

THE TEILHARD NEWSLETTER

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Sarcenat – Teilhard's Birthplace, 1881 (with members of French Association visiting)

Editorial – An International Flavour

I had hoped to get a Newsletter finalized in July, but other tasks took longer than expected. And in August, there were some unexpected (but very welcome!) family visits. Apologies for delay once again.

The picture on page 1 of Teilhard's birthplace and childhood home emphasizes the international flavour of this Newsletter. There are items related to our sister Associations in France, Italy, and the USA. It is noted that translation into other languages is available for some items on the French Association website. The most recent US *Teilhard Perspective* carries information about new Teilhard books in French. We in the Teilhard Associations are beginning to play our part in the convergence of the noosphere!

In respect of our own activities, there are reports on our 2006 conference, attended by many new faces, and a brief report on the Annual General Meeting. Two long-serving members of the Executive Committee have retired, and have been replaced by 'young blood.' This bodes well for our future.

The most important news of our forthcoming activity is probably the news of our planning for next year's conference. Reserve the dates (4th- 6th May, 2007) in your diary now. We will be pleased to have feedback to guide us in the final planning stage.

We have a large section in this issue devoted to Teilhard books and articles. As you will see, there is a substantial upsurge of new work appearing on Teilhard.

Under *Future Events* (page 12 at back), attention is drawn to a talk to be given by Dr David Grumett of Exeter University at the Iain Ramsey Centre in Oxford on the 26th of October. Despite the lateness of this notification, I hope that members will be able to attend. (Members who attended the joint event last year at Lampeter will recall David speaking.)

Note: To encourage the study of Teilhard, a number of items referred to in this Newsletter as 'available.' To obtain a copy of any of these, simply write, telephone, or e-mail to me at the address on the masthead on page 1, indicating which item(s) you would like.

Bill C (Acting Editor)

Teilhard European Conference 'Christo Energizzatore,' October 2005

Report by Alan Nugent, Chairman

The conference was organized by the Italian Teilhard Association. A colourful modern icon of the '*Energising Christ*' which, with the spectrum colours of the rainbow showed bright angels holding the array of the stars; showed the risen and ascended Christ powerfully giving life and true energy to the whole universe; expressed our focal theme. This icon became the symbol of all we were about at this very special event.

Christ the Energizer seemed to be what was special about the Conference location. The Ecumenical Monastery at Bose in Piedmont about 40 km NW of Turin is very special. It is a community of some 80 mainly young people who have embraced the religious life. They are an international community. Their worship is beautiful and powerful; their hospitality generous; their devotion evident. Set in a gently sloping wooded valley with a backdrop of the Alps their locale is awe inspiring. Everything pointed to Christ the Energizer.

The title of the Conference was '*The Evolution Christ: Teilhard de Chardin's spirituality as a bridge between Western and Eastern Christianity*', yet somehow this ponderous theme was taken over by '*Christo Energizzatore*'. The distinguished French Jesuit and Teilhard scholar Gustav Martelet spoke passionately about the Universal Christ as the 'guarantor of man's transcendence'. Luciano

Mazzoni, vice President of the Italian Teilhard Association discerned Teilhard's spirituality as a living element in the contemporary Church and in the same vein Georges Ordonnand, President of the French *Association des Amis de Teilhard de Chardin*, discerned in Teilhard's understanding of Christ an urgent call for European and World political awareness. A spiritual energy coming from the Cosmic Christ seemed very real.

The Conference title was approached most closely when there was a dialogue between two Teilhardian scholars Stephano Maria Capilupi from Italy and Konstantin Glebovich from the University of St Petersburg drawing a parallel between Christian evolutionism and contemporary Russian Christology.

It was a memorable Conference; full of energy. I enjoyed being in the company of friends of Teilhard from several European countries. Even the committee meeting of the '*Centre Européen Teilhard*' which went on until past 11pm on the Saturday night did not lack for energy; though I suspect that might in part be attributed to the delicious dessert wine that the community provided for us. I was made most welcome. Our European friends were clearly delighted to be in personal touch with the British Teilhard Association.

Canon Alan Nugent, Chairman

Tribute to Michelle Le Morvan

As you will see from the AGM report on page 9, Michelle has resigned from the Executive Committee. She (then as Michael) was a founding member of *The Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Association of Great Britain and Ireland*. She was present at the inaugural meeting which took place at Attingham Park in Shropshire on 27th March 1965 during a weekend course on ‘*The Thinking of Teilhard de Chardin.*’ She has continued in membership ever since, through the first name change to ‘*The Teilhard Centre for the Future of Man*’ in 1971, then through the change to *The British Teilhard Association* in 1994/5. She has been active in Committees since the start. Among

many particular tasks she organized a regional conference in Manchester, edited *The Teilhard Review* for some years, and finally served a period as Editor of the more recent *Newsletter* – in total a really solid effort. We are much in her debt.

We are pleased that she has accepted election as a Vice-President of the Association. Being now the proud owner of a set of the 11 volumes of Teilhard’s *Oeuvres Scientifiques* she has started to select and summarise highlights from them. The first of these will appear in the next *Newsletter*. She also contributes two book reviews to this issue.

Report on 25th International Teilhard Conference, 2006, London Colney

‘Mysticism, Experience and the Vision of Teilhard de Chardin’

Conference attendance was 38, including nine students. We also had eight other registrants attending for the first time. The number of ‘old faithful’ registrants was lower because of the delay in getting the conference details out.

The atmosphere was one of great enthusiasm, with the usual vigorous discussions over meals, in corridors, and in the bar.

Short summaries of the papers presented are given below, prepared by Rod White (one of the two new ‘recruits’ to the Executive Committee – see below).

David Lewin: ‘Mysticism, Experience and the Vision of Teilhard de Chardin’

David Lewin addressed the main issues of how we relate mysticism to Teilhard and how we study mysticism in the academic sense.

Teilhard calls for a new way of ‘seeing,’ he calls for a synthesis of science and religion. Whilst it is commonly held that a mystic is someone who withdraws from the world, someone who has direct mystical experiences and receives knowledge about God in a passive manner, Teilhard calls for us to see the world unified, to see God ‘all in all.’ In this sense the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

For Teilhard mysticism is more than how William James would define mysticism as ‘private experience.’ Vision is more universal and is not dependent on personal spirituality. This universal aspect enables an academic study of mysticism and also creates a synthesis of reason and revelation.

In order to fully participate in this vision we have to understand the past and have faith in the future.

Brian Edwards: ‘Buber, Teilhard and the Problem of Experience’

For some people at the conference Buber created a ‘désjà vu’ experience. Brian Edwards started his talk by stating that Buber as well as Teilhard doesn’t fit neatly into one category. Buber was a Zionist, a theologian and a mystic, Teilhard was a palaeontologist and a Jesuit priest. It may be said that when people don’t fit into a category we place them in the ‘mystic bin’.

Buber was concerned with how we understand the idea of ‘experience’ in religion. He is also concerned with how we become individuals and how communities can be created with passion and feeling.

Buber sees communities and individuals becoming ‘lifeless’, they are not fulfilling their true potential. This seems more relevant for today with the increase in materialism and the leisure industry. It is also notable that increasingly people are searching for answers to the meaninglessness that they see in society.

At their full potential individuals and communities reflect the image of God but it is increasingly difficult for us to live up to this potential. Buber claims that it is too easy to have I-It relationships where people, possessions, skills become mere objects and this reduces us to mere objects.

In the I-Thou relationship there is a full and deep relationship. In the same way that we can only see our eyes in reflection, we only find our true potential reflected in how we treat other people. It is only in the I-Thou encounter that we achieve our full potential as seeing ourselves in the divine image.

Whilst Teilhard also stresses that we are made in the image of God, Teilhard focuses more on universal convergence into the noosphere.

For Teilhard we discover our divine image in seeing and knowing the world, whilst for Buber it is the personal act of knowing that allows us to achieve our full potential.

Duane Williams: Teilhard and the scope of mystical vision

Duane started his talk by referring to the fact that an Omega point – an ending, presupposes a beginning – an Alpha point. It is very hard to determine where this beginning is in the same way that it is very difficult to determine which acorn is going to grow into an oak tree.

He describes Teilhard in terms of nostalgia. Whilst nostalgia is a ‘sickness’ or ‘homesickness’ for the past Teilhard has a ‘sickness’ for the future. He lived in anticipation of the omega point.

In terms of the vision of Teilhard, it is not a matter of examining the personal visions of Teilhard but looking at his idea of a universal, hyper-personal vision that is the convergence and union of individual personal visions of the world.

In closer union we become fuller human beings (we reach our true potential) and this leads to an increase in vision and makes vision mystical.

The alpha point represents the ox pulling the cart and in a sense the ox anticipates the cart and the cart assumes an ox. The fact that the Omega point has potential leads us to see that the world is held together from above.

Teilhard's vision of life is one – root and branch.

(Tapes of these three presentations can be obtained from John Franklin, cost £7.00 for each talk including p & p – his address is 21 Park Vista, London SE10 9LZ – cheques payable to British Teilhard Association)

The Late Cardinal Basil Hume and Teilhard's ‘Divine Milieu’

Mrs Christine Laubin, one of our new members who attended the 2005 conference, has passed over a copy of some notes which she typed up after listening to an evening address on ‘Discovering God’ made by Cardinal Hume. It was one of a series of events throughout 1986 called ‘Mission Hitchin,’ which involved all the Christian churches in that area.

In response to a question about how to approach and help agnostics to faith, the Cardinal had recommended offering a copy of Teilhard's *Divine Milieu*. He added that he always bought any secondhand copies of it he saw in bookshops for that very purpose. Over the next couple of years or so

Christine did the same thing, eventually sending off a parcel of ‘*Divine Milieu*'s’ to the Cardinal.

In his reply to her, he wrote:

‘It was extremely thoughtful of you to have collected those copies of *The Divine Milieu*. I marveled at your memory of my referring to it when I spoke at Hitchin.’ He went on to say: ‘Incidentally, I have often mentioned that evening I spent at Hitchin Town Hall to others. I thought it was a wonderful evening and a great example of what can be achieved [in working towards Christian unity].’

(Copies of Christine's notes are available – see editorial)

Notes on Teilhard books, reviews, and articles (new and old)

An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin, N. Wildiers (Fontana, 1968)

Thanks to archive documents donated by Michelle le Morvan, we have a recommendation for this book dating back to 1963. It is contained in a letter to her from Christopher Mooney SJ (author of *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ*), sent from Jesuit HQ in Paris (42 Rue de Grenelle). Michelle had written to him asking for advice on books on Teilhard. She was preparing a talk for presentation to an audience at the University of Galway in 1964. The most strongly urged recommendation was to buy this book (then only available in Dutch and French). Mooney says:

‘It is a tiny book (120 pages) but as an introduction to the *total thought of Teilhard it is*

vastly superior to anything in French, English, or German. (There must be at least 15 introductions to Teilhard's thought on the French market today)’

Wildiers book was translated into English in 1968 and published in the Fontana Theology and Philosophy Library series with four subsequent editions in '69, '71, '73, and '75.

We hold a number of copies, which have been purchased for display/sale at our events. If any member would like a copy, please get in touch. If you undertake (in due course) to let us have some notes giving an opinion of its relevance to today, then it will be sent free of charge – otherwise a donation of £5.00 is suggested.

New UK book:

Teilhard de Chardin: Theology, Humanity, and Cosmos, David Grumett

Summary (from rear cover of book)

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) has been regarded for too long as an esoteric thinker who evacuates theology by subjecting it to scientific theory. There is an urgent need to reclaim him as a French catholic theologian with intellectual roots in the early twentieth century. Teilhard's imaginative and inspiring work is grounded in the constructive use of biblical and patristic motifs and in his own life experiences of war, exile and scientific endeavour. From these, he develops a distinctive philosophical theology which combines elements frequently assigned to the separate domains of philosophy of religion, systematic theology and mysticism. Teilhard provides a detailed theology of human embodiment and natural substances, whilst his theories of human action, passion, vision and virtue offer suggestive resources to pastoral theology. His evolutionary cosmology and social democratic politics are discussed in their historical context, and the significance of his work for the ongoing dialogue between science and religion is assessed.

(As soon as this book is reviewed in a theological journal we will seek permission to include it in a newsletter. In the meantime members who have bought this book are free to submit comments for publication.)

New Teilhard Books from Europe:

(This item by courtesy from the American Teilhard Association. It was contained in the Spring issue of 'Teilhard Perspective' – Ed. note.

(The *Teilhard Perspective* issue is available – see editorial)

Four new volumes with regard to Teilhard have been published in French in the last year. Along with David Grumett's work below [actually above in this newsletter – Ed. note], there appears to be a new burst of interest across Europe. His vision was very well received at a conference in the Czech Republic last October. These books were found in the O'Neill Library of Boston College, which has one of the largest Teilhard collections in the Northeast. Georgetown University houses the former ATA library, along with many new additions. English translations of these books would be most welcome.

Arnould, Jacques. *Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris: Perrin, 2005. A new biography. Please check www.editions-perrin.fr for more information.

[David Grumett has read this book and suggests that it does not add very much to the existing biographies

which are already available in English e.g. Cuénot, Speaight. Ed. note]

Danzin, Andre and Jacques Masurel. *Teilhard de Chardin: Visionnaire du Monde Nouveau*. Paris: Editions du Rocher, 2005. Preface by Yves Coppens. Both a volume about the expanse and relevance of Teilhard's numinous genesis, and a collection of commentaries by leading French thinkers such as Bertrand Collomb, Jean-Pierre Dupuy, Jean Boissonat, Bernard d'Espagnat, and Joel de Rosnay. This work especially seemed to merit translation as quite timely and significant.

Demoulin, Jean Pierre, ed. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2005. A reissue with commentary and texts chosen by the editor of Teilhard's essay: *Let Me Explain*.

Martelet, Gustave, SJ. *Teilhard de Chardin: Prophet d'un Christ Toujours Plus Grand*. Brussels: Editions Lessius, 2005. A biography and interpretation.

Lettres à Jeanne Mortier, (Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1984)

[This book is very difficult to obtain second-hand. Two appeared briefly on the market in France earlier this year. I was fortunate enough to be able to buy one of them. The other was sold very soon afterwards. Ed note]

The book contains more than 100 letters between Jeanne Mortier and Teilhard. The first five are from the period 1939-40, and the remainder to the period from 1946 until Teilhard's death in 1955. Jeanne Mortier was his secretary, typing up his essays, arranging for them to be duplicated (in one case 200 copies!) for distribution to his colleagues and superiors, as well as to enquirers. Teilhard appointed her as his executor, ensuring that his work could be published after his death.

The letters have never been translated, (though they are frequently referred to). They contain some remarkable insights into Teilhard's thinking, and some very sharp assessments of individuals. This probably explains the publication date – 29 years after his death.

Mark Bones, a recently joined member, has kindly translated the introduction for us, where Jeanne Mortier describes how she learnt about Teilhard, made arrangements to meet him in 1939, and how that meeting developed into her becoming his secretary. It is hoped to get permission to publish this in a forthcoming Newsletter (and thence to our website, where all Newsletters are available for perusal back to 1996).

(Mark Bones translation is available – see editorial)

Thomas M. King SJ, *Teilhard's Mass: Approaches to 'The Mass on the World'* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005). 0 8091 4328 3, pp. xiv + 172, £10.50) –

Review by Billy Hewett SJ

(We are grateful for permission to reproduce the following review from the July 2006 issue of the Jesuit journal, *The Way* - <http://www.theway.org.uk>)

In the 1950s, when Teilhard's writings circulated privately in smuggled, typescript editions, they were exciting. Teilhard's stress on movement and dynamism, as opposed to what he calls *fixisme*, aroused many people's enthusiasm. What was also striking was his costly loyalty to the institutional Church, of which the Society of Jesus was a highly institutionalised part. There was nothing flashy or exhibitionistic or selfseeking about Teilhard's insights: they came out of rigorous scientific research nourished by an exemplary Jesuit life.

And yet, for all their originality, Teilhard's writings do not generally wear well. Quite apart from their French spiritual idiom, which does not travel well into English, his best insights became common currency with Vatican II, and were expressed there in more appealing ways that make his originals look somewhat dated. His recently published retreat notes, for example, were hampered by the *fixisme* that had hardened the Ignatian tradition. The revival represented by *Christus*, founded in 1954, came too late to help him. Year after year he loyally made his eight-day retreat, compressing the thirty-day process into eight; year after year he complained about the Exercises' dryness and irrelevance. It was only when he finally reached what he called the 'Ad Amorem' at the very end that he heaved a sigh of relief and usually found the hint of the great dynamic that has become the key to our contemporary understanding of the Ignatian Exercises.

Teilhard's Mass centres on one of Teilhard's texts, 'The Mass on the World', the final form of which dates from 1923. The text is a passionate prayer arising from the occasions when Teilhard had 'neither bread nor wine nor altar', and so sought to make 'the whole earth my altar', offering to God 'all the labours and sufferings of the world.' Perhaps King's most valuable contribution comes in the three appendices. The first reproduces Teilhard's original text in translation, while the second is a prayer service based on 'The Mass on the World' that can also be incorporated into a liturgical celebration of the Eucharist. The last all too briefly explores how Teilhard's own personal prayer life reflects the structure of the Mass and the pattern of the Ignatian Examen.

Having read the appendices, the reader will be in a better position to savour the seven chapters commenting on various implications of 'The Mass on

the World.' Chapter 1, 'Teilhard and the Priesthood', reflects on Teilhard's wider sense of his role as a priest,

... one consecrated to be the first to become aware of what the world loves, pursues and suffers ... the first to sympathize, to toil I would be more widely human in my sympathies ... than any of the world's servants.

Hearing of a Eucharistic Congress being held in Chicago, he wrote:

I follow with a profound interest these grand collective manifestations. But was there among those thousands of adorers one sole preacher to try and explain the true extensions of the Eucharistic and its animating place in human work? To transform Catholics it would be enough to show them what to communicate and sympathize mean in their fullness.

Chapter 2 is about the transformation of the world, as a process informing both science and the Mass. 'In Teilhard's Mass', King comments,

... we begin by gathering into our souls all that constitutes our world. And all of us live in a world that is coming alive and a world that is dying Can the Christian hypothesis bring coherence to the data of our life? Or to the dust of our death? Teilhard claimed they could. Geometricians, theologians and others whose faith is guarded in closed cassettes will not understand this, but physicists and mystics will. For their hand is on the plough.

Chapter 3 fascinatingly describes the scientific work with which Teilhard was involved while he was writing 'The Mass on the World', while Chapter 4, 'The Mass and the Salvation of the World,' is one of the best attempts I have come across to render Teilhard's difficult language accessible. In Chapter 5, King takes 28 quotations from 'The Mass on the World', and offers lucid, thoughtful, prayerful and relevant comments on them. Chapter 6, 'The Mass and Adoration,' shows how Teilhard's speculations led him to develop the notion of adoration far beyond the devout conventions of Benediction. Two weeks before his death he wrote of how science could move people to a kind of worship towards the world. It was as though God, out of the future, was calling scientists and others to a cosmic form of adoration.

Chapter 7 turns to the theme of mission and ministry in Teilhard's writing. 'The only thing that counts for me is not to propagate God but to discover Him: from this, conversion follows ...'. Teilhard complained of the missionaries working to convert the Chinese people: they were 'pushing an artificial religion without a natural trunk', whereas Christianity should be presented as the completion and fulfilment of the world in which they were already living. When

Teilhard's friends were struggling with faith questions, he used to tell them that they must first discover the God of their life. He would ask them about what their 'real me' had been finding in the world. What had been engaging them? Where was this engagement going? For Teilhard, conversion began with a 'fuller consciousness of the universe'; then one could hope that the person's own engagement would open their vision to the universe's crowning glory. Only when natural expectations were sensitised could Christian revelation make sense.

Thomas King is a lifelong devotee of Teilhard, and very well informed on his life and work. As such he is uniquely well placed to revive enthusiasm for Teilhard's legacy, and he presents Teilhard's ideas both simply and attractively. It is a sign of Teilhard's genius that the insights which cost him so much are now taken for granted, and that the man himself has been forgotten. But the world in which we live is still evolving, and we remain conscious both of its positive nurture and its looming threats. Teilhard witnesses to how both promise a Christic way ahead, come what may.

Billy Hewett SJ

Proceedings of French Teilhard Association's Lille-Hastings and Paris-Cairo conferences—2001 & 2002

These proceedings were published in 2003 by publishers Aubin Ed., Paris. It is hoped to publish a full review in the Newsletter at some stage. They cover the first two of a sequence of five conferences, with the fifth being the celebration events in April 2005 in New York. (These were briefly referred to in Newsletter No. 20). The arrangements for the events at Hastings were made by Peter Reid, President, and Siôn Cowell, former President.

The text on the rear page of the proceedings reads :

'Our objective is to make better known the visionary aspects of Teilhard's thought, which opens many perspectives towards a better understanding of life and the Universe, which in turn can contribute to development in today's world. The discussions in the Paris-Cairo (2000) conference are at a cross-roads between Islam and Christianity . . .

An article by Thomas M. King 'The Salvation of the World according to Teilhard de Chardin'

As part of the Hastings-Lille conference, Tom King (see Hewett review above) gave a presentation, with the last five pages giving an introduction to the 'Mass on the World' which he was to celebrate on the

following day. He seeks to prepare his audience for this celebration.

(Copies of Tom King's paper are available – see editorial)

Books containing chapters about Teilhard

Author David Cairns wrote a book in 1953 entitled *The Image of God in Man*. In 1973 he produced a revised edition (published by Fontana) with an additional chapter on Teilhard. He responds well to Peter Medawar's criticism of *The Phenomenon of Man*. Looking back at the issues of the *Teilhard Review* published in 1973-75, there is no mention of this book. If any member recalls seeing the book at the time, or has a copy, please let us know. In the meantime, the chapter has been scanned, and some explanatory notes added.

(Copy for private study available – see editorial)

A copy of Harvey D Egan SJ's book *What are they saying about mysticism* (Paulist Press, 1982) was donated to the Association by Professor Kilgallon at our May conference. The chapter headings following the introduction are:

- 1 Psychological Approaches I
 - 2 Psychological Approaches II
 - 3 Irreducibly Plural Types of Mysticisms
 - 4 Mysticism as a Way of Life I
 - 5 Mysticism as a Way of Life II
 - 6 Christianity's Eastern Turn
 - 7 Turning East Criticized
 - 8 A Contemporary Mystical Theology
 - 9 A Future Mystical Theology
- Epilogue, Notes

A substantial part of Chapter 7 is devoted to Teilhard, and he is also referred to in chapters 8 and 9. Ursula King's book *Towards a New Mysticism: Teilhard de Chardin and Eastern Religions* is also referred to. Quite apart from the references to Teilhard, it seems a good introduction to mysticism. Second hand copies are available via abebooks.com (£1-£6).

(A review of this volume would be welcome – as for the Wildiers volume we will be pleased to provide a copy free of charge to any member willing to undertake this. Ed note)

***The Road less Travelled*, Dr M. Scott Peck**

Review by Michelle Le Morvan

Some of you may have read this book. The author is a psychiatrist and as deeply imbued with the scientific method as any other professional scientist. What struck me very powerfully was the correspondence between many of his ideas and those of Teilhard. His thesis is that psychiatry is, at its core, a science which is directed to growth, and this growth is essentially a spiritual journey which we are all called upon to make. As a psychiatrist he has seen his own journey

inextricably bound up with the journeys made by his patients.

I am going to concentrate on what Dr. Peck says about evolution in the latter part of the book. Spiritual growth is for him the evolution of an individual which mirrors the evolution of life as a whole. It takes place gradually and as the years progress it is working against the physical decline of the body. The processes of physical evolution and spiritual evolution thus mirror one another. As he points out:

“Given what we understand of the universe, evolution should not occur.”

This, of course, is because of the Second Law of Thermodynamics which states that energy will always flow from a state of greater organisation to one of lesser organisation. Those familiar with *The Human Phenomenon* will recognise that Teilhard had to face the same problem. The ascending current of evolution takes place in a universe gradually winding down. As he states:

“In the ordinary course of things, we who read and write this book should not exist.”(p. 283)

His diagram showing the rise of spiritual competence is exactly the same as the one he uses to show the evolution of life. This diagram of spiritual evolution applies both to the individual and to humanity as a whole. The whole process is a miracle in Dr. Peck's words. The force which propels this process is love. The existence of this force of love can only be explained by the existence of God.

Dr Peck also uses the terms “Alpha and Omega.” Space does not allow me to discuss this in detail but as he points out:

“The idea that God is actually nurturing us so that we might grow to be like Him brings us face to face with our own laziness.” (p.289)

Original sin is now seen to be our own laziness which affects everyone who has ever lived at some level. A major form of laziness is fear. He then goes on to discuss the problem of evil and the evolution of consciousness.

It is not possible in the space available to discuss all the material in the book to show that his thoughts are very close to Teilhard's views of consciousness. In fact he throws invaluable light on some of Teilhard's ideas by viewing them from a different scientific perspective. There are no references to Teilhard but his spirit prevades much of the book. I suggest that it is well worth reading. Although first published in 1983 it is still readily available in paperback through all good booksellers.

(Various editions have appeared since 1983. The price of the latest edition on Amazon.co.uk is around £6.00)

My Heart's Quest: Collected Writings of Eric Doyle,
Eds. J. Raischl and A. Cirino.

Review by Michelle Le Morvan

It has been one of the real privileges of my life to have known Eric Doyle and to have had the privilege of his friendship. I remember waiting for a train to Havant at Guildford in the summer of 1975, and as I was about to get on, Eric alighted. It was one of those rare joys whose memory lasts down the years. We had a few moments of joyous reunion before we went our own ways. I still have some tapes of his talks with their humour, their profound learning lightly carried, and their full humanity. He was a star in the same way that the great founder of his order, Francis of Assisi, was a constellation.

This book is a great tribute to Eric's memory. It contains a large selection of his writings, including some pieces from The Teilhard Review. The layout of the book links together the many strands of Eric's life: Franciscan themes, St. Bonaventure, John Duns Scotus, Teilhard de Chardin, and a collection of writings on various general themes. In addition to his own writings on these themes, there are various personal reminiscences by those who were privileged to know Eric. Particularly interesting are the accounts of his share in 400 editions of “The Big Question,” a discussion programme shown on Anglia TV. These reveal the enormous impact he made, not only on those who shared the programme with him, but on the audiences who tuned into the show. There are also two CDs of talks that he gave: “Saint Francis, Saint Clare and Spiritual Motherhood” and “Universal Call to Holiness.” This is a book, not to be read through, but one rather to be dipped into. It takes us away from the shallow artificial world which bombards us daily from all sides, into the stillness which ultimately leads into the “Ultimate Mystery” which lies at the heart of the Cosmos, and the “Anointed One” who came to lead us into that mystery.

This is also, in some ways, a sad book, for it reminds those of us who were privileged to know Eric, what a loss to Christianity and Humanity we suffered by his early death - he was only just 46 years old when he died. It is also a testimony to his life, his humour, his learning and above all, the rare humanity which made him truly “A man for all seasons and for all peoples.” It is a fitting tribute for which the Editors are to be congratulated and thanked.

(The book is published by the Franciscan International Study Centre. It is available through amazon.co.uk, at £20 plus £1.99 sourcing fee, delivery free – Ed. note)

Association business – 1. Annual General Meeting, London Colney, April 2006

The Chairman briefly reviewed the progress of the Association during 2005, highlighting the successful conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of Teilhard's death. He recalled the updating of our constitution, which now included terms of office for both Officers and Members of the Executive Committee, in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Charities Commission. Particular tribute was paid to David Lewin, who joined the committee in 2005, and who had played a major part in planning and organizing the speakers for the 2006 conference.

The accounts were duly approved, showing a deficit between income and expenditure, balanced however by appreciation in our capital assets. Our investment income has increased due to transferring half of our reserve funds into the Charities Property Fund. Subscription income also showed an increase, due to increase in membership, and the adoption of payment by banker's order by members. (A banker's order

form is enclosed with this Newsletter. It would be appreciated if as many members as possible moved to paying their subscriptions in this way.)

It was reported that the membership continued to build steadily. Around half were coming from people who had traced us through our website.

Two new members have joined the Executive Committee, Mr Rod White and Dr David Grumett. They replace retiring member Michelle Le Morvan and retiring Vice-Chairman, Peter Reid. Peter has been a member of the Association from its inception in 1966, and has given stalwart service and support throughout that period. We are particularly pleased that he has accepted the post of President, which means that he continues as an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee. And as already mentioned above, Michelle Le Morvan becomes one of our Vice Presidents.

Association business 2. Planning for Conference 2007 (London Colney 4th-6th May 2007) and 2008

The 2007 conference has been the subject of detailed discussion by the Executive Committee at its meetings in July and September. It has been agreed that the time is opportune for a conference with a significant emphasis on Teilhard the scientist.

Again and again in his writings Teilhard reflects on his 'combined' vocation both as a fully professional scientist and as a fully committed and active priest. His scientific papers fill 10 closely printed volumes (over 4000 pages in all, along with 38 detailed maps.) But he was no narrow scientist. Professor Ursula King, in her introduction to *Selected writings of Teilhard* (Orbis books, 1999 – available through amazon.co.uk at £6.14, free delivery in UK if your order is more than £15) says:

'Teilhard's brilliant gift for synthesis tried to connect and relate, not to fuse or identify, different aspects of human experience and exploration without keeping science, philosophy, religion, theology and spirituality in separate and unconnected compartments'

And in the first of Ursula's selections, taken from the essay 'My Universe' written in 1918 (and not published until 1978 in *The Heart of Matter*), contains the following:

'Science (which for me means all forms of human activity) and religion have always been for me one and the same thing; both have been, so far as I am concerned, the pursuit of one and the same object.'

In this extract we are all of us (whether formally religious or not) being set an example to live our lives

as a whole – not in 'separate compartments' as in the previous quote.

The central theme will be '*Humanity's Place in Nature*.' We will make a start with Teilhard's book *Man's Place in Nature*. This (not very well known) book is based on six lectures which Teilhard delivered in 1948 to a general audience at the Sorbonne University in Paris. It contains the content, in a simplified form, of Books 1 to 3 of *The Phenomenon of Man*, with a brief treatment in the last few pages of the key ideas from Book 4 (Book 4 is titled *Superlife*, where Teilhard speculates on the future lying ahead ('En Avant') for human life and society.)

A review and discussion of this book will provide a basis for us to assess Teilhard's solid achievements as a scientist. A scientist who viewed his work in a very broad context, taking into account all aspects of history, starting with the distant past revealed by palaeontology. To assist us in working forward from Teilhard's ideas, we will have outside speakers to tell us about present-day science and its relevance to present-day society.

Teilhard was insistent about the need for spirituality and science to be integrated. Thus the conference is in no way intended to 'just be for scientists' (though their attendance will be encouraged!). We will be working hard towards that synthesis so clearly identified by Ursula King in the quotations above.

Further detail about the speakers for 2007 will be in the next Newsletter.

In regard to the conference in 2008, discussions are still at the preliminary stage. However, since this will be the centenary year of Teilhard's start on theological studies, which he did at Hastings for four

years from 1908- 1912, we are seeking a conference venue near Hastings. The provisional topic will be on Teilhard's theology.

Association business – 3. Contacting former members of the Teilhard Centre Report from Treasurer/Membership Secretary.

When Siôn Cowell handed over the Chairmanship to Alan Nugent in 2002, he also passed over a set of record cards holding the names of former Teilhard Centre members who had not joined the British Teilhard Association in 1994/5.

In May, using the British Telecom website's 'Find a Person' facility (www.bt.com), it was established that a number of these members were still resident at the same address. Phoning a number of them revealed two things:

- a) Many did not know that the British Teilhard Association existed.
- b) A number expressed strong interest in receiving details about the Association.

Following this, all the cards were gone through (around 400), and all old members found to have a telephone number which was not ex-directory, were then contacted by phone. This gave a total of over 30 people who expressed interest. (It should be added

that many who did not want details sent to them nonetheless wished us well.) Details have been duly sent (including a short 'history' of the Association since 1994, a copy of which is dispatched with this Newsletter). So far we have welcomed back seven to full membership, and a further three have asked to be put on the Newsletter mailing list. We hope that others will join when they receive this Newsletter, and learn more about our current activities, and about Teilhard activities world-wide.

Over half the population of the UK are now ex-directory. Thus it is certain that at the addresses on the 200 cards for which we could not establish a telephone number further former Teilhard Centre members will be resident. A mailshot is being prepared to send out to a sample of 50 of these addresses. If a substantial response to this is received, the remaining 150 will be dealt with in the same way.

Association business 4. Our website (and notes on the French Association's site)

It was reported to the September Committee meeting that the number of visitors has trebled since the beginning of this year – it is now running at 15000 per month. That is the good news. The not so good news is that most of the visits are very fleeting. We will be looking at the introductory pages on the website to see if these can be made more attractive.

The French Association (Association des Amis de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin) have recently extended and improved their website. Their home page (www.teilhard.org) has a long list of future events, mainly in France, but some in Italy and elsewhere. There are links to Teilhard's life ('Vie'), thought (Pensée), understanding [of Teilhard] ('Comprendre'), key text extracts from his work

('Textes'), details of his written works ('Oeuvres'). The texts under these headings are being studied to see how they might be used or adapted for our site.

Some of the pages can be automatically translated into other languages by clicking on the appropriate national flag alongside. The translations are readable. Again this is something that we need to consider.

Of interest to members who can read French and are connected to the Internet, is the fact that articles from the French Association's journal '*Teilhard Aujourd'hui*' ('Teilhard today') can be accessed. Unfortunately, the automatic translation facility is not available for these pages.

Association business 5. Newsletter distribution, size, topics

E-mail distribution is now being carried out by Rod White using his e-mail address:

Rod White <igneosgeos@btinternet.com>

He has contacted most members with e-mail to ask which format they would prefer. If you have not already replied to him then please do so now. If you have received this by post and now wish to change to

e-mail (saves trees, postage, and toil by editor!), please contact him via e-mail.

The new rules for second class postage allow up to 100gm of folded A4 size paper. This allows eight sheets, plus a strong envelope. We intend therefore to continue with Newsletters of 12 pages of text.

Ideas and contributions are welcome. Please contact editor via masthead details on page 1.

Teilhard writing 100 years ago – extract from letter to his parents from Cairo, Sep 7, 1906

(Teilhard has just returned from his August summer holiday spent in Alexandria. In his previous letter of 22nd August he mentions going out in a sail boat. This was ‘great fun, on account of the large number of steamers which come and go.’ He also observed ‘natives fishing illegally- with dynamite’ and their having to share the catch with thieves. Both thieves and fisherman then ‘persuaded the Negro coast-guard to close his eyes to the affair.’)

Dear Father and Mother,

So here I am, back in Cairo, and not unwillingly, despite the charms of the sea.

. . . From now until the time school opens, I shall leisurely prepare my course for next year; I have new subjects to prepare, which is quite pleasant. However, I do not yet know whether I shall have to teach the lower classes, third and humanities, as last year. Meanwhile I get about quite a lot, sometimes in the line of duty, to show new arrivals the wonders of Cairo (the desert has rather fewer admirers), sometimes, and especially, on my own account, since my duties are constantly growing. I am becoming a supplier of shells, neuroptera, orthoptera, chrysalids, lepidoptera, etc., not to speak of making a fundamental study of geology, or rather, paleontology.

Mr. Pallary, of Oran, has responded to my first package; he advises me about shell collecting, asks me a number of things and has returned to me, classified, the types which I sent him. Among them is a new kind of desert snail. Unfortunately I was not the person who found it, and the priest from whom I got it cannot remember too well where he picked it up, so that it is hard for me to find more specimens, which are eagerly sought after. Sturdy snails are not uncommon in the desert, but the types seem to keep very much to themselves, each one occupying a particular region to the exclusion of the rest. Hence the best way of finding any new ones is (invariably) by going farther afield. And that is not at all easy.

Egypt is at the peak of the flood period, and also of the date harvest; the little date forest of Marg offers a spectacle of extraordinary animation. Arabs have moved under their trees to gather the dates; they live there with their families and their chickens. To climb the date palms, which are often very tall, they use strong ropes which they tie around the trunks and on which they sit; by doubling up and placing their feet on the jagged protrusions of the trunks, they climb up very fast.

For the first time, I have been to see the Nilometer, which for centuries has measured the water level of the Nile. It is merely a cistern, connected with the

river, in the center of which there stands a marble column serving as an indicator, in addition to several scales carved in the sides; all around the catchment is an inscription in Kufic (ancient Arabic) lettering. Three or four bench-marks give the average altitude of the place as 29 meters. The Nilometer is at the southern end of the little island of Roda, on the outskirts of Cairo. The island is still only partly cultivated and in some areas quite wild; we happened upon a filthy mud village, to the terror of the children, who scattered in confusion together with some white chickens which had been painted carmine. Fortunately an Arab directed us across the tip of the island, which is covered with lovely gardens that exhale a fragrance of henna, with arcades of lemon, orange and guava trees.

You will have learned from the papers of the death of Prince Ibrahim, who was killed in France where he had gone on a pleasure trip like all wealthy Egyptians. His funeral took place the day before yesterday with great ceremony. I was lucky enough to see the cortège pass in a big street near the Citadel, in a marvelous setting of mosques, and among purely native spectators. First, some mounted police (shaweeshes), then five or six camels laden with large cases from which Arabs took various things and threw them to the crowd. Presumably because it was the end, the only things left in the cases were pears, which did not prevent a full-fledged assault on the last of the camels, the one least protected from the crowd. I also saw more than one pear spurting up on the backs of the distributors. Behind the camels came three gamoosas, whose lot was to be sacrificed forthwith on the tomb, then distributed among the spectators. Then came a long line of soldiers, and finally another line of men in tarbooshes and multicolored aprons carrying what looked like censers and large chiseled dishes filled with flowers. Finally came the representatives of various groups—officers, priests of different rites, consuls, and, curiously enough, whirling dervishes, with ascetic features and immense pointed hats of grey felt. The coffin, drawn by eight horses on a gun-carriage, was followed by members of the family, and by a long train of coaches, virtually hermetically sealed, carrying Moslem ladies. It was a sad end for the poor prince; he was quite young, a very rich proprietor of large estates near Alexandria, and, apparently, on very cold terms with his cousin, the khedive.

(One can sense the budding scientist, looking at everything with a keen eye, noting down the details. But alongside the interest in natural history, he is also observing the people around him, and their activities. Already an interest in socialization – Ed.note)

Future UK Teilhard events

1. Lecture by Dr David Grumett (in the IRC / Sophia Europa Seminar series)

Venue; Date: Harris Lecture Theatre, Oriel College, Oxford; Thursday October 26th, 2006

Time: 8.15 (wine) for 8.30 pm

Title: Towards a Theology of Matter: insights from Teilhard de Chardin

Abstract

Natural disasters triggered by events beyond human control raise pressing questions about the limitations that material existence imposes on humankind. In my presentation, drawing on the work of Teilhard de Chardin, I will begin to develop a theology of matter under the three headings of nature, intentionality and finality: What is matter? How is matter organised? What is the purpose of matter?

Matter is represented in Plotinus and patristic creation imagery as intrinsically disordered and lacking any essential form. Teilhard, drawing on this tradition, presents matter as subject to an ordering principle, which he variously terms 'energy' or 'spirit' in language with suggestive parallels in Orthodox theology. His key hypothesis of evolutionary convergence, re-emergent in recent debates in palaeobiology, suggests that human life tends towards a spiritual unification by means of change and transformation. Humanity nonetheless remains dependent on the vicissitudes that its material condition imposes on it.

Teilhard, both palaeontologist and theologian, realises that no single intellectual discipline will alone be able to provide complete answers to fundamental metaphysical questions. Thinkers who address such questions inevitably trespass across disciplinary boundaries, thereby provoking the retrieval of alternative discursive forms within disciplines.

2. International Teilhard Conference, 2007

Venue; Date: Pastoral Centre, London Colney; Friday 4th May – Sunday 6th May, 2007

Theme: Humanity's Place in Nature (see page 9 for more detail)

3. International Teilhard Conference, 2008

Venue; Date: Near Hastings (provisional); May 2008

Topic: The theology of Teilhard (provisional)

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I light a candle

I light a candle to those we have loved and lost,
may they live for ever in our hearts and prayers;
there, revered and blessed, they shall not be forgot,
there, all memories shall be of joy,
and given time, our sense of loss and loneliness will ease.

I light a candle to our troubled world,
to those who heal and those who suffer,
to those who cause suffering and know no better.
May we learn, as Christ taught us, to overcome all
barriers,
each human soul to care, one for the other.
Only then will *homo sapiens* live at peace with himself,
and understand the true meaning and value of loving.

(by **Venetia Carse**, Association member since 1982)

Coming in the next issue

1. Held over is a short paper describing Teilhard's work on the Geology of Jersey prepared by Michelle Le Morvan – this follows on from her paper in Newsletter 19.
2. The *Letters from Egypt* feature will continue.
3. Continuing the international theme, there will be a short paper by Teilhard scholar Fr Mathias Trennert-Helwig from Constance, Germany. In it he discusses the attitude of the Church in the 1950s when not only Teilhard but also French theologians like Henri de Lubac came under a 'Vatican cloud.'

Communications and enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary:

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