

THE TEILHARD NEWSLETTER

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Attendees and Speakers at the April 2005 Woodstock Forum (see page 5)

*Seated: Schmitz-Moormann, Hefner, Wofford
Standing: Fr Olivier Teilhard de Chardin, the grandnephew of Teilhard;
Fr. Jim Salmon; Marie Bayon de La Tour, the grandniece of Teilhard*

Editorial

This Newsletter contains items on Teilhard over the full range of his work and career.

We start with the second excerpt from Teilhard's writings of 100 years ago. It shows him closely observing a well-to-do Muslim celebrating his return from pilgrimage to Mecca. Next Michelle Le Morvan summarises one of Teilhard's early geological studies, carried out while studying philosophy on the island of Jersey.

We are pleased to include an article by Dr Mathias Trennert-Helwig, a German Teilhardian. Fr Mathias is a parish priest in Constanz, responsible for three parishes, and has to fit his Teilhard studies in with that work (see book-section for details of his 1992 book). His article describes the tensions between various parties during Vatican II, and in particular how forward looking theologians were brought in 'from the cold' by Pope John XXIII. He highlights Teilhard's influence on the Council.

Moving to the present day there is a long report of the one-day conference held at Georgetown University in

2005. In the book section the contents of a book just published are listed, giving details of eight papers presented at the New York 2005 events, along with a ninth on the relations between Chinese philosophy and science from Teilhard's time to the present day.

The 2005 events in the USA appear to have triggered a trend. Well attended Teilhard conferences were held in Czechoslovakia and the Philippines during 2006. Hopefully proceedings of these two conferences will be available in due course.

A full review of David Grumett's book briefly mentioned in Newsletter No 22 is included

Finally, details are enclosed/attached of our 2007 conference, along with a registration form.

Note: We continue the practice of identifying items as 'available for private study.' **To obtain a copy** of any of these, simply write, telephone, or e-mail the address on the masthead on page 1, indicating which item(s) you would like. *(Bill C - Acting Ed.)*

Excerpt from Teilhard's 'Letter from Egypt,' dated March 17th, 1907

At this point in his career, aged 25, Teilhard is half way through a three year period of teaching at the Holy Family School¹ in Cairo. He begins with various greetings, mentions his teaching duties, and talks of the holiday excursion he is planning to Fayoum 'an oasis southwest of Cairo, famous for its fossils and also for its place in antiquity . . . ' He continues:

' . . . I have been through Arab Cairo again; a second archeological expedition took place with Father Tissot and the cream of his class, who are virtually the cream of the school. . . . First, the Bab al-Zuweila gate, vaulted, flanked by two towers from which dethroned caliphs and crusaders used to be hanged, enclosed now in the heart of the Arab quarter near the very beautiful mosque of Al-Muayyad; the heavy swing doors, studded with large nails, are covered with dirty little rags, testifying to the public gratitude to "saint" Zuweila, whom half the passers-by venerate by pressing their heads against the door. An old witch insisted that this was an infallible remedy for headaches.

¹ The history of the school, and some details about how it operated in 1997 may be found at <http://www.companysj.com/v143/famille.html>

It was founded as a seminary by the Jesuits in 1879 for the purpose of training candidates for the priesthood for the Coptic Catholic Church in Egypt. But from the beginning it was open to pupils seeking a secondary education. At least two attempts were made in the early years to make it exclusively Catholic; these attempts were defeated by the Jesuits.

Next, we visited the big mosque of Al-Hassan, near the Citadel. Its walls are enormously high, somewhat reminiscent of the exterior of the palace of the popes at Avignon. Restoration work is under way, but it will be hard to restore it to its primitive splendor; one of the ancient doors, made of bronze worked with silver and gold, is on exhibition in a kind of wall-cupboard. We ended our tour with a visit to the Ibn Tulun mosque, about which I wrote to you in September. It is the oldest of the Cairo mosques still standing, and one of the largest in area. It was built by the famous caliph, Ibn Tulun, who slept floating in a lake of quicksilver [mercury], and it is certainly majestic, with an immense courtyard surrounded by porticoes decorated in a style that is still severe. . . .

These visits to mosques are doubly interesting because life still goes on in the setting in which they were first built. I was recently reading an account by an Arab poet of a trip on donkey-back to Old Cairo, in 1240; his description of donkeys and the habits of donkey-drivers could appear without alteration in the travel notes of a tourist today. As for the fellahin [workers on the land], they are still living in the times of the pharaohs.

I was present this morning when a pilgrimage returned from Mecca, according to all the rites. I think I told you that each pilgrim is escorted home from the station in triumph, in full Arab regalia, and often riding in a buggy. My man this morning was nobly seated on horseback, preceded by two camels bearing a palanquin, then by a grotesque personage

wearing on his head an object that I can compare only to a cornucopia or to an elephant's trunk, then by two more camels carrying two warriors brandishing swords, then by strangely attired dancers performing wild but at the same time elegantly rhythmical dances, and finally by two more camels on which children were perched beating kettledrums as hard as they could. For such occasions, the camels are very strangely caparisoned: heavy red materials with designs in gold hang down like sheets at the rear and at either side of the animal, as well as on both sides of

its head, which is surmounted by a plume. Under all this, they continue to ruminate with shifty looks, slowly turning their heads, with their great black shining eyes, in circular motion, but always on the same plane. The whole procession moved slowly into the street which passes in front of the big hotels, obstructing traffic, but to the delight of the tourists, probably. The touching part of the ceremony is to see the natives crowding around the holy man returned from Mecca to kiss his hands; there is something very religious and very noble about it. . . .

Teilhard de Chardin and Vatican II – and the Monitum - Dr. Mathias Trennert-Helwig

(See editorial for author details)

Teilhard's writings were known in Rome long before the announcement of Vatican II. *The Divine Milieu* had been examined in the 1930s, and *The Phenomenon of Man* in 1944 and again, with revisions to the text, in 1948. But the real difficulties lay with copies of many of his other essays, which had circulated widely in France, via duplicated (and sometimes handwritten) copies. Some of these 'clandestins,' as Teilhard called them, were printed in batches – in at least one case, 200 at one time! Some others of his essays were meant only for perusal by Jesuit colleagues, but copies of these inevitably 'leaked' to others, and several of these in turn also got to Rome.

During World War II, the Vatican's influence was restricted, and it took some time for it to be re-established. French theologians, always noted for their independent attitude, took advantage. A reaction from Rome was inevitable. Above all from the Holy Office, where the memory of the modernist crisis before the First World War was still so vivid in influential circles. P. Garrigou-Lagrange, a member of the Dominican order, wrote: "Where is the *nouvelle théologie* going? It is returning to modernism." (*Angelicum* 1946). This roundly condemned Teilhard, but also the other representatives of this trend in France.

When Teilhard died in 1955, Henri de Lubac (the two of them had been close friends since 1922) had just gone through his worst period. Together with four professors of the Jesuit Order at Lyon University, he had been forbidden any further teaching activity in June 1950 – shortly before the publication of the encyclical *Humani Generis*. He was also ordered to stay in houses of the Society of Jesus and in the City of Rome. It was even forbidden to write about Teilhard in the Order. The decision to strike this blow against the "young French Jesuits" emanated from the Holy Office, whose most important adviser at this time was P. Garrigou-Lagrange OP; supported by P. Journet, P. de Boynes, P. Boyer and Jacques Maritain, the then French Ambassador at the Vatican.

The Secretary in the Holy Office was Monsignor Ottaviani, its Prefect from 1959 to 1968.

In 1956 de Lubac's book *Sur les chemins de Dieu* was allowed to be published. In March 1958 Pius XII was sent this book, along with his earlier book *Méditation sur l'Église*. Pius XII expressed his thanks through his father confessor Fr. Augustin Bea with sincere and acknowledging words. In November 1959 de Lubac was able to resume lecturing in Lyon – the bans of 1950 were quietly ignored.

Returning to Teilhard's works, vigorous controversies arose, based on interpretation of various texts. To help resolve these, the four French Jesuit Provincials, with the consent of their General, asked de Lubac to prepare and publish a book about Teilhard's thinking, thus breaking through the Society's still decreed silence about its meanwhile famous son. After thorough censorship, *La pensée religieuse du Père Teilhard de Chardin* was duly published in spring 1962. Holy Office groups immediately requested that the book be placed on the Index of Prohibited Books, but Pope John XXIII refused. They had to be satisfied with an official "warning" ("Monitum"), which appeared on 30.6.1962 in the *Osservatore Romano* and warned of the mistakes in Teilhard's works. It was said that the Pope was unpleasantly surprised by this "Monitum" and the anonymous, i.e. semi-official statement that accompanied it. He allegedly called it "regrettable" in the presence of a group of French theologians and resident Leopold Senghor, the then President of Senegal.

It is clear that fierce arguments in connection with de Lubac and Teilhard were taking place behind the scenes in Rome. On the instruction of his General, de Lubac was obliged to withhold permission both for translations and for reprinted editions of his book. But he circumvented this by writing a new work: *La prière du Père Teilhard de Chardin*, published in 1964. But in the meantime the struggle for an appropriate answer to the "joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the men of this age" had shifted into a more important arena: Vatican II had begun and

Henri de Lubac had been appointed into the preparatory commission by Pope John XXIII.

With the appointment of de Lubac, Yves Congar, and other theologians judged as “progressive,” John XXIII had not only disregarded the Holy Office headed by the now Cardinal Ottaviani; on 20.10.1962 he explicitly ordered the already functioning Council to discuss the world, its social revolutions and the meaning of the sciences. Teilhard's life-theme was thus on the agenda. In 1936 he had written to the "Propaganda fide" congregation in Rome: “I believe that the world will not be converted Christianity’s hopes of heaven, unless first Christianity is converted (that so it may divinize them) to the hopes of the Earth”²

This topic of the “Church ad extra” (i.e. the turning of the Church to those outside) was energetically pursued by Cardinal Montini; Cardinal Suenens was appointed Relator of the new concept that was to be worked out. Under the time pressure that had meanwhile been created, Belgian, French, Italian and German theologians (Joseph Ratzinger, Karl Rahner, Bernhard Häring, Ch. Delhaye, Jean Daniélou, Yves Congar, Ch. Moeller, among others) worked out a new text, completely superseding the draft of the Holy Office (written in declamatory, deductive church language). This new text was passed and announced on 7.12.1965 as the Council's last resolution, by 2,309 votes to 75.

The name of Teilhard had an extremely polarising effect right through to the Council's last debates. For those Council fathers, who did not know his writings or only knew them superficially, he was the symbol for a “superficial,” “triumphant” or “poetical optimism” that dangerously played down the reality of sin (Cardinal Döpfner on 22.9.1965 - Archabbot Benedikt Reetz and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre offered similar views). Others, however, celebrated the Jesuit as a “famous son of the church,” “devout priest and great scientist” (Bishop Otto Spülbeck of Meissen), “great visionary” (Cardinal F. König) or even as a forerunner of the Council, which Joseph Ratzinger called “a sketched-out Teilhardism”. Teilhard's name was certainly one of the most frequently mentioned in the Council halls (René Laurentin).

The impact of the statements of *Gaudium et Spes* (even though they do not seem radical today) can only be comprehended if compared with the language of the preconciliary documents (for example "Humani Generis" 1950). “Evolution” had been mutated from being a symbol of modernism into the official

description of the world, as we can read in Article five: "Thus, the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one." (*Gaudium et Spes* Art. 5)

Additionally, Teilhard's spirit can be recognised in the following topics of the pastoral constitution:

- The challenge for the Church, against the horizon of the modern world view, to answer the questions about the point in the face of evil and death (GS 10).
- The maturing of mankind into a planetary, networked community and the subsequent moral responsibilities that this brings (GS 1, 23, 42, 73, 84)
- The special dignity of the human work that takes part in the God's constant work on the Creation (GS 33-35, 43, 57, 67)
- An inner necessity for the church to pay heed to the “signs of the times” as Johannes XXIII said (GS 4, 54)
- The irrefutable relevance of the changing scientific world view, its development through research, technology and education (GS 5, 15, 36, 39, 61)
- Man's secret in the historical process – interpreted by Christ as the "first-born of the whole creation" (Kol 1, 15), the "Alpha and Omega" (Apk 22, 13) (GS 10, 22, 32, 45, 93).

For Mario von Galli SJ – a much-respected observer of the Council – it was clear: "I'm staying with it. This Council was saved by this constitution being saved!"

The success of the II Vatican Council and the promulgation of *Gaudium et spes* was due decisively to Paul VI, who had his esteem communicated to Henri de Lubac as early as 1950 as an employee in the state secretary's office. After Montini had been promoted to Archbishop of Milan in 1954, he had Lubac's *Méditation sur l'Eglise* printed and circulated among his clergy – the Italian translation had been refused permission to be printed in Rome. Monsignor Montini expressed his thanks in writing for being sent the *La Pensée religieuse du Père Teilhard de Chardin* shortly before being elected Pope by the conclave on 21.6.1963, thus clearly voting for a consistent continuation of the Council. As a result of a note from the Pope to the Prefect of the Gregorian University, P. Charles Boyer, no other than de Lubac was invited to give a lecture on Teilhard de Chardin before the Thomist Congress in September 1965.

² From the essay ‘Some Reflexions on the Conversion of the World,’ *Science and Christ*, Collins, 1965, page 127.

(Two short sections relating to Rahner and Maritain have been omitted here – full text *available*)

Teilhard today - a true son of the Church

In October 2004, a conference on Teilhard was held in Rome at the papal Gregoriana University, chaired by Cardinal Paul Poupard. Pope John Paul II quoted Teilhard's *Mass Over The World* in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (no. 8, 2003). On the 50th anniversary of Teilhard's death on April 1955, representatives from various national Teilhard Societies came together for a congress in New York/Washington. Many gathered for a commemoration service at his graveside by the Hudson River on Sunday 10th April, the precise anniversary of the date of his death. This continuing and developing interest raises the question: 'Is Teilhard being tacitly rehabilitated as a "true son of the church" and especially as a theological thinker?'

Does the "Monitum" still apply today?

The question is often asked: On what documents of Teilhard's, were the reservations of the official church based? What are the "serious errors that harm the Catholic teachings"? What did Cardinal Poupard mean when he mentioned reservations and criticism against Teilhard's position on 21.10.2004 in Rome?

The semi-official statement on the Monitum in the *Osservatore Romano* of 30.6.1962 confirms the assumption that it was the dissent towards the Thomistic metaphysics, which is unavoidably characteristic of the evolutionary philosophy of life. This "philosophia perennis" was considered in the Holy Office irreconcilably connected with the Catholic teachings:

"It is true that the essential difference of matter and mind is not expressly defined. But it forms a theorem that was always taught in Christian philosophy, in that philosophy of which Pius XII says in the encyclical 'Humani Generis' that it is the officially recognised one in the church."

According to this system, invariability of the substances is part of the innermost core of that cosmic order that unfolds in the gradual construction of the creation from the inanimate matter to plants,

Teilhard de Chardin and His Relevance for Today - Woodstock Report, June 2005, No. 82

(Copied from <http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/publications/report/r-fea82a.htm>)

A report of the conference held on April 11 2005 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Teilhard's death on April 10th 1955. Of particular relevance because of the breadth of the contributions – from theology to politics.

On Easter Day in 1955, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, French Jesuit priest and paleontologist, died

animal, people and spirits (angels) through to God. Anyone like Teilhard who postulates an evolutionary development of creatures, including in this process the development of the human spirit (mind?) because the evidence demands it, is attacking the foundations of Thomistic ontology – with all consequences for the "unchanging" teachings of the church and moral theology that are based on it.

We have to assume that this fundamental conflict is still alive today. The representatives of Thomism are trying as much as possible to prevent their "forever true" metaphysics being turned upside down by the evolutionary paradigm. It is probably from here that associated statements from the encyclical "*Fides et Ratio*" of 1998 originate:

"The speculative dogmatic theology therefore depends implicitly on a philosophy, founded on the objective truth, of people, the world, and, more radically, being." (Section 66 of "*Fides et Ratio*")

"Furthermore, my appeal is directed at the philosophers and to everyone teaching philosophy: in view of an eternally universal philosophical tradition, you may have the courage to win back the dimension of real wisdom and also metaphysical truth of philosophical thinking." (Section 106)

If in talking of "an eternally universal philosophical tradition", the encyclical is demanding a return to the static substance philosophy of scholasticism, such a demand cannot be based on St. Thomas Aquinas. In his *Summa contra Gentiles* (II,3) he emphasizes the need for theologians to contemplate the natural cosmos.

"An error about the creation results in a wrong theology."

(*Error circa creaturas redundat in falsam de Deo scientiam.*)

Thomas Aquinas, the greatest master for the clerical profession, would probably be the first to welcome the due re-establishment of the Catholic theology on a dynamic world. I believe that Teilhard has made some significant steps forward in this vast area. The time has come for others to follow.

suddenly of a heart attack in New York City, an obscure death following a fairly obscure life - as far as the general public was concerned. Within just a few years, Teilhard was being celebrated within the church he served and the world he loved. And, 50 years after his final diminishment (a word that he used creatively in connection with ultimate communion with Christ), Teilhard remains an

undiminished figure of intellectual and spiritual life within Catholicism and beyond.

At Georgetown University on April 11, Woodstock joined with three other organizations in hosting a day of reflections on Teilhard's contributions to both theology and science. That evening, the Woodstock Forum drew a standing-room-only crowd of more than 350 people who heard presentations on Teilhard's legacy.

"Teilhard ultimately had a very big influence in the last century," said James F. Salmon, S.J., a Woodstock senior fellow and professor of chemistry - and theology - at Loyola College in Maryland. He moderated the forum, attended by, among others, at least 100 members of the French Teilhard Association who had traveled to the United States for commemorations in New York in addition to the Georgetown events.

Father Salmon was alluding in part to Teilhard's largely unrecognized role in helping to define the mission of the United Nations. As it turns out, though little known outside of scientific circles, Teilhard's unpublished thoughts and personal contacts had inspired a few early architects of the international body, helping them to achieve a global vision.

"Faith and science [must] converge. Science will not come to the feet of a theologian." - Teilhard de Chardin

And then there was Teilhard's impact on the Catholic Church, whose leaders had largely suppressed his theological and philosophical ruminations during his lifetime. After his death, friends in Paris began publishing volumes of his thoughts; his classic works *The Divine Milieu* and *The Phenomenon of Man* made him a symbol of renewal during the build up to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

There were distinct echoes of those writings in the Council's 1965 document, *Gaudium et Spes*, which defined the Church's opening to the modern world and spoke in Teilhardian terms of scientists being led in their secular work by Christ the Omega, "the goal of human history." Thomas M. King, S.J., a Georgetown theologian who organized the day portion of the April 11 gatherings, cited this and other links between the Jesuit's thoughts and what became part of official Catholic teaching at Vatican II.

More recently, Teilhard's insights into the organic connections between spirit and matter, earth and consciousness, have materialized in several converging areas of contemporary discussion. These include science and religion, ecology and spirituality, and the globalization of many things.

Sponsors of the daytime conference - all with overflowing audiences - included Georgetown College and Georgetown's Jesuit community, together with Woodstock and Cosmos and Creation, an organization at Loyola College co-founded and co-directed by Father Salmon. The evening Woodstock Forum included presentations by Nicole Schmitz-Moormann, a Woodstock fellow who has engaged in a lifelong task of deciphering and transcribing unpublished writings by Teilhard (see "In Focus" feature on page 10); former U.S. Senator Harris L. Wofford; and Lutheran theologian Philip Hefner. What follows are some highpoints of those remarks as well as the question-and-answer segment.

A Vast Legacy

"Teilhard's literary legacy is vast," said Nicole Schmitz-Moormann, who edited Teilhard's key scientific works with her late husband, Karl, one of the world's leading scholars of the Jesuit's thought.

For one thing, approximately 200 people are known to have received his extant personal and professional letters, correspondence spanning several decades. His journal consists of 1,700 pages, not including missing entries between 1925 and 1944, covering his years spent in a sort of Jesuit exile in China.

"It is quite significant that Pierre Teilhard's letters have been treasured and kept by those to whom he wrote through the years. He did not keep the letters addressed to him, but in some cases, thanks to recipients who made carbons of their own letters, we have the back and forth of the exchanges," she noted in her opening presentation at the Woodstock Forum, held in Georgetown's Bunn Intercultural Center Auditorium. "The contents of personal letters addressed to acquaintances and friends reveal his thoughtfulness, his openness to diverse opinions, religions, and races, his apparently endless patience to explain. His correspondence shows clearly that he was not on a preaching mission."

Schmitz-Moormann pointed to examples of how Teilhard's intimate thoughts in personal letters reflected the development of his ideas. She cited his correspondence with New York artist Lucile Swan, with whom he shared a special friendship. In those exchanges, "We can study the meaning and the influence of *la feminine* (the feminine) in his own life as well as his understanding of love and chastity."

To Lucile, he wrote in 1936: "If you do not find me as you would like, the reason is the presence of God whom I love as a person and to whom I have given the final activity of my life." About himself, he wrote in the same letter, "I am not a preacher but a desperate searcher."

Teilhard made this provocative comment in an April 1950 letter to another correspondent, Jean Mortier. "I am a child of the earth before being a man of God," he wrote, "I only can scratch the divine for the cosmic. If you do not see that, you will never understand me."

That comment - about being the earth's child before God's - could easily be misinterpreted. Part of his point was that activity in the so-called secular world is the gateway to God. As he wrote in 1944, "Science leads to the divine. It is a modern access to the divine."

While penning *The Phenomenon of Man* more than a decade before it was able to see the light of publication, Teilhard voiced a conviction about the ultimate power of ideas. "There is very little chance that my book will escape the Roman censor. The essential thing is that the ideas make their way. And they do make their way," he wrote to Swan in 1947.

Schmitz-Moormann also spoke about what she referred to as Teilhard's "so-called journals," which she has painstakingly deciphered and transcribed over the past few years.

"Teilhard's literary legacy is vast." - Nicole Schmitz-Moormann

"In fact, Pierre Teilhard did not use the word 'journal' for the schoolbooks which he used to write down and develop ideas and concepts. He simply referred to them as *cahiers*, the French word for journals or schoolbooks" (that is, composition books or notebooks), she explained. "No intimate reflections are found in the journals, but his state of mind, births, and development of his thoughts are present." Indeed, Schmitz-Moormann believes the journals are key to understanding Teilhard's legacy. They at least give a taste of how the priest understood his intellectual vocation. "I will continue to do sciences so to influence others and to live personally the transition of cosmos into Christ," he vowed in his journal, in March 1919.

In light of the recent wave of interest in mutual dialogue between science and religion, another journal entry in August 1921 appears nothing less than prophetic: "An accord between faith and science is certain, provided both converge. Science will not come to the feet of a theologian."

On the subject of love, Schmitz-Moormann quoted a March 1916 entry in which Teilhard wrote, "For a man, God must be loved through a woman in using her." Those words express his view that an understanding of the feminine is key to understanding God, who is neither male nor female. Schmitz-Moormann commented, "This statement is so strong, almost disturbing, that we feel the need for a

complementary explanation." She added that such a clarification (especially of "using her") is to be found in his October 1919 reflection, where he writes of his ideal "to seek after the feminine in a woman without destroying her and without being absorbed by her." Teilhard had many deep Platonic friendships with women, from which he drew insights about knowing and loving God.

As Schmitz-Moormann observed, Teilhard's name has been linked in recent years with discussions of globalization as well as pluralism. Teilhard himself spoke of "planetization," the sundry forces that are pulling people and cultures together. And beyond this, one would need a Teilhardian glossary of terms to keep track of his distinctions, a sort of lexicon that the Jesuit himself planned but never finished.

"Planetization is a phase in noogenesis," she quotes him as noting (noogenesis referring to the origins of conscious reflection). "Planetization has begun with hominization" (which Teilhard saw as the evolutionary leap beyond the animal biosphere, into the sphere of reflection) "and it is the final phase of hominization."

Suffice it to say that in mapping out this global convergence of human cultures and religions, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was visualizing a world of dialogue decades beyond his own world.

Teilhard on the Stump

"I was ready for Teilhard," said Harris Wofford, a lawyer and scholar who served as a Democratic member of the U.S. Senate from 1991 to 1994. He was speaking of the 1950s, when doors seem to be opening everywhere, for him and for people like his stepmother. She was ordained a minister at age 50, in 1959, and his family gathered for her memorial service on the morning of the April 11 forum at Georgetown.

"It was Teilhard's vision that knit together in one comprehensible whole, not only a view of the world and human destiny, but a view of the ever-expanding universe of universes, the existence we were all trying to comprehend," recalled Wofford.

"Teilhard's vision tells us to hurry up, to find the ways and means to harness the energies of love." - Harris Wofford

During the presidential campaign of 1960 and for some years afterward, Wofford worked with Sargent Shriver, the brother-in-law of President John F. Kennedy who founded the Peace Corps and spearheaded the War on Poverty during the Kennedy administration. Shriver was another fan of Teilhard, and Wofford told of how Teilhard's message stayed

with Shriver through the 1960s and rang out at the 1972 Democratic national convention.

As he recounted:

"On nights when we worked late into the morning hours, I often found myself in Shriver's suite at the Mayflower Hotel or in some hotel traveling to another country. Each night before he turned out the lights, he would sit and read for a while, usually a book of spiritual import, and very often it was Teilhard de Chardin. And when he finished, he would sometimes pass the book over to me. And then in the morning, he was up promptly to go to Mass, and I had no way to escape that, and greatly benefited by it.

"Then in the presidential campaign of 1972, after George McGovern asked him to become his running mate, I was helping Sarge work on his acceptance speech. He was late, as sometimes happens - the motorcade to go to downtown here in Washington to the special convention to nominate him to hear his acceptance speech was revving up. Sarge was still unsatisfied with the end. 'I know how I want to end!' he suddenly proclaimed. 'It's Teilhard de Chardin. I'm going to find that quote. It's on a plaque in a pile upstairs.' We physically tried to stop him, but he bounded out and in two minutes was back with the plaque. So he ended his address with these words of Teilhard that brought the quite electrified delegates to their feet: 'The day will come when, after harnessing the winds, the tides, and gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in this history of the world, man will have discovered fire.'

"Those who were there that day have not forgotten, I suspect, the fire with which Shriver delivered those words about fire. And they became the theme of his campaign, as those who love Sargent Shriver know those words are the theme of his life. He practiced what Teilhard preached as he went to help his wife Eunice and his son Tim spread Special Olympics to the far corners of the world."

Wofford added that those and other words of Teilhard played a significant part in what he described as "my own little journey" from the Anglican Episcopal Church of his father to the wider Catholic Church of Teilhard. At the same time, the former senator made it clear that - as a follower of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King and their advocacy of civil disobedience - when it comes to fundamental matters of conscience, he would have some close questions to ask of Teilhard. "I find it very hard to fathom the faith he must have had to accept the public silencing of his most important thoughts. But I respect his agonizing decision to choose what he probably viewed as divine obedience," said Wofford, who served as a special

assistant to President Kennedy, coordinating civil rights policy for the White House.

What does Teilhard's vision have to say to politics today, to worldwide poverty, including poverty of the spirit, to the suffering brought on by various forms of violence, from street crime to terrorism to war? Wofford posed this question and answered: "Teilhard's vision tells us to hurry up, to find the ways and means to harness the energies of love, to do in the political world what scientists did with the physical atom, to crack the atom of civic power, to start a chain reaction of constructive force that will answer those burning questions. As John Kennedy said, 'Man now holds in his hand the power to end all poverty on earth and to end all human life on this planet. And God's work on earth must be our own.'"

Wofford concluded by linking the literary with the political. He says Teilhard's grandest metaphors always had "something to do with fire - the fire that will blaze forth when we do discover how to harness the power of love for the unity of man.

"The poet in him is to restore in the world of politics and religion the heat and the light needed for that old idea of creative fire. So we must hope that the sparks that his words send out will one day catch fire in the dry tinder of our times."

The Eucharistic Milieu

In his presentation, Philip Hefner delved deeply into an essay that Teilhard wrote 80 years ago in China, titled "My Universe." In it, he wrote, "The mystical milieu is a flesh. For it has all the properties the flesh has, of palpable domination and limitless embrace." Hefner, who edits *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, sees poetry in the text. But what makes the text really stand out, in his view, is the Eucharistic image. In this connection, Teilhard drew on Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote: "The bread of the Eucharist is stronger than our flesh. That is why it is the bread that assimilates us and not we the bread when we receive it."

Hefner reflected on the power of that image: the bread that is Christ's body, consuming us. "And of course, we know that Teilhard considered the entire created world to be the Eucharist host," said Hefner, professor emeritus of systematic theology at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago. This means the Eucharist has physical extensions, beyond the visible wafer.

He let Teilhard speak for himself about this Eucharistic milieu. "Since Christ is above all Omega, i.e., the universal form of the world, he can attain his organic balance and plenitude only by mystically assimilating all that surrounds him." And: "The host is like a blazing hearth from which flames spread

their radiance, just as the spark that falls into the heather is soon surrounded by a wide circle of fire." ("Here's fire," Hefner interjected.) Continues Teilhard: "So the sacramental host of bread is continually being encircled more closely by another infinitely larger host, which is nothing less than the universe itself. The world is the final and the real . . . the final and the real host into which Christ gradually descends until his time is fulfilled."

In these meditations, Teilhard was catching nothing less than the rhythm of life, as Hefner sees it. "We work actively, extending our energies to the utmost and we are also acted upon, drawn into the processes of the world, and therefore the processes of God. We receive the gracious pull of God through the push of our own actions. We take the bread and the wine in the sacrament and we consume them, but we do so within the larger rhythm in which we ourselves are consumed by the blazing flames of the host itself, which is the world and which is Christ."

These mystical images also throw light on the Teilhardian view of science and the process of evolution. As Hefner explained, evolution, in Teilhard's thought, is all about Christ and the emergence of Christ in the universe. Teilhard had this to say in his essay: "All around us, Christ is physically active in order to control all things - from the ultimate vibration of the atom to the loftiest mystical contemplation. From the lightest breeze that ruffles the air to the broadest currents of life and thought. He ceaselessly animates without disturbing all the world's processes. And in return, Christ gains physically from every one of them. Everything that is good in the universe is gathered up by the Incarnate Word as a nourishment that it assimilates, transforms, and divinizes."

Here we have Teilhard's vision of nature, which reveals God and the workings of Christ. And since the sciences focus on nature, they represent knowledge of God's ways, Hefner commented. Referring to Teilhard's theory of "complexity consciousness," he added, "His spiritual vision compelled him to recognize that this was not only a theory of evolution, but it was a theory of God, a theory of God's way of working. In this essay, he uses the term 'creative union.' And we know how fully he appreciated matter - a fully material thinker intrinsic to the world, intrinsic to us. Whether we speak of the physical or the spiritual, we're talking about the material realm and its development. Materialism or naturalism is not the issue for Teilhard's vision. Rather it's our perspective on nature and matter, our understanding of it." That is because, through the process of creative union, the natural and material worlds are "inseparable from the spirit." That is why the mystical milieu is flesh.

The little essay opens up a spiritual vision carried forth, in Hefner's mind, by the Eucharistic images. It is a vision in which all human striving, whether scientific or moral - whether aimed at personal fulfillment, material advance, or sheer excellence of performance - is cosmically Eucharistic. In other words, it is "set forth for us in the Body and Blood of Christ," Hefner said. "Our building the earth is not our mastery of the earth, but rather the vehicle of our being consumed by the earth and united with it in the processes of complexity. Our building the earth is our pathway into Christogenesis, the fuller becoming of Christ. Christ is the enabler, the God-forward of evolution."

Teilhard's theory of evolution was also "a theory of God, a theory of God's way of working" through the universe. - Philip Hefner

Hefner related that Teilhard summarized his vision of Christian life when he wrote that the mystical vision discloses two things: the sacramental consecration of the world by a complete faith and communion with the world through a complete loyalty. "Complete faith, complete loyalty," Hefner underscored. "Faith focuses on the unification with Christ. Loyalty" - and here he quoted Teilhard - "is to grasp every opportunity of growing greater and in accepting every summons to die."

Ultimately, growth and death come together in this mystical movement. They are, Hefner concluded, "our access to unification with Christ and God."

Fire at the Forum

During the formal presentations, Wofford invoked the metaphor of fire in Teilhard's thought, which Hefner alluded to as well. And this talk of fire (or the lack of it in today's political world) caught on during the question-and-answer segment of the forum.

"The problem is that the crisis of our time, with the exception of those that call or result in explosive armed force with plenty of fire one way or the other, are slow burning crises. There isn't a blaze that ignites people, that excites people," one member of the audience observed.

Another questioner, who said he had just spent five years living and working outside the United States, added: "I think . . . we as a culture here are excessively fat, rich, and therefore not about to assume the Gospel challenge and catch fire. I think we're too lazy, indolent, and why should we? We have the easy boat. But that's this country. So I'm trying to approach your finest point of - How can we

really catch fire? And I doubt it's going to happen until we all get poorer or more urgent."

In his response, Wofford noted that a "depression of the spirit" seems to have begun in the United States during the Vietnam era. Although he did not offer an easy remedy, Wofford seemed to suggest that if the political fire were to be set again, it would have to be caught in realms beyond politics. "We all know in our bones that the thing that we call the state and government is only one of many of the corporate forces in the world," he explained. Wofford, a former president of Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, pointed to business and non-profit organizations as well as churches and educational institutions - "that whole world that governs most of the things that affect our lives. We haven't found the way to apply the sense of self-government that in every one of those corporate bodies, there's a responsibility to seek the common good."

He added simply, "I yearn for some great goals that can galvanize us."

Christ, Front and Center

Two Woodstock fellows at the forum raised questions about Teilhard's brand of Christo-centrism and whether this thrust of his thought poses a problem in the religiously pluralistic world of today. Senior research fellow John Haughey, S.J., remarked, "I wonder whether the heuristic of the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached can be connected to Teilhard's eschatology which turns out to be so thoroughly Christological. It is more dated than is needed at the present time." Visiting fellow Anthony Savari Raj of Madras, India, asked, "Is it not possible to think and speak of God, or Christ, without burdening him to be the Omega point or the apex" of all other human and religious striving?

Hefner stuck with Teilhard, and with a more traditional view. "I don't look upon this Christology as an imposition. You must think this. You must honor Christ with this preeminence," he said, speaking specifically of those who espouse Christian faith. "It's rather that everything a Christian looks at is through the lens of Christ. And whether this generation will put it one way and another generation will put it another way, their lens of meaning, if they're Christian, is going to be Christ."

THE GEOLOGY OF THE ISLE OF JERSEY

(A summary of Teilhard's work by Michelle Le Morvan)

(The paper is written for geologists. When this Newsletter goes on to our website, it will help to promote 'Teilhard the geologist' in the scientific community – Ed. note)

This paper is about Teilhard's analysis of the geology of the Isle of Jersey. Jersey is near to us and such a popular tourist holiday destination that it is actually possible to retrace some of Teilhard's steps - far more easily than anywhere else he worked. If we try to do this even in a small way it will help us to appreciate some of his qualities as a geologist. If you do visit Jersey, at the very least you should go to the museum of the Société Jersaise and have a look at the geological collections. (Address: 9 Pier Road, St. Helier).

Introduction

In 1919 Teilhard read a paper on the Structure of the Isle of Jersey, later published in the Bulletin of the Geological Society of France (1920). This followed two earlier papers written with Fr. Pelletier on the minerals of Jersey. These were discussed in Newsletter 19. As Teilhard notes in the introduction to this paper, Père Noury had described the geology of the Island in 1886 and A. de Lapparent had described the petrology of the rocks of the island (1892). In the paper described below Teilhard sets

out to discuss the geological structure of the island. His achievement in preparing this paper lay in the fact that his observations were based on his keen eye as a field geologist and his ability to see the interconnections of the rock units. He did this without chemical analysis, boreholes, radiometric dating (which was still in its infancy). Also none of the rocks contain fossils, which would have assisted with dating

The Structure of Jersey

The chief rock units of the island are either igneous or metamorphic, and unlike sedimentary rocks, cannot contain fossils. As already mentioned, without radiometric dating the placing of them within the geological time scale is impossible. Thus the only date given by Teilhard is to the central schist deposits which he considered to be Precambrian in age (i.e. older than 570 million years). The paper is accompanied by a geological map of the Island which divides the rocks into three main groups. A simplified map of the island showing these three groups is given in Fig. 1. We will look briefly at each area in turn.

a) Y - Y'

This area occupies the north-eastern corner of the Island. The rock sequence dips in a north-easterly

direction. At the base are the Precambrian schists, succeeded by a series of beds of igneous rocks, largely volcanic in origin, but containing many different structures and lineations. At the top of the sequence, at Rozel, is a bed of sedimentary conglomerate which appears to be the same one as at Havre-Giffard. At the eastern end of the Island, the sequence appears in the beach below Montorgueil. The coastal section from Montorgueil to St. Catherine appears to replicate that to the north.

b) X - X'.

Going across the island from west to east, this line goes from St. Ouens Bay to St. Catherine. The beds successively cross the schists and the previous sequence, all dipping regularly to the north-east. The beds showing flow structures and the conglomerates are particularly easy to follow. Looking at the rocks on either side of this line (to the north and the south) in western Jersey, we find that they are approximately symmetrical. There is also a great mineralogical similarity, being minerals which have a common origin - such as allanite, zircons, molybdenite. The rock succession is similar.

From a tectonic point of view (i.e. studying how the rocks came to be deformed), we find that the Y - Y' boundary separates an area of surface geological activity (to the north-east) from an area of intense activity below the crust which has now been exposed by subsequent uplift and erosion. In the north-western area there has been intense metamorphism (the changing of rocks by intense heat and pressure) to form new rocks. This is particularly true of the rocks around Mt. Mado.

For Teilhard the rocks to the north and south (of Y - Y') could not be studied in their relationships to one another without real chemical analysis (to which he had no access). Around Havre-Giffard - Mt Mado it appears that the extrusive rocks were formed simultaneously with the consolidation of the granites,

whereas in the south the consolidation of the granites appears to have been before the extrusive rocks were erupted. Teilhard inclined to the view that all these rocks, both extrusive and intrusive, were the result of a very complex igneous-metamorphic event in which the granites and the porphyrites formed.

c) Z - Z'

This small area at the promontory of Belle Hague is unusual and separate from the rest of the geology of the north. The rocks have some curious resemblances to the Samares area in the south. It may have been thrust forward over the conglomerates of Havre-Giffard to its present position. The abnormal contact along Z - Z' was the only large rock displacement that Teilhard had seen in Jersey and it appeared to have extended north of Fremont Point. Alas all is now covered by the sea.

Reference: *Sur la Structure de L'ile de Jersey*; Bull. Soc. Geol. France. 4e serie, t. XIX, 1920, pp 273-278 (also published in Teilhard's *L'Oeuvres Scientifique*, Tome 1, pp. 199-204.

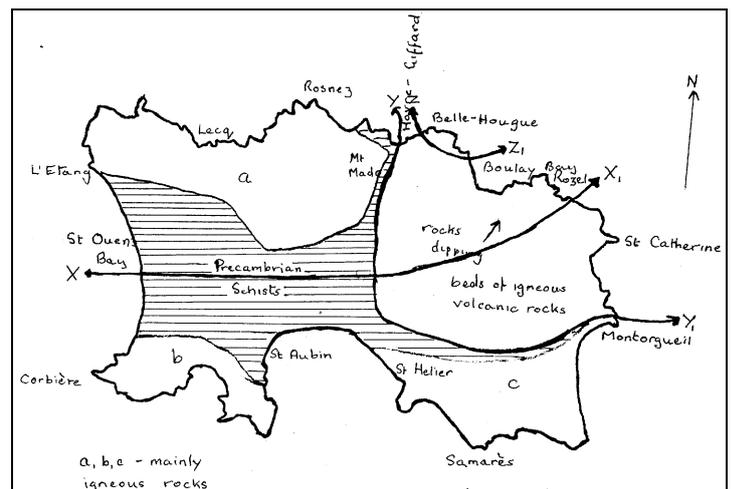


Figure 1: Geology in Jersey (a larger copy is available)

Notes on books: a) about Teilhard; b) containing references to him

Teilhard and the Future of Humanity (Ed. Meynard T., Fordham University Press, 2006)

Contains papers presented at the events held in New York in April 2005 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Teilhard's death in that city.

Contents:

Preface – Thierry Maynard S.J.

Teilhard and Human Spirit

1. Feeding the Zest for Life: Spiritual Energy Resources for the Future of Humanity – Ursula King (Theologian)

2. God and the Human Future – Thomas M King, S.J.

3. The Personalization of the Universe; or The Era of the Person – Henri Madelin S.J.

Teilhard and Ecology

4. Zest for Life: Teilhard's Cosmological Vision - Mary Evelyn Tucker (Vice-President, American Teilhard Association)

5. Teilhard's Vision and the Earth Charter – Steven C. Rockefeller (Philanthropist)

Teilhard and Economic Globalization

6. Teilhard, Globalization, and the Future of Humanity - Michel Camdessus (Former Head of the International Monetary Fund)

7. Teilhard and Globalization – Jean Boissonat (Economist)

Teilhard and Science

8. The Emergence of Consciousness in Biological Evolution and Quantum Reality – Lothar Schäfer (Biochemist)

9. The Role of Science in Contemporary China and according to Teilhard – Thierry Meynard S.J.

Professor Ursula King's paper has already been put on the Internet – a copy is *available*. A copy of the text of Jean Boissonat's paper as issued at the conference is also *available*.

It will be seen that these papers cover a wide range. While the book has not yet been reviewed, it is undoubtedly of a high standard of scholarship.

Members interested in buying a copy of this book are asked to let us know. We intend to try to negotiate a special price for members. The more sales we can indicate the stronger our bargaining position will be.

Robert Wicks. *Modern French Philosophy: From Existentialism to Postmodernism* (One World, 2003)

The author is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. He presents concise accounts of 15 French thinkers, seeking to 'define the last 100 years of French thought.' Both Bergson and Teilhard are included. Teilhard is included as a 'foil' to counteract the dark views of E.M. Cioran (Nihilist and Ecstatic, 1911-1995). (*In a private e-mail the author says that 'when he found out that Teilhard risked his life many times for others in WWI, that was enough to put him high on my initial list' – Ed. note*)

(A copy of the Teilhard chapter can be provided for private study.)

Mathias Trennert-Helwig, *Die Urkraft des Kosmos: Dimensionen der Liebe im Werk Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, (The Elementary Force in the Universe: Aspects of Love in the Work of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin), Herder, 1992.

Fr. Mathias (see editorial) has very kindly sent us a copy of this book. It is a dissertation prepared under the direction of Professor Riedlinger of the theological faculty of the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg im Breisgau. If any member of the Association fluent in German would like to review it, it can be sent on.

The bibliography gives welcome detail of the substantial German scholarship on Teilhard, particularly by Professor Riedlinger.

George Pattison. *Thinking about God in an Age of Technology*, Oxford University Press, 2005)

A full review of this book will be presented in due course. A cursory glance through it reveals a substantial mention of Teilhard.

Dominique Wang. *À Pékin avec Teilhard de Chardin, 1939-1946* (In Peking with Teilhard de Chardin, 1939-1946), Laffont, Paris, 1981.

The author was married to Willy Wang, a Eurasian (Chinese/Belgian) engineer trained in Belgium, who went to work in Peking in 1939. The book describes many social evenings, and the contributions made to the conversations by Teilhard and Father Leroy, his companion and co-worker during that period. Her Chinese uncle was often present. He and Teilhard (only two years separated them in age) discussed Chinese philosophy and attitudes at length.

It is perhaps surprising that little of the knowledge that Teilhard must have gained about Chinese philosophy appears in his post-war writings.

Second-hand copies of this book are available from French booksellers through Abebooks (www.abebooks.fr)

John W. Bennett. *Classic Anthropology: Critical Essays, 1944-1996*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, N.J., USA, 1998. Chapter 15 (pp 401-411)

Professor Bennett was the founder and first chair of the Department of Anthropology in Arts and Sciences at Washington University in St Louis, in 1967. He earned a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Chicago in 1946 (he was born in 1916). This book is a collection of his 'best' essays. The Epilogue chapter (pp 401-411) is devoted to Teilhard.

The author points out that anthropologists have difficulties in dealing with religion, and is suggesting that they need to take it more seriously. He suggests that Teilhard's approach is of value because he does (by definition!) take religion seriously.

A copy of the text of the chapter can be made *available* for private study.

(*For the record the book was discovered via a search on the word 'Teilhard' in Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Hayden library in April 2005. All the chapter headings had been copied into the computer catalogue. No reference to it has been found anywhere in books on Teilhard. So this Newsletter mention raises its profile in the Noosphere!*)

If any member has made a similar surprise discovery of a reference to Teilhard, please let us know. Ed. Note)

Review of *TEILHARD DE CHARDIN: Theology, Humanity and Cosmos*, by Thomas M. King, S.J.

By David Grumett. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters Publishing, 2005.

(Reprinted with permission from the American Teilhard Association's Fall 2006 Newsletter)

The present text begins with a long quote of (Cardinal) Henri de Lubac, S.J. saying we need to understand Teilhard in the context that formed him: "We must bring to mind again the situation of the religious and conservative world in France around 1900, and the interior exile of Catholic society, the theology current at the time, as well as the positivist, determinist, and anti-religious mentality then dominant." De Lubac saw Teilhard facing a conservative Church and a strongly secular society, and in the face of such obstacles he forged a spiritual interpretation of evolution that reaches its consummation in Christ. This is the intellectual world that Grumett has uncovered in his monumental work.

Grumett, a University of Exeter theologian, offers a thorough examination of the religious, political, and philosophic currents that formed Teilhard's thought. As the publication of his doctoral dissertation written for Cambridge University, it constitutes the most extensive academic study of Teilhard's sources likely to be written. Grumett has accessed the copious writings of Teilhard (essays, journals, letters, retreat notes, etc.), the books that he read (Teilhard has left his *carnet des lectures*), the French-Jesuit archives, the teachers who taught him, writings of his fellow Jesuits, the influential philosophers of the early twentieth-century, medieval thinkers that Teilhard read, the works of the Jesuit founder, St. Ignatius, along with the abundance of material written about Teilhard. And instead of losing himself in this wealth of detail, Grumett manages to achieve a well-argued central thesis: Teilhard was primarily a theologian and his theological vision was "rooted in Historic, catholic Christianity," in other terms, "Theology provides the hermeneutic for the whole of his thought." Grumett allows that many people have not read him that way, and he attributes much of this misunderstanding to the fact that his writings appeared in the troubled 1960s when people were looking desperately for a different message. To guide us through the complexities and details of his claims, Grumett offers a brief summary statement of each chapter.

Grumett is particularly concerned to show that Teilhard, beyond having a distinctive philosophy of human action, also had a philosophy of human passion and suffering. The two themes are traced through his theology and philosophy. He sees Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Maurice Blondel, Henri Bergson, Pierre Charles, and Pierre Rousselot as

having major influences on Teilhard. Grumett sees Teilhard's understanding of the body-soul relation as a key element that situates much of his thought in the Thomistic tradition. He points out that Teilhard's understanding of matter was more inline with the texts of Plotinus than was that of Henri Bergson (a supporter of Plotinus); he argues that Jacques Maritain's charge that Teilhard offered a "Hegelian theogeny" is not justified. He sees Teilhard closer to Origin than to Justin on the nature of matter, and so forth. Teilhard was not necessarily aware of all of these influences, but in presenting them Grumett situates Teilhard within the significant traditions in philosophy and theology. Grumett emphasis is on Teilhard's years of education, still one misses any mention of Edouard Leroy, a noted Catholic philosopher and professor at the College de France, whom Teilhard met in 1920 and soon was meeting weekly to discuss their common interests.

Grumett argues many people have not been aware of the academic quality of Teilhard's writings and attributes much of this to the fact that Teilhard wrote some essays between battles in the First World War and other essays while on expedition – or even while working in Peking. In such places he did not have the libraries necessary to make his works as scholarly as they might be. But Grumett shows that Teilhard was aware of an abundance of intellectual currents and was responding to many of them. On several occasions Grumett acknowledges Teilhard's mysticism: "Teilhard is seeking to communicate a profound spiritual experience which is as such strictly incommunicable." Though incommunicable, this experience was articulated in the somewhat-panteistic flavor that runs through Teilhard's writings and sets him apart from most of the Catholic theologians that influenced him: it also does much to explain his extraordinary popular appeal. Though Grumett acknowledges this, he does not give it the recognition it deserves. Still one must recognize the extraordinary achievement of the present study. It is not light reading, yet is clearly written and so well outlined that many can find it a good tool for reference.

Hopefully by showing the subtlety and many dimensions of Teilhard's thought, *Teilhard de Chardin: Theology, Humanity and Cosmos* will enable scholars to see that Teilhard is much more than a maverick and enable him to take the place he deserves among the philosophic and theological giants of the twentieth century.

(Thomas King, SJ, is Professor of Theology at Georgetown University and author of many books and articles seeking to explain and convey Teilhard's spiritual vision.)

Association News

1. Future events:

International Teilhard Conference, 2007

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

Theme: Teilhard: Scientist and Christian Humanist

[\[Further details and booking form\]](#)

International Teilhard Conference, 2008

Venue: The Friars, Aylesford, Kent: Dates: Friday 18th to Sunday 20th April 2008

Theme: The theology of Teilhard (provisional)

(Note change of venue from London Colney – this is to allow a day trip to Hastings to visit sites with connections to Teilhard, in particular the Museum and the site of the scholasticate at Ore Place where he studied theology)

2. Membership

Over 20 new members joined us in 2006. We still have to follow up some of the new attenders at the annual conference, along with a number of others who expressed interest and have been sent information.

3. Subscriptions

Many thanks to those who responded to the ‘late call’ for subscriptions sent out with the Newsletter in October. (You should all have received an acknowledgement by e-mail or via a ‘Post-it’ note on the Newsletter – apologies to anyone who may have been missed.)

At the Committee meeting held in December 2006 a preliminary discussion took place on subscriptions. It was suggested that now that the Executive Committee is up to full strength, and that we can expect a reasonable programme of events to be developed in the next few years, along with increased demands from students for support, it was time for a modest increase in subscriptions, to take effect in 2008. (It should be noted that there has been no increase for the last 10 years.) At the same time, it was agreed that we should continue to ask those members who can afford it to consider making a regular donation over and above the subscription. Following the appeals made during 2005 and again in October 2006, we now have a total of 10 members who are giving regular donations in the range between £40 and £80. It is fully recognized that not everyone can afford this, and that many have other commitments which they would see as having first priority for increased giving. But we would ask that you give the matter serious consideration.

Subscriptions will be considered again at the next meeting of the Executive Committee. Any proposals agreed will be put forward for comment/discussion at the AGM, prior to a final decision by the Committee. (Under our Constitution, the Executive Committee is the body with the power to set subscription rates.)

A proforma relating to subscriptions for 2007 is enclosed/attached with this Newsletter.

4. Obituary – Mrs Venetia Carse

It is with regret that we announce the death of Venetia in September last year. It is a matter of great sadness that she did not live to see her poem published in the last Newsletter. She maintained a lively interest in the Association right up to the onset of her last illness and hospitalization. The Association was represented at a memorial service held in November.

General communications and enquiries about the Association should be addressed to the Secretary:

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