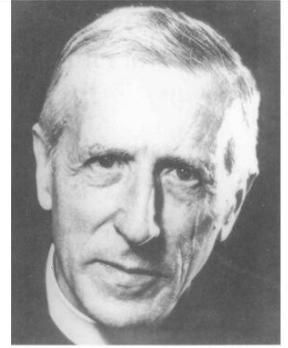


# THE TEILHARD NEWSLETTER

Published by the British Teilhard Association

[www.teilhard.org.uk](http://www.teilhard.org.uk)



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### Editorial

Welcome to the 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the Teilhard Newsletter. Firstly, I would like to thank those of you who have given us feedback on your new look newsletter as this helps keep us going! We have received some very interesting contributions from our membership for inclusion in this issue and have a couple of items held over for October. Please keep sending us items because we are going to be trying hard to produce three TNs per year and would like to keep up the mix of content and provide something of interest for everyone.



It was good to see so many people at the joint meeting with the Alister Hardy Society in April. Copies of the talks are available on CD or DVD if you missed this excellent day or would like to hear them again (see page 4 for details of how to order these).

It is always interesting to hear from other members their personal stories of how Teilhard first caught their imagination and entered their lives. This month we have an article *Teilhard de Chardin in my Life* by Sister Katharine Holmstrom SHCJ. Please help us to make this a regular feature – how did Teilhard inspire you? The first part of the conference paper (from 2009) by Professor Wayne Parsons also demonstrates

how Teilhard inspired and continues to inspire him. Who is going to be next? We will await your responses...from a paragraph to two sides A4...please don't let us down! You have until the next submission deadline of 30 September.

**ROSEMARY & STEPHEN**

## Members -- News

We are saddened to report the passing of two more of our members - Norman H. Judd died in August 2009 and Margaret Bateson, who would have celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 9 June, died in January of this year. Our sincere condolences are extended to their families.

*Our thanks to Margaret's Son, Peter Mann for the following:*

### **Margaret Elizabeth Bateson (1920 – 2010)**

Margaret was an enthusiastic member of the British Teilhard Association since its inception in 1963 and will be remembered as an attendee of many of its annual conferences.

She was born on 9 June 1920. The daughter of a country parson, she had a happy childhood in Somerset. From there she went on to study social sciences at Bristol University.

Margaret slid away from Christian orthodoxy, but one day in the early sixties she read a review in the TLS of Teilhard de Chardin's 'The Phenomenon of Man'. She was so excited that she ran all the way to the nearest bookshop to place an order. Although well-read, it was the works of Teilhard that restored her faith and changed her life.

She continually retained a fascination for science, and for myth and legend, especially the Arthurian stories. Her own 'round table' of literary and theological figures included William Blake (as Merlin), Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Oliver Lodge, Paul Tillich, Charles Williams and Teilhard as Sir Galahad.



She always wanted to write (her sister, Rachel, wrote poetry) but her first attempt, 'The Dream of Iola', got nowhere. Much later, after reading all of Teilhard's books (she had first editions of most of them), and after visits to Ireland, loving contact with grandchildren and the gift of a computer from her son in Hong Kong, a new start was made in Bath. At 80, Margaret published her first book, 'The Merlin Set-Up', which features time travel adventures to Roman, Medieval, and Victorian Bath. With a wealth of historical colour, and heavily influenced by Teilhard's writings, the book seeks to make Christianity and spiritual matters relevant to modern teenagers.

She wrote another four books in this series in the last decade of her life: 'Under the Merlin Spell', 'Merlin's Island', 'Merlin in Cyberland' (dedicated to Teilhard on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death) and 'Moving On with the Merlinauts'. Margaret's books can be bought or read online at [www.merlinroom.co.uk](http://www.merlinroom.co.uk)

Margaret died peacefully on 3 January 2010 surrounded by her family. She was always young at heart. Some time before, she had been in a taxi on her way to a medical appointment when her driver became engaged in an argument with another driver. "Look", he said, "I've got an old lady in the back". "Where?" said Margaret, looking around in surprise.

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## Teilhard in Google Earth

**Rod White writes:** I stumbled across the idea of trying to chart out the life of Teilhard on Google Earth because one night I tried to find Chateau Sarcenat – where Teilhard was born. It is tempting to spend all your time researching the ideas and thoughts of Teilhard but what about his everyday life. What about the places that he spent his time around. Could we still locate them and if we could what would we learn about Teilhard?

I found Chateau Sarcenat relatively easily and it was quite amazing to look around at the landscape. Although Google Earth only provides aerial photographs users can contribute photographs and I was able to find a photograph looking out over nearby Durtol and Clermont-Ferrand. Perhaps this was a view that Teilhard could have experienced on one of his walks from his family home?

Perhaps if we all collaborate and use our knowledge collectively we could all use Google Earth to share our knowledge. In coming together and sharing our resources, it is a very Teilhardian approach. After all we may be able to visit some of the places Teilhard visited but most probably not all of them.

Google Earth gives users the opportunity to contribute photographs, notes even videos. I was able to travel virtually to the Antarctic and find photographs, videos and sound files of the scientists and wildlife. There is certainly great potential with Google Earth.

Once all the locations are gathered together they can then be shared with other users so that you could follow on Google Earth the places where he travelled and even stop for example in Hastings to explore what it looks like today.

Once I found locations and places I was then able to search through Google for more information and I found some fascinating photos of the Holy Family School in Cairo where Teilhard worked for several years. The photos were from 1905 and this one chance find shows the potential of this project. Before Google Earth I might be able to show these photos to several people, then forget about them but if they are recorded and shared in one central location then we can all find out about these locations. Just think of the number of people who may have made other similar finds, this knowledge needs to be shared and not forgotten.

### **What help am I looking for?**

**Locations** – Do you know of a specific place where Teilhard visited or worked? All you need to do is describe it to me, where it is near, or a distinctive feature and I should be able to locate it and record it. I know that members of BTA will be familiar with Teilhard's time in Hastings. I don't mind about any sort of information you wish to send me, large or small it is all important. It would also be good to reference the location – how did you find out about it, does Teilhard mention it in a letter? Also what date did he visit this place.

**Photographs** – Perhaps you visited somewhere that Teilhard was known to be. First of all, describe the location to me and send the photographs to me in whatever format you wish. Quality, size is not important. I can even scan photographs that are sent to me by post. Again a reference as to how you located it and a date would also be useful. If you have technical issues please contact me and I will be keen to help.

I hope that members of BTA can help me with this project. No detail is too small and it is important that we record this information for future generations. Let us all work together and we can learn and share about Teilhard as we go.

*Rod White*

## Recent events

John Franklin writes:

On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2010 the British Teilhard Association, together with the Alister Hardy Society, presented a one-day conference at the Essex Unitarian Church in Kensington, London, W8 on the theme, *Future of Humanity: A Cosmological Vision*. Speakers included, Prof. Ursula King, Dr. Christopher Knight and Prof. Bernard Carr. The meeting was chaired by Rev. Cannon Alan Nugent, Chair of the British Teilhard Association, and Rev. Jonathan Robinson, Chair of the Alister Hardy Society – and was attended by some 50 members of the two societies and friends.

Professor Ursula King, Professor Emerita of Theology and Religious Studies and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies, University of Bristol, in a paper titled *The Future Evolution of Humanity on Earth: A Gigantic Task, a Dream or a Nightmare?* spoke of Teilhard de Chardin's vision of the further self-evolution of humanity, asking how a more unified Humanity might be nurtured around the globe whilst maintaining ecological balance and harmony.

Dr Christopher Knight, an author, priest of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Executive Secretary of the International Society for Science and Religion, spoke on *Evolution and Spiritual Experience – an Eastern Christian Perspective*, exploring links between the thought of Teilhard de Chardin and certain strands of Eastern Christian thinking about the creation.

Professor Bernard Carr, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Queen Mary University of London, gave an illustrated talk on the cosmos and development of increasing complexity in the 14 billion years since the Big Bang culminating in brains and consciousness. In his talk, *Cosmos, Creation and the Culmination of Consciousness*, Prof Carr pointed to the need for new paradigm of science which could accommodate all types of conscious experience and thereby unify matter, mind and spirit.

*All three talks have been recorded and separate CDs of each talk are available at £6.00 each including p&p (£15.00 for all three). A DVD of the three talks is also available price £8.00 including p&p.* Copies may be obtained from John Franklin, 21 Park Vista, Greenwich, London, SE10 9LZ: cheques payable to 'The British Teilhard Association'. Information about the Alister Hardy Society can also be obtained from John Franklin.

## Forthcoming events – [ASSISI 2010](#)

### Assisi International Colloquium on Teilhard de Chardin

**09.00 Friday 15 October – Sunday 17 October 2010**

*Theme: 'Human Energy' from the book of that name by Teilhard de Chardin, a collection of six main essays on the subject, including Spirit of the Earth*

**Participation Fee for Meetings** € 35 per person, to be paid to  
the Teilhard de Chardin Italian Association – Corso Svizzera 29 – Turin - Italy

**Accommodation:** at **Pro Civitate Christiana** needs to be booked directly from attendees to [ospitalità@cittadella.org](mailto:ospitalità@cittadella.org)  
telephone number: 075/813231

#### COSTS

**FB:** € 65 for single room and € 55 for double/triple room;

**HB:** € 55 for single room and € 45 for double/triple room;

**Hotel room, including small breakfast:** € 40 for single room and € 30 for double room

Meals are served based on fixed menus, natural water included; wine and drinks excluded

## Also Coming in 2011: 28th International Teilhard Conference

Venue: All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, Nr St. Albans. Friday 24-26 June 2011 (Details to be announced).

## Letters to the Editor

### Teilhard and Rome

Concerning the discussion about the official judgement of Teilhard in Rome I would like to refer to the quotation of Teilhard's "Mass on the World" in the Encyclical "Ecclesia de Eucharistia" (2003), No. 8 (cf. my article in the Newsletter Feb. 2007). According to the customs Teilhard's name was not mentioned; but staff of Johannes Paul II realized before its publication that it would be identified as Teilhard's and considered as a kind of rehabilitation. As I know from Vatican sources it was the Pope himself who insisted on the phrase.

In the following year 2004, Cardinal Walter Kasper broadly referred to Teilhard during the Eucharistic Congress in Mexico; his speech was published in two parts over several pages by the Osservatore Romano Oct. 2004.

In my opinion, Benedict XVI welcomes well Teilhard's ideas about a cosmic liturgy; the obstacles can be found in the metaphysics: a considerable part of Roman theologians hold to "unchangeable substances" in the tradition of Aristotle and do not accept a metaphysics of "Becoming" (Ilya Prigogine) required by any evolutionary concept.

Thank you for e-mailing your newsletter!

*Dr. Mathias Trennert-Helwig*

**Another reason to check out the new website!!**

**Editor's Note:** Dr Trennert Helwig's article *Teilhard de Chardin and Vatican II – and the Monitum* as published in TN 23 pp. 3-5 is too long for us to reproduce in this issue but may be accessed via this link:

<http://www.teilhard.org.uk/teilhard-association/newsletters/>

### **Our help is requested to identify the source of a quote by or about Teilhard**

**[Editor's Note:** Unfortunately, the four page review referred to in the following letter cannot be included here due to this issue of the TN being almost full when the request was received. I will try to arrange for the full review to go on our website, but until then I have followed the letter below with the quote so that any of our perceptive readers (and I know you are out there) can give this their attention without any undue delay!]

Dear Editor

One of the subscribers of our Dutch review *GAMMA* draws our attention to a quote in a science-fiction

novel from the well known author Philip Dick. We were asked to give the place in Teilhard's work, where it is taken from. I herewith send you a review from this book, in which the quote also is mentioned. When you - or one of the members of the British Teilhard Association - have the possibility to find out this place, I would like to receive your information on it.

With kind regards

*Henk Hogeboom van Buggenum*

Stichting Teilhard de Chardin

e-mail: [teilhard@planet.nl](mailto:teilhard@planet.nl)

web: [www.teilharddechardin.nl](http://www.teilharddechardin.nl)

**Extract taken from review:**

P.K. Dick's: *A Scanner Darkly*  
by Frank C. Bertrand

In *A Scanner Darkly* the main character lives the contrasting realities of two personas, Robert Arctor (a "doper") and S.A. Fred (a "straight" and undercover narcotics agent), "Robert Arctor" being Fred's undercover role. But a drug enhanced, if not induced, schizophrenia of the hebephrenic type makes it increasingly difficult for Fred/Arctor to distinguish between the two realities of himself and his undercover self. Which reality is real, or more real, Fred's or Arctor's? Or, as he states it, "I would know, if anyone did, because I'm the only person in the world that knows that Fred is Bob Arctor. But, he thought, who am I? Which of them is me?" (pp. 74-75)

Possible answers lie in Dick's use of the word reality in *A Scanner Darkly*, wherein it occurs eleven times, ranging from "He felt, in his head, loud voices singing: terrible music, as if the reality around him had gone sour," (p. 63) to "If He is active here, He is doing that now, although our eyes can't perceive it; the process lies hidden beneath the surface of reality, and emerges only later." (p. 205). The words and ideas associated with reality in *A Scanner Darkly* are varied and rich in implications. Most intriguing, though, is its use on page 100 where a character named Luckman reads from a book either by or about Teilhard de Chardin:

*He to whom it is given to see Christ more real than any other reality in the World, Christ everywhere present and everywhere growing more great, Christ the final determination and plasmatic Principle of the Universe, that man indeed lives in a zone where no multiplicity can distress him and which is nevertheless the most active workshop of universal fulfilment*

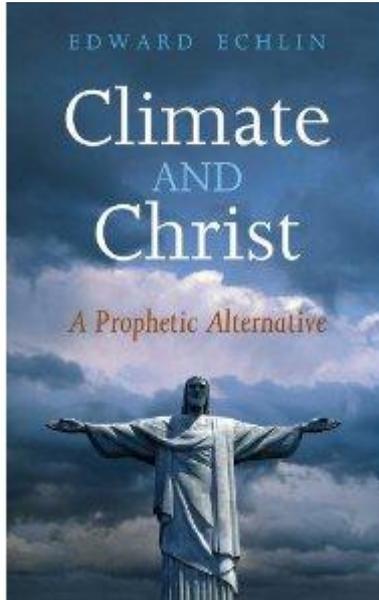
...

**Does anyone have the answer? Please do let us know.**

## Book Review (I)

Edward Echlin

### Climate And Christ: A Prophetic Alternative



#### Book Review by Stephen Retout

Edward Echlin is a theologian who has written extensively over many years on the relationship between ecology and theology. His latest volume is aimed at the general reader and takes on the challenge of developing a coherent Christian response to climate change.

The first chapter, 'Climate Dynamics and Us', gives a very readable account of climate change on water supplies and food supplies. Echlin writes from his long experience as an organic gardener using local and global examples to illustrate the impact of climate change, especially on food production. In addition he draws on scientific data and interpretation from John Houghton, without weighing the account down with statistics. Echlin sees climate as having made us a community and pleads that on this issue of climate change: 'All nations must collaborate as the world community we are.'

Chapter 4, the final chapter is entitled 'Towards a Prophetic Alternative' and is followed by a Conclusion. The theme of prophecy is applied to the urgent call to change our lifestyles in terms of minimizing further ecological damage. These ideas relate in particular to food and energy production and consumption.

Personally, I find it quite depressing that calls such as this to minimize jet travel for example still seem to fall on deaf ears. At a recent theological conference I

attended it was assumed that all attendees were flying although less energy intensive ways for feasible for many. Echlin's call for a prophetic response cannot be made often enough.

The middle two chapters bring in the theme of evolution in relation to climate change. 'Evolution's Credit Crunch – Where are We?' is the title of Chapter 2 and the one which draws heavily on Teilhard, reminding us on Page 60 that: 'his synthesis grounded in Saints Paul and John and the Greek fathers, and his demonstration of the compatibility of evolution with Christianity, remain ahead of his own time and relevant in our own. Teilhard understood biospheric connectedness, and he went further, connecting 'all things' and the whole universe to Jesus Christ.'

Echlin sees Teilhard's spirituality as an antidote to what he calls psychologised spiritualities which he believes explain the apparently insensitive approach of many Christians to environmental issues. The mention of Teilhard's apparent interest in vegetarianism on Page 57 may generate some discussion among BTA members.

Echlin lives nearby to Ore Place and draws inspiration from his local Teilhardian links. He even tells us that the site of his house today would have been seen directly by Teilhard from his room at Ore Place! There is even a mention of the April 2008 BTA visit and lecture at Hastings Museum.

Echlin acknowledges that Teilhard was influenced by the ethos of his time and was too optimistic about the results of economic progress. Nevertheless, he sees Teilhard's mystical appreciation of matter and the Earth as giving real inspiration for people of this generation for prophetic action in lifestyle change. Some readers may find it surprising that Echlin keeps three pictures in his hall to inspire himself and visitors. These pictures are of Newman, Teilhard and John Seymour the self-sufficiency practitioner and writer.

The link between evolution and ecology may seem tenuous at first sight but Echlin succeeds in weaving a fascinating tapestry of academic quotations and ideas for ecologically sound *praxis* to make his case. Some BTA readers may find this book very helpful in making the connection between Teilhard, evolution and climate change. It may also suggest some interesting 'conversation partners' with whom to engage with Teilhard on climate change and ecological issues in general.

(134 pages; Publisher: Columba Press, Dublin 2010; ISBN 978 1 85607 690-6).

## THE BLOG-SLOT

This newsletter incorporates our first ‘Blog-Slot’ – these may become a regular feature, to be ‘*slotted in*’ where they help us to make further connections with one of our articles. This month we are given a reminder of the importance of the Eucharist in the context of climate change and thus provided with further insights into the subject matter of Edward Echlin’s latest book.

This quote is taken from a blog by Jacques Haers SJ a professor of systematic theology at the Faculty of Theology Catholic University of Leuven. Professor Haers attended the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference (Copenhagen Summit COP15) as a member of the ‘Franciscans International’ team.

‘Participation in the liturgy reminded me how important a eucharistic celebration can be in the context of the worldwide climate change crisis: this celebration connects us globally – the eucharist is celebrated worldwide; there is time to take in reality, our responsibilities and our mistakes in reality; we celebrate the beauty of our world and thank God for it; we participate in God’s work in creation and bring this on the table, where this shared work shapes us into a church; the readings, and particularly the gospel reading, remind us that we belong to the world, as in the incarnation the Lord belongs to the world – our faith is not about moving out of the world into some other kind of world, but about moving into the world to move with it into its full future, the Reign of God; there is celebration of communion with God, with our fellow human beings and with the world; we are reminded of our mission into our world and of the fact that this mission leads us into total commitment – that we may be celebrating the eucharist as Christ did, on the eve of his passion. All of these are crucial attitudes today, in the midst of a groaning world, as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his “Messe sur le Monde” was well aware of. I refer to him here, because his writings and those of Thomas Berry accompany me here, and I am glad to have those two beacons with me in Copenhagen.’

Source: <http://ignatianeconet.wordpress.com/?s=teilhard>

See also – Report on website ‘Jesuits and Partners in mission for social justice’ - *Promotio Iustitiae*.

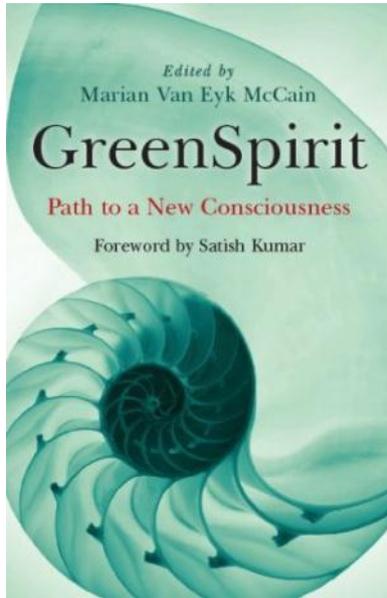
<http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/pjnew/PJShow.cfm?pubTextID=8477>



## Book Review (II)

### GreenSpirit: Path to a New Consciousness

[www.greenspirit.org.uk](http://www.greenspirit.org.uk)



### Book Review by Ian Mowll

It is often accepted in GreenSpirit circles that Teilhard de Chardin was the first person to link the ideas of an evolving universe and spirituality in a way that made sense in our modern times. Therefore, it was Teilhard that inspired such people as Thomas Berry and Matthew Fox, who have had such an influence on GreenSpirit thinking. So important are Teilhard's ideas that he is directly mentioned on pages 32, 103, 127, 138 and 247 in the book. Here is my favourite quote on page 32:

'Out of this human quest have arisen what may loosely be called the 'great religions' as well as the native spiritualities. Teilhard de Chardin in his comprehensive story of the evolving universe, *The Phenomenon of Man*, shows its development to be psychic and material, in other words both spiritual and physical. In the same way that every living form that has emerged since the dawning of the universe is an integral part of that emergence, so too is every new insight, every intimation of our deep interconnectedness, every vision of our human destiny. Thus we must embrace the recognition that the emergence of the differing religions is an equally valid part of the ongoing but unfinished journey of human consciousness within the evolving universe'.

The book is a set of 31 chapters, each chapter written by a contributor. This approach is

green spirit in itself, offering diversity to make a unique whole. No one person or outlook contains all of the answers. Some of the contributors to the book may be familiar names; examples include Matthew Fox, Brian Swimme, Satish Kumar, Emma Restall Orr, David Korten and Neil Douglas-Klotz.

The book is well structured. It starts with an understanding of our world and our place in it, to understanding ourselves, then looking through the lens of different spiritual traditions and finally to practical outworking; written this way, I found the book to be coherent and flowing.

There are many gems in the book, here is one of my favourites: '*You take hydrogen gas, and you leave it alone, and it turns into rosebushes, giraffes and humans*' - Brian Swimme. Whilst this fact is amazing in itself, it brings home to me how much we humans are part of a creative, dynamic universe. We are not the masters or authors but the participants.

This book has helped me, yet again, to feel deeply connected to this awesome, beautiful planet Earth.

Ian Mowll

For more information about the book and how to buy it, go to: [www.greenspirit.org.uk](http://www.greenspirit.org.uk)

#### Advert

Talk by Jonathon Porritt on  
'Growth, Prosperity and the Human Spirit'  
and

#### **launch of the new book:**

'*GreenSpirit: Path to a New Consciousness*'  
by Marian Van Eyk McCain (Ed), Foreword by Satish  
Kumar

6:00pm on Wed 14th July at St James's Church, 197  
Piccadilly, London. W1J 9LL

[www.greenspirit.org.uk](http://www.greenspirit.org.uk)

Tel: 020 8552 2096

## Teilhard de Chardin in my Life

[BTA Editor: In TN 27 we invited you, our readers, to contribute articles for future editions. Our thanks to one of our members Sister Katharine Holmstrom SHCJ for starting us off (**I say this with the real hope that others may be inspired to follow!**) this wonderfully warm personal testimony to the great inspiration Teilhard has given and continues to gift to her, as indeed he does for many of us who are blessed with having been introduced to his thought.]

Our readers may like to learn more of Sister Katharine's community, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus (RC) by visiting their website <http://www.shcj.org/> or, for the European Province <http://www.shcj.co.uk/top/index.html>

It was while studying for the Baccalauréat in France, in 1958, that I first heard the name of Pere Teilhard de Chardin, who as we know had died three years before. I can't remember if his name was uttered – in respectful admiration – by the philosophy teacher or by the priest who came into school for RE. I next heard of him when I was a young religious, from an older nun commenting on Teilhard's attitude when he had *such* a message to give to the world, yet obeyed the injunction not to publish it; also from a fellow-student remarking on his refreshing breadth and openness. Then I was sent back to France, for teaching and parish work, and in 1991 made a retreat at Chantilly (the Jesuits' former Cultural Centre), advertised as being focussed on "Teilhard de Chardin et l'Eucharistie". Since I had been wanting for some time to deepen my understanding of the Eucharist and its implications, I signed up and entered into an eight-day experience which really hooked me onto Teilhard and changed me quite deeply. The retreat giver was a Jesuit, Pere Pierre Noir, an authority on Teilhard who had known him personally.

What opened my eyes – and my heart – so radically and definitively was the beginning of the realization that the Eucharist is not "just" the celebration of the Mass, but is the whole on-going process of gathering up, transforming, moving forward, converging, of ... everything and everyone. The bread on the altar represents the work, effort, progress of the world; the chalice: the pain and suffering of the world. (*Mass on the World*, 1923). I remember a sort of graph showing how an arrow going only horizontally, or only vertically, would be insufficient: you need an arrow pointing diagonally upwards, embracing the whole cosmos to take it towards and into God, to complete the Body of Christ. (cf. the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians and Romans Chap. 8). This was so exciting!

Teilhard's appreciation of diminishment and pain gives me meaning and hope. When the news from our tired and violent world is totally unbearable, I go back to him, for instance at the siege of Verdun: "I believe that the suffering of the world is the sign of a great labour coming to fulfilment. As the cosmic mass speeds up and grows, its elements crumble, break, cry out in protest ... and the transformation takes its course ... Only the figure of Our Lord on the cross can express and do justice to the world of anguish, mystery and secret hope awakened in our souls by the vision and memory of what has been achieved in those places ... O, the pain of the world! How deeply is it felt there!" Sometimes I find this hard to believe, yet I trust his insight and faith. (A friend wrote to me, at the beginning of this year, "... so much pain and innocent suffering. But you have the secret of an infinite hope ..." Well, yes: we do have the secret of an infinite hope, and can be grateful for it.

I am constantly out of my depth with Teilhard's long (creative!) words and philosophical concepts, but I do feel strongly inspired by what I glean of his message. When I went to that retreat I was tired and disinclined for effort, thinking of asking for a quieter life – but there he was, saying "Get up! Join the movement forward (the evolution)! Don't just sit back as a spectator while it happens, but take part, be in on it. Granted it is taking billions of years, but *eventually* everything bad and negative will just drop aside, like cinders, and the rest will all be assumed into God. Come on!"

Three months later, a call came to go to Africa to take part in a new foundation. Although I had always been very much attracted to Africa, I am a fearful person by nature and never thought myself a suitable person to go. Here was a call (with no obligation to respond to it) and there was Teilhard prodding me forward. So I answered: "Yes, please". The following year, I made another retreat with Pere Noir, this time on "Teilhard de Chardin and the Spiritual Exercises" (of St Ignatius), to consolidate my response and its consequences. Throughout that life-changing year in Chad, with all its challenges and joys, I often invoked Teilhard, reminding him: "You sent me here! Go on inspiring me."

So I feel reassured, and grateful to him, as his wise and serene face gazes down on me from my bedroom wall.

Postscript: Soeur Marie St Jean Teilhard-Chambon (sic), a cousin of Teilhard's from Auvergne, was a member of my religious congregation (Society of the Holy Child Jesus). She died before I became so

interested in him, but I do remember the brightness and vitality of her face, leading me to think at first that she was much younger than was really the case. In fact, there is a family resemblance in their features.

*(Sister) Katharine Holmstrom SHCJ*

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## *Noetic Art and Teilhard*

<http://maryann.enigmadream.com/index.html>

The Editor has received a CD of artwork from Maryann Shores, an American artist, drawing attention to her website (above) on noetic art.

What has this to do with Teilhard you might think?

The following extract from the website explains .....

*The word "noetic" is based up on the Greek "noos" which refers to the mind. My Noetic Art is intended to stimulate thought, somewhat like a riddle does. These paintings are available for your use, to print out, project for discussion, for personal uplift, and other uses you may envision, as long as they are not changed in content.*

*There are about 600 to choose from for illustrations which may be used on paper, shirts, cups or other items suitable for gifts, or group use such as program covers, book marks etc.*

*The work was originally inspired by the writings of Teilhard de Chardin and presents many old ideas in a new light. No fee or permission is required to use them without changing them.*

*- Maryann Shores*

Not only is Maryann Shore's noetic art inspired by Teilhard, but the website contains a large collection of pictures specifically based on Teilhard's work. The link to these Teilhard noetic art pictures is

<http://maryann.enigmadream.com/Noetic3/index.php>

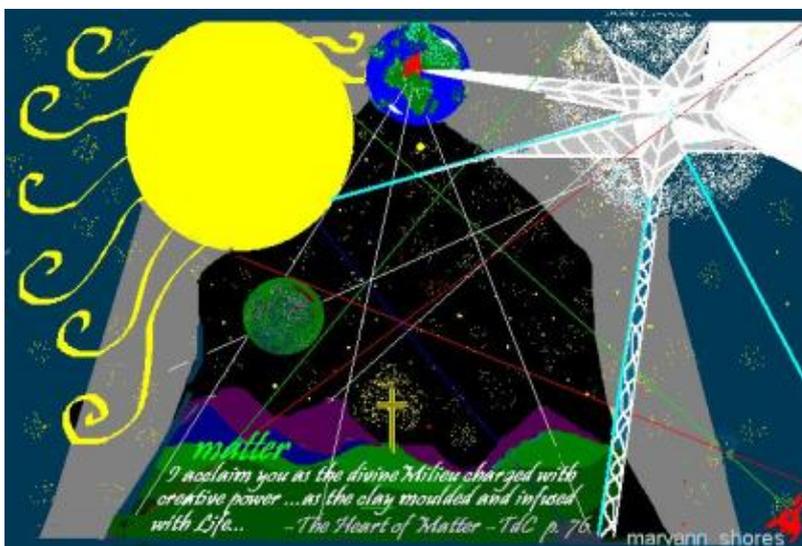
Here is one example of noetic art based on Teilhard:

The newsletter editors think these pictures could play an important part in making Teilhard's ideas more accessible

to a wide range of people. Maryann Shores asks the following question on her noetic art website:

*Most classical art is intended to evoke an emotional response. Noetic art is intended to evoke an intellectual response - what do you THINK?*

The Editorial Team would be interested to hear what BTA readers think about these Teilhard noetic art pictures, and any potential areas of use. We will collate your comments and pass them on to Maryann Shores.



# The Evolution and Planetization of Political Life (Part 1)

By Professor Wayne Parsons

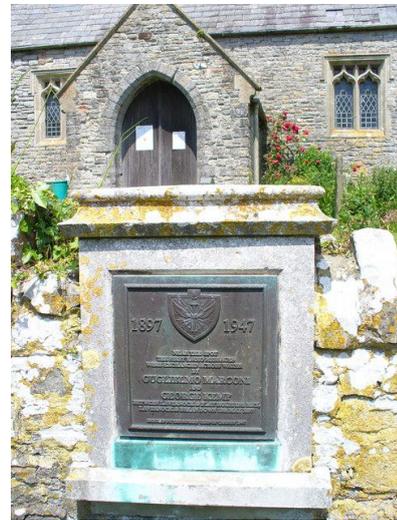
**[BTA Editor:** In TN 27 it was suggested that part of the next newsletter would be given over in part to recounting something of the presentations given at the 2009 Teilhard Conference. Our thanks go to Prof. Parsons for providing this excellent paper. The first of two instalments follows. The talk was also recorded at the conference and may be listened to via the BTA website <http://www.teilhard.org.uk/teilhard-association/podcasts> if you have access to the internet and cannot wait until October to read Part 2!]

There is a piece of public art in Nice in the South of France which always makes me think - it is called La tête au carré - box head'. It comprises a large head which, at night, is illuminated so that you can see that his box head is a library full of books. Mr. Box Head looks out on the streets and the beautiful people of Nice through the lens of all the books he has stored away. As human beings how we see the world and make sense of it is the product of many factors: when we were born; where we grew up; and all the people we have encountered and all our experiences. But the tête au carré always reminds me that the way we see the world is also greatly influenced by the books we have read - particularly in our youth. And for me, there is no doubt that the books of Teilhard had the most formative of influences on my own intellectual and spiritual development.

I grew up in South Wales in the 1950s and 1960s and spent much of my free time scrambling over rocks and cliffs. I soon became fascinated by geology and paleontology and when I was not searching for specimens at Lavernock or marveling at the Barry Island unconformity, I was to be found in the geology section of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. Eventually, I studied geology for one of my 'O levels', and thereby discovered Teilhard's *Man's Place in Nature*. And bang, then it happened.

I was standing on Lavernock point one afternoon after a morning of fossil hunting and realized that what had taken place there in back in 1897 represented a critical stage in human evolution. Looking at the Church of St Lawrence which overlooks the bay, I was reflecting on Teilhard, and how the birth of Jesus could be understood as an event in the story human evolution: the emergence of a new kind of homo sapiens. Then I noticed a sign erected in 1947 which informed me that a mere century before Marconi had sent the first radio signal across water from here to Flat Holm Island. I realized that Teilhard's book implied that I *also* had to think about this event in the context of human evolution. It dawned on me that what he had written

about in terms of complexity, planetization and the growth of the noosphere were all manifest in this piece of rusting iron. What I was looking at was a physical artifact which commemorated a stage in the development of life on the planet that was as important as the exposed layers of red rock which had once been a desert in the Permian and Triassic periods, or the black rocks which had once been a lake inhabited by ichthyosaurs. So there on that point I was confronted by three dimensions of evolution: the evolution of life; the evolution of religion; and the evolution of human communication. And it was all related, it was all interconnected: the church, the iron sign and the red and black strata.



Photographs of the Marconi-Kemp plaque at the Church of St. Lawrence and the cliffs at Lavernock Point are reused with permission from [www.geograph.co.uk](http://www.geograph.co.uk). These images are under © Copyright [Colin Smith](http://www.geograph.co.uk) and licensed for reuse under the [Creative Commons Licence](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/). For terms of reuse see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>

After that I still remained – and continue to be - fascinated by geology, but something happened that afternoon in Lavernock. As a result of reading Teilhard I had acquired a new way of seeing the world and new understanding of the relationship between evolution and religion. But I also had come to appreciate that the most important aspect of evolution to understand and explore was the mental,

social, technological, economic and political dimensions of human existence. I traveled home that afternoon with so many questions rolling around in my head like old-fashioned mothballs. And, they still roll around in my head today. When I came to select my A levels a while later I was fortunate in – quite by chance – picking up a copy of Alfred Marshall's great book *Principles of Economics*. In its day, the most important economic text book ever written. However, by the 1970s it was regarded as past its use by date. In the book Marshall writes about how economics was essentially about the study of human evolution: the Mecca for economists was biology not physics. And that was another critical moment. In due course I was to read for a BSc (econ) rather than a BSc in geology: I reasoned that it was the complexity of what Aristotle called ζῷον πολιτικόν (*zoon politikon*) political life (what he considered to be the defining characteristic of human life) and that curious species homo economicus which would be the focus of my academic life, rather than the fossils of the Cambrian era.

So, in a very real sense, Teilhard made me a social scientist, rather than a natural scientist. But he also did something else. Teilhard showed me that in order to understand the evolution of the human species, you had to think on a big scale: you had to think out of the box head. You had to think horizontally, rather than vertically. And that was important too: in due course I became more and more interested in public policy. This is an approach to the social sciences which focuses on trying to integrate knowledge across economics, political science, sociology, psychology etc. And this desire to have a more integrative approach is, I believe, entirely down to the influence of Teilhard. His work, I think, has been rather like a system of scaffolding which over time has helped me: but once the buildings were completed the scaffolding was removed. In truth, it would have done my professional career no good to be associated with the work of a French Jesuit! (Although I have long had a picture of Teilhard on my office wall and am happy to tell those who ask all out him.) But I believe that Teilhard's insights into the evolution of political and economic development are so remarkable that they should be far better known. When I reflect on the sheer excitement that I experienced as a young man when I discovered his work, I am deeply saddened by how his ideas have failed to ignite my own children's generation. And in that I am in part to blame: I never really shared my interests in Teilhard and abandoned it formally after a proposed MSc thesis was rejected by my supervisor who advised against trying to mix 'religion', evolution and the social sciences. And he was right: it is a very dangerous mix indeed.

However, at a time when the relationship between religion, evolution and politics and economics is so highly charged and of immense significance it is depressing to realize how little Teilhard's ideas now matter, and yet how much they could offer to current debates. As a Catholic I have to confess that the official position of the church is a major impediment to the growth of a new awareness of Teilhard's message and his faith in the future of man at a time when we seem to lack a sense of vision and hope in the possibilities for generations yet unborn. A renewed understanding of Teilhard could energize and inspire at a time when we urgently need re-energizing and a renewed faith in the future.

What were the ideas that energized and inspired me? *Man's Place in Nature* made me think about human life in the context of the evolution of the universe, and its relationship to matter and mind. It directed my attention to the fact that evolution has not stopped: what we see around us is not the end point, but simply another stage in the process which began billions of years ago. In order to understand man's place in an evolving universe we had to focus less on the biological aspects of evolution, but on the mental aspects of evolution. Teilhard showed me that the key process to understand was *complexity*: and how this complexity was bringing about massive changes on a planetary scale. We were still evolving and so was the planet itself. This meant that we had to understand the dynamics of global change. Whether we liked it or not, human beings were being metamorphosed by enormous pressures: including demographic and technological forces. For me, this implied that the critical dimension of complexity was how *homo politicus* and *homo economicus* would evolve in the conditions which Teilhard mapped out. I believed that Teilhard was implying that we would see something like a 'Cambrian explosion' in the evolution of the planet: we would see a step change in political and economic life through increasing complexity, planetization and the formation of a noosphere. In my own lifetime I have seen that prediction come true, and yet Teilhard gets little credit for that amazing insight. At the same time, Teilhard was amongst the first to recognize the role of complexity in evolution: his reflections on the organization of complex systems pre-figure much of the literature which has emerged in recent decades. And again, he receives scant recognition for this achievement.

As an undergraduate Teilhard's writings stimulated more thought than anything else I read: somehow they provided a big picture which enabled me to make sense of all the economics and political science I studied. They made me a much better social scientist than I would otherwise have been, I am sure.

One of the books which was a constant point of reference for me as an undergraduate, and which has remained a close companion ever since is *The Future Of Man*. When I was a student it was easy to get seduced by books which called for revolutions: but I always considered the *Future of Man* to be far more revolutionary than any of the other 'little red books' which were being waved around in the 1970s! In response to many arguments I recall that I frequently had recourse to my own little red book - the (red) Fontana paperback edition of the *Future of Man*. Re-reading it more than thirty years later I was surprised how fresh and how truly revolutionary it remains as both an introduction to his ideas, but also as a tool for thought and action. As a professor of public policy I am interested in how human beings seek to solve those problems that they consider to be 'public'. I believe that Teilhard can provide us with insight into the problems which we have today and offer some useful guidance into what we can do to promote the 'faith in the future' which is so vital if human beings are to solve their problems. What is fascinating about the chapters contained in the book is that they were written at times when the prospects for the future looked very bleak indeed. He is writing at moments when the whole planet seemed to be going through a series of terrible convulsions and when the light at the end of the tunnel appeared to be an inevitable nuclear blast. It was not, in the words of the poet, 'bliss' to be alive and to be young was to be in a very scary place indeed, rather than heaven. And yet, Teilhard shows how we could and should have confidence and faith in the future of man and the planet. Faith in the future was all about understanding change on an evolutionary scale. Progress was taking place – even if it did not seem so at the time. Nowadays, when we too are being overwhelmed by our problems and when wars and rumors of war fill our news media the perspective of Teilhard is a powerful antidote to those who see little hope for mankind.

In this essay I want to look a few key ideas in *The Future of Man*, and reflect on what these suggest to those of us who are concerned about the possibilities for homo sapiens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To begin with, for Teilhard, progress is a dangerous, volatile process. The future would be not be shaped by sedimentary forces. The world of the future would be made from igneous and metamorphic materials. It would involve fire, explosions, and compression. It would involve *planetary* convulsions. As Teilhard put it:

Progress is not what the popular mind looks for...Progress is not immediate ease, well-being and peace. It is not rest. It is not even, directly, virtue. Essentially progress is a *force*, and the most dangerous of forces. It is the Consciousness of all that is and all that can be. (p 19)

For Teilhard, progress is not a ripple on the water - but a storm. It is not a light, but a powerful fire. Progress is like a great windmill or ship powered by dangerous and unpredictable winds of change. Human progress depends on the capacity that human beings have to respond and learn from disasters. Error and evil can be engines of progressive change.

For example, I remember arguing as a student *for* the bomb, at a time when practically everyone wore a duffle coat and was a member CND. I did so largely because of what Teilhard argued in his essay on the atom bomb. We had to see the bomb, he said, as part of the evolution of human planetary consciousness. The sheer power that man now possessed meant that, if we were to survive, we had to become aware of our responsibility to the planet. So the atomic bomb was an important event in the explosion of evolution we were experiencing:

By the liberation of atomic energy on a massive scale...man has not only changed the face of the earth; he has by the very act set in motion at the heart of his being a long chain of reactions...[has made him] virtually at least, a new being. (p.141)

He saw the bomb tests at Bikini atoll as stages in the evolution of a planetary consciousness. And peace had also to be understood as an evolutionary process, not an event. Peace itself was a complex process: it was the outcome of a weaving of new institutions and relationships. So, like Teilhard, I put little faith in CND marches, but had tremendous faith in the growing complexity of human political and economic life,

That is why...I do not turn to official utterances or 'pacifist manifestations' or conscientious objectors. I turn instinctively towards the ever more numerous institutions and associations of men where in the search for knowledge a new spirit is silently taking shape around us. (p154)

Peace, one of the prime objectives of public policy is therefore not an event: peace will not 'breakout', like 'war'. Peace is a process which involves human beings weaving a new fabric of relationships over time and space. And, one of the most important tasks for 'global public policy' is to facilitate and promote the process of weaving new relationships in many ways and at many levels.

As a scholar, Teilhard passionately believed in the role which education and research could play in weaving this network of relationships which could foster a greater planetary consciousness:

In the present day human education is spreading its net over the earth on an unprecedented scale and by means of unprecedented methods of expression and diffusion. Never have there been so many libraries, periodicals, schools, universities, laboratories - or pupils! (p 36)

For Teilhard, human beings have to play an active part in shaping and weaving the future. This involves problems of values and institutions and the need to become aware and conscious of the forces of global change if we are not to perish in the 'whirlpool' and the 'melting pot' of global change. Peace, therefore,

requires a new 'general perspective and habit of mind'. A new global consciousness.

[*To be continued in TN 29*]

### In the Words of Teilhard...

We think it is important to quote directly from Teilhard in this and future issues, especially to highlight how he relates to current issues of concern to humanity and the Earth.

The following quotation is taken from *The Divine Milieu* written between Nov. 1926 – March 1927 at Tientsin, China:.

'May the time come when men and women, having been awakened to a sense of the close bond linking all the movements of this world in the single work of the Incarnation, will be unable to give themselves to any of their tasks without illuminating it with the clear vision that their work, however elementary it may be, is received and used by a divine Centre of the universe! When that comes to pass, there will be little to separate life in the cloister from life in the world....'

Teilhard de Chardin, P., *The Divine Milieu* (1927). Translated by Siôn Cowell. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004, p.25.

### What are they saying about Teilhard?

A quote from Ilia Delio, O.S.F.:

'If God loves us where we are and comes to be with us humbly in the flesh, then we must admit that the humility of God is intertwined with the Incarnation. Incarnation we might say is God bending low to embrace the whole world in love. This makes the entire creation – all peoples, all mountains and valleys, all creatures big and small, everything that exists – holy because God embraces it. This is what I believe Teilhard de Chardin was trying to tell us when he said, "There is nothing profane here below for those who have eyes to see." Everything is sacred. The entire creation, including every person, is a sacrament of God because within each and every thing, in some way, God is hidden.'

Ilia Delio, *The Humility of God: A Franciscan Perspective*. Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005, p.31.

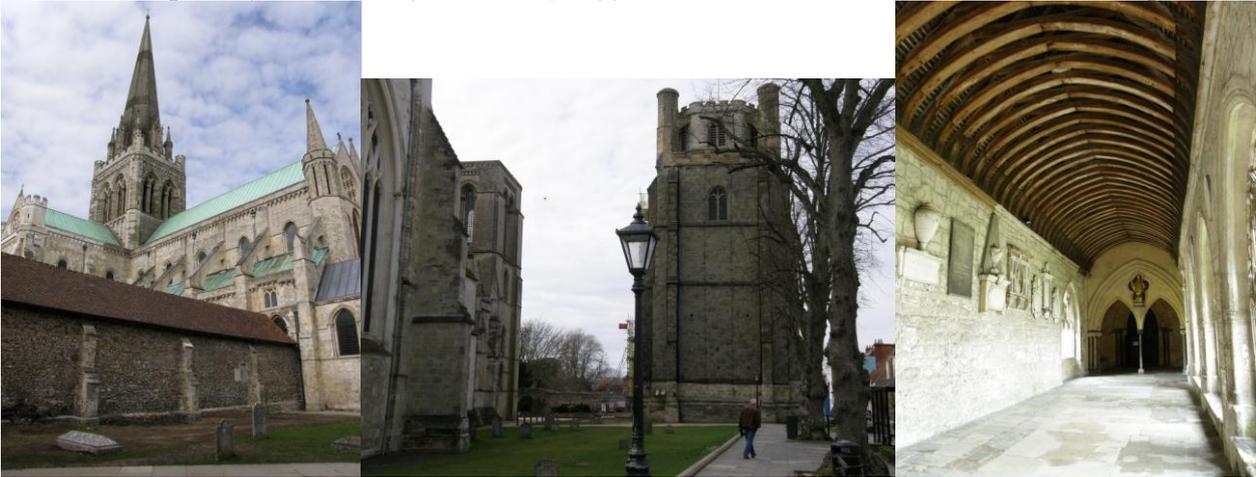
## In the Footsteps of Teilhard...

### Chichester Cathedral (West Sussex)

On 11 August 1911, Teilhard wrote to his parents from Ore Place Hastings, describing how, while on a visit to Selsey ‘...in the hopes of finding some interesting rock banks...’, he had ‘...spent one or two hours in Chichester, which suffices when one is not an archaeologist...’.

Teilhard describes the cathedral thus:

‘The cathedral is especially worth seeing; it is hardly bigger than Notre Dame du Port, has a Romanesque



Nave, gothic aisles, a long choir and an isolated bell tower; it dates from the eleventh century and must stir up a world of memories for anyone sufficiently versed in history. Grafted to one side of the church is a square cloister with pointed arches made of oak beams with finely carved arcades circling a very poetic, medieval churchyard. I went in during evening services; Canterbury, the music was still listen for a long time; the atmosphere without measuring up to the Offices in religious and very beautiful, and I stayed to was impressive.’

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin  
*Letters from Hastings 1908-1912*  
 New York: Herder & Herder, 1968.  
 Letter of 11 August, 1911, pp.157-159.



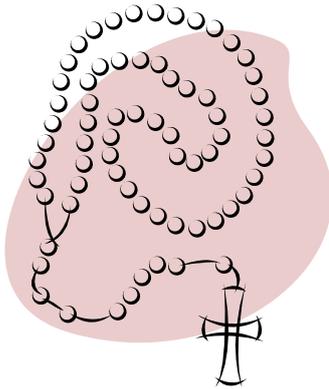
Photographs by Rosemary Cattell  
 28- March-2010

**Online extra:** Visit the official Chichester Cathedral website <http://www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/>

Teilhard’s letters to his parents during the Hastings years show him to be knowledgeable about and compassionate towards birds. Through these letters Teilhard always shared his natural history observations with his Father, describing wildflowers, trees and birds. A visit to Chichester Cathedral today would have given him additional delight because Peregrine falcons have nested there for the tenth year, a period during which they have raised thirty chicks. This year they are raising four – although they will probably flown before we go to print, you may like to view the following: <http://www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/dyn/pages/whats-on/peregrines.shtml> (for video footage from 2009) See also:

<http://www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/dyn/pages/whats-on/10th-anniversary-of-the-cathedral-peregrines.shtml> (2010).

## Praying with Teilhard...



The life of each one of us is, as it were woven of two threads – the sacred taste for being...and for action.

*O God, may you find me at all times as you desire me and where you would have me be, may you lay hold on me fully – both by the within and the without of myself – so that I may never break this double thread of my life.*

Teilhard de Chardin, P., *The Divine Milieu* (1927). Translated by Siôn Cowell. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004, p.40.



Artwork by Maryann Shores taken from her illustrated booklet *How to Save the World: Excerpts from Building the Earth by Teilhard de Chardin*. Reproduced with thanks.

## Contributions for the October Newsletter

The Editorial Team would be pleased to receive contributions for the June Newsletter

*by 30 September 2010*

Please send hard copy to Rosemary Cattell at  
Whitegates, Salisbury Road, Horsham,  
West Sussex, RH13 0AL

E-mail contributions, in Word, are most welcome.  
Please send to [r.a.cattell@btinternet.com](mailto:r.a.cattell@btinternet.com)

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## **STOP PRESS!**

Have you received a paper copy of this newsletter but now have an e-mail address? It saves the BTA printing and postal costs if we may send your copy by e-mail.

Please remember to keep us informed of any changes to your postal address and e-mail address. A fairly large number of the February newsletters distributed by e-mail were sadly undeliverable... We do not want you to miss out!

### **New Look for British Teilhard Association Website**

The new Teilhard website is well worth a look. Have you visited it yet? Go to [www.teilhard.org.uk](http://www.teilhard.org.uk) and see for yourself. If you are not on the internet your local library may be able to help you.