

THE BRITISH TEILHARD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Charity No. 313682

NO. 3

JULY 1997

EDITORIAL

Better late than never!

One or two members have criticised me for the delay in producing the *Newsletter*. They are probably right to do so. I regret I cannot get the *Newsletter* out as quickly and as frequently as I would like to do. My only defence is that I have to do everything myself - from preparing copy to licking envelopes! I do not complain but I do ask for help in providing us with suitable material for publication. My thanks to all those who have helped me out with copy for this issue. Now is the time to start thinking about what we can put in the next issue. As always comments - and criticisms - are always welcome.

The Teilhard Review

Our Vice-President, Bob Faricy, has recently launched an initiative to restart *The Teilhard Review*. This will be welcomed by all those who regret its passing. In its final years *The Review* faced enormous problems which put into question its viability in both the long and short term. Above all, however, it found its academic credibility being questioned - something it could ill-afford when we remember that it was heavily dependent on university subscriptions in the United States, Canada and Australia.

The Executive Committee of *The British Teilhard Association* fully supports the idea of restarting *The Review* - provided, of course, that adequate funding can be arranged and an editor can be found who has the necessary academic standing and knowledge of Teilhard's ideas. We shall let you know how Bob Faricy's initiative is progressing!

Siôn Cowell

TEILHARD AND JUNG COMPLEMENTARY APPROACHES TO SPIRITUALITY

The 1997 conference was held at London Colney on 18-20 April. Barbara Hogg reports.

In his introduction to the conference theme **Siôn Cowell** (United Kingdom) emphasised the importance of the feminine in the thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1181-1955) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) who continue to stand out as two of the truly great visionaries of the twentieth century.

In "Two Visions for the Structure of Cosmic Consciousness" **Fabio Mantovani** (Italy) brought Teilhard and Jung together to shape a new structure of cosmic consciousness. United in their belief in the growth of consciousness, they share a wholistic and phenomenal approach. Jung believes consciousness reaches its highest level in the personal through the realisation of the Self while Teilhard sees the evolution of humankind reaching its highest degree in the Omega Point through increasing complexity-consciousness.

In "Jung and Teilhard - The Feminine of God" **Bob Faricy SJ** (Rome) sought to evaluate their ideas of the feminine to create a better understanding of the relationship between God and the world. Both men view evolution at the biological and social level while Teilhard also embodies a Christology within his framework. Their views on a unified vision of God and the world leads them to finding the feminine in God but through different ways: Jung through what he calls the "Quaternity" or "Fourfold"; Teilhard through the relationship of mutuality between the world and God in Jesus Christ. For Jung the quaternity is a universal archetype - reality is seen in fours, for example, in the four arms of the cross. He thinks something is lacking in the doctrine of the Trinity. The qualities that are symbolised in the fourth part, namely darkness, materiality and intractability, are combined in femininity. Teilhard wants to conceptualise the Trinity in a new way, not to change it, so as to bring out the relationship between the Trinity and the world. For Teilhard, reality is quadrate.

For Jung, Mary - the instrument of God's birth - is the symbol representing the earth, the body and its darkness. For Teilhard, belief in the incarnation leads him to see the feminine included in the world. The mother of Christ is embodied in what he called the "Eternal Feminine". And the "Eternal Feminine" is present in the creation process and - in a perfect way - in the Blessed Virgin Mary.

John Woodcock (United Kingdom) in "The Way between the Opposites" synthesised the theories of Teilhard and Jung. Jung teaches love of the Self and Teilhard teaches love of God through love of the world. Teilhard believes love of neighbour is learned

Life is sustained by a creative energy, fundamentally benign in nature, with a tendency to manifest and express itself in movement, rhythm and pattern. Creation is sustained by a superhuman, pulsating restlessness, a type of resonance vibrating throughout time and eternity.

New elements:

- a. God and the divine are described as a creative energy, which is perceived to include, but also supersede, everything traditional theology attributes to God.
- b. The divine energy is not stable or unchanging, but works through movement, rhythm, pattern and restlessness - within the evolving nature of life itself.
- c. The divine co-creativity operates within the evolutionary process rather than as an external agent based on a cause and effect relationship.
- d. Notions such as "God" and "divinity" are used sparingly, because these are human constructs (descriptions) that may limit rather than enhance our understanding of life's ultimate source and meaning.

Principle 2

Wholeness, which is largely unmanifest and dynamic (not static), is the wellspring of all possibility. In seeking to understand life, we begin with the whole which is always greater than the sum of the parts; paradoxically, the whole is contained in each part, yet no whole is complete in itself.

New elements:

- a. No one source of knowledge, theological or otherwise, can provide a complete description of reality; the mystery of life is fundamentally open-ended.
- b. Theology is about opening up new horizons of possibility and ultimate meaning, and not about consigning truth to specific dogmas, creeds or religions.
- c. Since the whole is understood to be contained in, but not by, each part, the dilemma of pantheism is resolved.

Principle 3

Evolution is underpinned by a deep unfolding structure, characterised by design and purpose, necessitating an unceasing interplay of order and disorder, randomness and creativity.

New elements:

- a. Evolution is considered to be the primary context of divine-human creativity in the world.
- b. Life, in its basic meaning, is blessed and not flawed (as in the original sin approach).
- c. In the divine-human unfolding, light and shadow always intermingle; quantum theology, while acknowledging the paradox of polarity, seeks to outgrow all dualisms, especially that of good vs. evil.

Principle 4

The expanding horizon of divine belonging is the context in which revelation takes place; all creatures are invited to respond, to engage in the co-creative task of being and becoming. All life forms have unique roles in this process, the primary focus of which is creation itself rather than formal religion.

New elements:

- a. The primary context of divine revelation is the unfolding process of creation and not formal religion. Each religion is a particular crystallisation of divine revelation. No one religion, not even all the religions together, could contain or explain the fullness of revelation.
- b. All life forms, and not just humans, have a co-creative role in the divine plan for the world and in the responses it elicits and evokes.
- c. Revelation is ongoing; it cannot be subsumed in any religion, creed or cultural system.

Principle 5

Because the capacity to relate is itself the primary divine energy, impregnating creation, we humans need authentic ecclesial and sacramental experiences to explore and articulate our innate vocation to be people in relationship.

New elements:

- a. The doctrine of the Trinity is a human attempt to describe God's fundamental relationship nature.
- b. The divine interaction within creation is that of subject to subject rather than subject to object.
- c. The innate human desire and capacity for relationships is the experience in which we connect most authentically with the divine ambience of our existence.
- d. Church and sacraments are key moments for exploring and articulating our relatedness, as a divine invitation to life and meaning, and not organisations and rituals commanding legal observance.

Principle 6

Ultimate meaning is embedded in story, not in facts. All particular religious stories belong to a larger story, which includes but also transcends the specific religious traditions of any one historical or cultural epoch. All sacred texts are attempts at articulating ultimate truth and archetypal values, approximations that require fresh interpretation in each new cultural epoch.

New elements:

- a. Sacred story is our primary channel for accessing the divine source and ultimate meaning of life.
- b. Sacred texts (e.g. the Bible) which seek to safeguard the story need to be interpreted afresh in each new age if they are to preserve the ever new challenge and inspiration of the sacred story.
- c. Creation itself, and not we humans, is the primary narrator of the sacred story; we humans should be the supreme listeners.
- d. Both the contemplation and narration of the sacred story require symbol and ritual if we are to engage meaningfully with its deep mythic and archetypal significance.

Principle 7

Redemption is planetary (and cosmic) as well as personal. Redemption is about reclaiming the darkness, the nothingness (void) and chaos of our world and celebrating the negative potential for new life and wholeness.

New elements:

- a. Redemption is a divine-human process of befriending those elements of our experience which threaten our security and integrity, rather than an act of rescue by an external, divine agent.
- b. Redemption is a process of re-membering, highlighting the ultimate paradox of life that pain and extinction are prerequisites for fresh life and creativity.
- c. Redemption is not just about personal salvation; it also concerns the healing and reinvigoration of planetary and universal life; there can be no personal salvation apart from the latter.

Principle 8

Structural and systemic sin abound in our world, often provoking people to behave immorally. To integrate the global shadow, we need fresh moral and ethical guidelines to address the structural and systemic sinfulness of our time. The formulation of these guidelines is as much a political as a religious duty.

New elements:

- a. Sin is a form of destructive collusion between people and systems. Consequently, systems, rather than individual people, become the instigators of immoral and irresponsible behaviour.
- b. The major sin of our time is *specieism*, the human-structural assumption that humans are the ultimate life form under God and are entitled to lord it over the rest of creation.
- c. Morality is a universal cultural requirement in the light of which the dualism between church and state becomes an anachronism.

Principle 9

Because we are primarily beneficiaries of light (and not of darkness), and our final destiny - both here and eternally - is that of enlightenment, we all need those sacred moments of ritualistic/sacramental space, serving as heightened encounters with the sustaining mystery that enfolds us.

New elements:

- a. Life is inherently destined toward the ultimate triumph of goodness, and not the ultimate catastrophe predicted by the second law of thermodynamics.
- b. Humans are innately spiritual - so are all life forms - and if appropriate human and spiritual maturation takes place, humans feel a need to celebrate, in ritual and sacrament, their relationship with the ultimate mystery.

Principle 10

The concepts of beginning and end, along with the theological notions of resurrection and reincarnation, are invoked as dominant myths to help us humans make sense of our infinite destiny in an infinite universe.

New elements:

- a. We live in a world without beginning or end.
- b. The "end of the world" is a human/theological myth whereby we humans tried to set boundaries on our infinite universe.
- c. There is one world enfolded in eternity; heaven, hell and purgatory are states of being within the one world. Our dead ones are all around us, living within a different plane of existence.
- d. Resurrection and reincarnation are not facts, but mental/spiritual constructs that articulate both our paradoxical fear of, and yearning for, infinity.

Principle 11

Extinction and transformation, the evolutionary equivalents of Calvary and resurrection, are central coordinates of cosmic and planetary evolution. Their interplay at this historical moment - our "kairos" - provides the primary locus for the praxis of the quantum theologian.

New elements:

- a. Theology no longer belongs to christianity, not even to formal religion; it has become an agent for global transformation.

- b. We are invited to do theology at the heart of the world and not within the confines of church or formal religion.
- c. The theological encounter becomes most creative (and most perilous), when we engage with the pressing global issues of our time.
- d. In its global praxis, theology seeks to demolish all dualisms, outgrow all human constructs and pursue ultimacy with the skills and discernments of a multidisciplinary imagination.
- e. Contemplation becomes the landmark of theology; the pursuit of justices becomes its dominant praxis. All the rest is window-dressing, useful, but not essential.

Principle 12

Love is an interdependent life force, a spectrum of possibility, ranging from its ultimate divine grandeur to its particularity in subatomic interaction. It is the origin and goal of our search for meaning.

New elements:

- a. God is not a passive, detached, external ruler, but a passionate, relational presence, embodied in the creative evolutionary process itself.
- b. God's passionate embodiment demands a whole new way of relating to bodies, through sexual tenderness, compassionate justice and altruistic befriending.
- c. Sexuality, and its erotic creativity, for long perceived to be a major source of temptation, is emerging as a key dimension of authentic spirituality.
- d. Our world will become a new place when we choose to take love seriously.

Source: © Diarmuid Ó Murchú MSC, *Quantum Theology*, Crossroad, 1996, 197-203

A MEDITATION ON THE CROSS

Nailed.
 Nailed to a cross, a tree
 rooted.
 Rooted deep into the earth, into Creation.
 God fulfils, infinitely
 integrated at One with his own,
 with us. "Emmanuel.
 God is with us" in death.

Words.
 Words on the threshold of life and
 death, dragged from the agony of
 separation, from a song of the past:
 "My God, my God..." toward the loving new
 "Father forgive", "Father into thy hands".
 The Word nailed to the Tree.

He came to bring us Life;
 abundant life.

Jane Bingeman

A GOOD READ

ALLCHIN, A.M., *God's Presence makes the World - The Celtic Vision through the Centuries in Wales*, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997

CARSE, Venetia, *Petals in the Mind - Poems*, Praxis Books, 1997

CORBETT, Lionel, *The Religious Function of the Psyche*, Routledge, 1996

DALEUX, André, *Teilhard de Chardin - Science et foi réconciliées?*, Éditions Gabriandre, 1994

GIRET, Raoul, *Teilhard aujourd'hui*, Aubin, 1996

GRIFFITHS, Bede, OSB, *Return to the Centre*, Fount, 1978

KING, Ursula, *Christ in All Things - Exploring Spirituality with Teilhard de Chardin*, SCM, 1997

KING, Ursula, *Spirit of Fire - The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin*, Orbis, 1996

WHAT TEILHARD MEANS TO ME

Members of the British Teilhard Association are invited to tell us in not more than 50 words what Teilhard means to them.

Roy Bass

"Finding and studying Teilhard's writings effectively transformed my received creationist views. To me his vision is a completely credible explanation of our origins, the means, direction and ultimate goal of our evolutionary nature. Within this framework and method every new fact or experience reinforces its essential truth."

Siôn Cowell

"I share Teilhard's vision of a universe in movement towards its ultimate consummation in the Cosmic Christ - he who enfolds and sustains the entire universe but who is also found at its very centre. No cosmos without the Cosmic Christ. "The Heart of Christ at the heart of matter"."

Ian Stratton

"I have loved the world of living nature from my early years, but have always found it enigmatic. Christian faith made sense of human destiny for me. It was Teilhard's vision of Christocentric cosmogenesis which made the two one, and has helped me to see both with new eyes."

Alison Williams

"First, for the coherence and comprehensiveness of his world-view: a universal process driven by and for Love, evolving according to the law of complexity-consciousness. Also for his concepts of human energy and parenthood, the task of co-creation, the goals of the global neighbourhood and, ultimately, Omega."

TEILHARD TODAY

Peter Reid asks some questions

Of those who are aware of Teilhard some will consider his ideas obsolete and others will think them absorbed by later patterns of understanding. But there are many areas of current debate to which development of his thought and belief can contribute.

Spirituality

For Teilhard spirituality was world-affirming rather than world-negating. The scientific parable of material creation evolving towards greater consciousness, as it moves towards greater complexity and order, suggests that matter has a spiritual potential. We may say that spirit and matter are as equally interchangeable as energy and mass in Einstein's equation $E + Mc^2$. "Spiritual" and "material" describe two sides of the same coin (cf. The "talent" of the parable).

Another wing of spirituality is Teilhard's use of the "Cosmic Christ" or "Universal Christ" - a concept newly-developed in the nineteenth century from early sources in St John and St Paul and in Origen. Teilhard was introduced to the concept in Hastings.

Ecology

Ecology introduces the current debate on the environment in which the Christian Churches are often accused of taking too little interest. In Biblical times the living world was valued but taken for granted and, even in Teilhard's time, the problems of pollution and overpopulation had yet to be fully recognised. But Teilhard instinctively valued the stuff of the world, the matrix of life on earth, and sought to end (at least for himself) the dualism of spirit/matter, soul/body and heaven/earth which had grown from the influence of early Greek and later Cartesian-type philosophies.

Theology was fearful of "pantheism" but the Cosmic Christ brings an all-inclusive divine authority which can be seen as the spiritual side of the ecology coin, positing the dynamic interaction of all systems which support life and the relationship of every created particle (as seen by one understanding of quantum physics). The "stewardship of God's garden" is one recent response by churchpeople to the ecological debate. For the ecologist this is not enough: spirituality demands a sense of belonging within the whole created, evolutionary paradigm.

Evolution

Teilhard saw evolution as oriented towards humankind, as the Omega Point draws the human race towards the future. Rather than a strict Neo-Darwinian, biological evolution, Teilhard is concerned with a cultural and spiritual evolution moving in parallel with the rise in consciousness in the long-term pattern of the creation process. The role of "union" in creating new levels of wholeness - new areas of diversity in unity follow from this. Such ideas are not readily acceptable with our lack of confidence in human nature. Belief in progress

and human perfectibility is questioned. Socio-biologists question the value of culture in civilisation: when put under pressure, e.g. from overcrowding or lack of resources, we revert to our basic culture of survival.

In reply we can examine the need for genuine mystical understanding in accepted myth or doctrine: we can also examine the idea of "wholeness", in both material and spiritual context(s), and question whether we are drawn towards this - when what we observe often appears as fragmentation. (We know several models of diversity in unity, including Europe and "The Church": neither are universally popular!)

Ecumenism

The photograph of the world taken by the lunar astronauts is a potent symbol, and the "Universe Story" stands for all people today as the Genesis creation story stood for Jewish scripture. The Cosmic Christ can go far to represent the spiritual side of this particular coin. For other faiths perhaps other myths (in the proper technical sense of the word). The symbol of unity remains. For a developing creation theology our definition of such words as "sin" and "salvation" may need to be overhauled.

Ethics

It follows that there is a need for a basic, unifying ethic. The clue from Teilhard points to the future; not only our hope for the future, but our in-built potential for the future. Taking the phrase "to build the earth" in both its material and spiritual aspects we can say that the basic ethical test for any action is whether it is creative or non-creative (or destructive). We ask again, "What do we mean by creation?" - and find that we have reached, not a conclusion, but a beginning.

Peter Reid

FRANCIS XAVIER O'SULLIVAN IBVM (1911-1997)

One of the greatest modern scholars of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Francis Xavier O'Sullivan died suddenly in Llandudno, Gwynedd, on 17 March 1997. Formerly headmistress of the Loreto schools in St Albans and Nottingham she was a well-known figure in *The British Teilhard Association* from its earliest days. Her own foundation in the rich Celtic Spirituality of her Kerry roots gave immediacy to her relationship with Christ - the Cosmic Christ of St John and St Paul. She found Christ in the mountains and in the sea, in growing things and, above all, in people.

She will long be remembered for her masterful translation of Teilhard's retreat notes. Her Ignatian religious life gave her a warm fellowship with Teilhard, enabling her to love and cherish at a deep level all that was dear to him. As life slowed down she lived positively an adoring state of "diminishment" which, seen as a gift from Christ, enhanced her spiritual growth. She continued to live to the full the insights of *The Divine Milieu*: "I have found the joy of utilising all forms of growth... to let you grow in me... I willingly consent to this last phrase of communion in the course of which I possess you by diminishing in you." A beautiful ending to a beautiful life. RIP.

Frances O'Kelly IBVM

OTHER DEPARTURES

Winifred McCulloch (1912-1997). A former Secretary of the *American Teilhard Association* and editor of *Teilhard Perspective*, Winifred McCulloch died suddenly on 22 January 1997 at her home in Manhattan (NY).

Karl Schmitz-Moormann (1996). Editor with his wife Nicole of Teilhard's *Scientific Writings* (in 11 volumes) and his *Journal 1915-1919*, frequent contributor to *The Teilhard Review*, and founder member of *The European Society for the Study of Science and Theology*, Karl Schmitz-Moormann died on 30 October 1996 in Princeton (NJ).

Norbertus Maximiliaan Wildiers OFMCap (1904-1996). Editor of the *Œuvres de Teilhard de Chardin* (1955-1976) and author of *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin* (1968), Max Wildiers died on 18 August 1996 near his home town of Antwerpen.

UPCOMING EVENTS

25-26 October 1997. "Foi en Dieu, Foi en l'Homme" - a weekend (in French) at the Centre Spirituel des Fontaines with Raoul Giret and Jacques de Ridder. Further details: *Association des Amis de Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*, 38 rue Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, 75005 Paris (tel. 00.33.1.43.32.18.55).

8 November 1997. Alister Hardy Society Members' Day at Westminster College, Oxford, including the Alister Hardy memorial lecture "Spirituality Imprisoned" by Elaine McInnes. Further details: Robert Waite, Westminster College, Oxford OX2 9AT (tel. 01865.243006).

4-6 April 1998. "Itinéraires teilhardiens" - a weekend (in French) at the Centre Spirituel du Hautmont with members of the *Centre Teilhard de Chardin*. Further details: Maître Bernard Casset, 56 avenue Barrois, 59700 Marcq en Baroeul, France.

24-26 April 1998. "Teilhard and Eastern Christianity - Convergence towards Omega" - Seventeenth International Teilhard Conference at All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, St Albans, with Donald Allchin, Bishop Basil of Sergievo, Siôn Cowell, Peter Cox and Andrew Louth. Further details (from December 1997): Secretariat, Plas Maelog, Beaumaris LL58 8BH (tel. 01248.810402 or fax. 01248.810936).

24 April 1998. Annual General Meeting of *The British Association*. Further details later.

26 September 1998. "Three Twentieth-Century Prophets - Hardy, Jung and Teilhard" - a one-day conference at St James's, Piccadilly, London. Further details later.

May/June 1999. "In the Footsteps of Teilhard" - a weekend with members of the *European Teilhard de Chardin Centre* retracing Teilhard's years at St Louis, Jersey. Further details in due course.

Monthly meetings. The "Centre-to-Centre Group" in Central London always welcomes newcomers. Further details: John Woodcock, 9 Gurney Close, Caversham, Reading RG4 7LE (tel. 01734.478156) or Barbara Hogg, Flat 3, 9 Hendon Avenue, London N3 1UL (tel. 0181.371.9823).

IN SEARCH OF INFORMATION ON TEILHARD?

Heythrop College Library, London. Contact: Librarian, Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8 5HQ (tel. 0171.795.4250 or fax. 0171.795.4253).

Teilhard Library, Bar Convent, York. Contact: Sister Gregory Kirkus IBVM, Librarian, Bar Convent, Blossom Street, York YO2 2BD (tel. 01904.629359)

Salle de Lecture (Reading Room), Fondation Teilhard de Chardin, Paris. Contact: Secretary, Fondation Teilhard de Chardin, 38 rue Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire, 75005 Paris (tel. 00.33.1.43.31.18.55).

A PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT

"The future of the thinking earth is organically linked to the transformation of the forces of hate into forces of charity" (Teilhard, *Natural Human Units*, 1939, III, 214 E; 300 F).

On Sunday 25 May 1997 with Teilhardians from France and other European countries I was privileged to attend Mass celebrated by René Courtois SJ in a cave in the village of Paissy which was less than 1.5km from the frontline on the notorious Chemin des Dames which saw some of the fiercest fighting on the western front in the First World War. It was an extraordinarily exhilarating yet sobering experience to stand where Teilhard himself had stood celebrating Mass all those years ago and to bring to mind something of what had led this "European humanist with a planetary vocation" (Pierre Noir SJ) in that hell on earth to develop his incredible vision of heaven on earth as the goal of an evolutionary process that was to be forever linked in his mind with the Cosmic Christ.

"The modernist 'volatilises' Christ and dissolves him in the world. While I am trying to concentrate the world in Christ." (Teilhard, Cahier 7, 9 June 1919, in Bruno de Solages OCarm, *Teilhard de Chardin*, 1967, 342)

"Christ must always be far greater than our greatest conception of the world" (Teilhard, letter, 26 December 1929, in Robert Speaight, *Teilhard de Chardin*, 1967, 162).

Siôn Cowell

14.07.97