it is like to be you.” (233)

American Teilhard Association and Thomas Berry Websites

At the ATA site 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 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.

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 to clarify 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 Arthur Fabel, address 11 Meadowbrook Dr., Hadley, MA 01035; email artfabel@crocker.com. 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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