

The Divine Welling Up and Showing Through: Teilhard's Evolutionary Theology in a Trinitarian Panentheistic-Procreative Paradigm

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Abstract: Cosmic creativity in the evolutionary theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin is most often focused through the Christological lens of the Cosmic Christ as Omega, the source, energy, and goal of the evolutive process. This study, however, appropriates a panentheistic-procreative paradigm to seek out and differentiate the Trinitarian relations of God to the cosmos as transcendent, incarnate, and immanent creativity. Bringing Teilhard's insights concerning the Divine Milieu, the Cosmic Christ, and Energy as radial and tangential into conversation with this paradigm discloses a triune God who is intimately present and operative through creative union with, in, and within an evolving cosmos.

INTRODUCTION

In a 1923 lecture given in Paris, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin sought "to bring face to face two great religious powers . . . that today share between them the world of human thought," Christianity and pantheism. Acknowledging that the former power most frequently attempted to distance itself from the latter power, he intended "to narrow the gap . . . by bringing out what one might call the Christian soul of pantheism or the pantheist aspect of Christianity" (CE, 56). He based his argument on his perception of what he termed "the tendency in the human soul . . . which can only be satisfied in Christianity," the tendency "to recognize the importance, in one's religious calculations, of the Whole" (CE, 57).

Christianity and Pantheism

Tracing the development of the pantheist tendency, Teilhard maintained that "our intelligence is baffled by the multiple;" therefore, the "intelligible world, the true world, can only be a unified world" (CE, 57). Driven by a need for such union, we "reach out to grasp in our aspirations . . . something which is diffused throughout [the world], which permeates everything" (CE, 58). "Fundamentally," Teilhard contends, "we have but one passion: to become one with the world which envelops us without our ever being able to distinguish either its face or its heart" (CE, 58). It is this passion that finds itself expressed in the pantheist current of human thought and does so in an aspiration "seen to be . . . fundamentally religious" (CE, 60).