

Cosmic Genesis

Teilhard de Chardin and the Emerging Scientific Paradigm

Arthur Fabel

Two of the initial issues of *Teilhard Studies* - *The New Story* by Thomas Berry and *The New Creation Story* by Donald Gray - effectively describe the present situation. We are in a difficult time between an old story we have outgrown and a new story we are still trying to read. Teilhard is a valuable guide because he seems to give us the most coherent and prophetic reading so far.

This issue will offer a survey of recent scientific advances. These appear to be verifying Teilhard's vision. In addition, the Teilhardian perspective can help to bring a new relevance and dimension to this evidence.

"In the history of science and philosophy the 1970s will stand out as the decade in which the foundations were laid for a great meta-scientific synthesis," advises systems scientist Erich Jantsch. There is something "in the air" today, a sense that we may be on the verge of an epochal discovery. The rate of new developments is constantly accelerating and beginning to reveal positive images of the human and of nature not possible just a few years ago. The 1980s portend to be a time of test and of potential breakthroughs.

A paradigm is the single reigning image for any field. This notion gained currency through the work of Thomas Kuhn which is now the paradigm for understanding scientific change. We are at a critical point when the old explanation no longer fits and the results pouring in press for a new one.

The sense of synthesis is also due to a new approach to science. Teilhard exemplified this: "I shall try to show how it is possible, if we look at things from a sufficiently elevated position, to see the confusions of detail in which we think we are lost, merge into one, vast, guided, organic operation, in which each of us has a place."

This is the holistic view now seen as vital to balance the reductive method. The brain's ability to shift from its analytical left hemisphere to the integrative right hemisphere is often cited as an example. It is the general systems view which seeks a "new natural philosophy" based